



News Release

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Have You Heard of Meet Up and Eat Up? Call to Action for the Summer Food Service Program

February 1, 2019

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has a request for its community partners: step up and speak up about *Meet Up and Eat Up!*

Officially known as the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), *Meet Up and Eat Up* provides free nutritious meals to children up to age 18 and living in low-income areas, where 50 percent or more of the students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals.

After school lunchrooms close for summer break, SFSP helps prevent more than 500,000 Michigan children from going hungry each year. Filling the summer hunger gap is vitally important because it can reduce summer learning loss, also known as summer slide, for children.

So, MDE is asking education stakeholders to spread the word about the program to the far corners of the state in the hope that more hungry kids will be fed.

“Childhood hunger exists in almost every Michigan community and the need for healthy meals continues during summer break,” Interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles said. “The Summer Food Service Program helps provide children with nourishment to make summer fun and foster continued learning.”

How can communities make a difference? Take action!

Highlight the *Meet Up and Eat Up* program in your community. Use social media and other creative methods.

The program’s 337 sponsors statewide can help by offering meeting space; scouting the best site locations; providing activities and learning opportunities; marketing the program and its logo (available below); and contributing to program costs.

“Aligning with Michigan’s plan to become a Top 10 education state in 10 years, feeding the whole child the whole year is key to reducing the impact of high-risk factors,” Alles said. “Providing equal resources to meet the needs of all children ensures access to quality educational opportunities.

“Many families across Michigan struggle with food security, and there is no reason that children should go hungry when programs like this are available. I strongly encourage schools, businesses, churches, and community organizations to support this effort.”

Meet Up and Eat Up operates in nearly 1,850 schools, public housing centers, playgrounds, parks, and faith-based facilities statewide. Last year, it served more than 3.4 million meals in Michigan.

To find a nearby location, visit the *Meet Up and Eat Up*/SFSP Site Locator Map at www.michigan.gov/meetupeatup. All site information, such as meal times and open days, is updated daily.

For more information about how you can help with the *Meet Up and Eat Up* SFSP this summer, please contact SFSP sponsors directly through the [SFSP Sponsor Directory](#), call MDE at 517-241-5374, or email mde-sfsp@michigan.gov.

For SFSP details, visit [here](#).

The SFSP is administered by MDE through funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is available to children 18 and under regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

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