



State of Rhode Island
Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos

March 24, 2026

Representative Joseph McNamara
Chair, House Committee on Education
82 Smith St, Room 101
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Letter of Support for H8129: An Act Relating To Education -- Federal Aid

Dear Representative McNamara:

I write to you in enthusiastic support for each H8129: An Act Relating To Education -- Federal Aid. This bill ends transaction fees for school lunches in all districts and requires at least one no-fee payment method for school lunches and a full disclosure whether fees will be charged by a payment platform. We have known for decades that access to healthy, nutritious food directly impacts a student's academic performance and emotional well-being. Sadly, for far too many students in this state, the meals they eat at school constitute the only stable food source they can rely upon. We learned during the State House's Food Insecurity Day that nearly 1 in 3 Rhode Island families currently experience food insecurity.

With the rising costs of groceries nationwide, school lunches offer a more affordable way for students to eat compared to a packed lunch from home. However, added fees at the lunch line checkout counter add costs prohibitive to many working-class, low-income families. What's worse is that many of these fees have nothing to do with processing payments for school meals and instead can be used to generate extra profit.

H8129 addresses this problem by requiring that all public schools and districts must provide at least one fee-free method to pay for school meals. I am in support of this bill and urge you to vote it favorably out of committee.

Sincerely,

Sabina Matos
Rhode Island Lieutenant Governor
CC: Rep. Justine Caldwell