

Fueled by Students: Unlocking the Full Potential of School Meals

The accomplishments of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs have been nothing short of remarkable, with about 30 million students participating in school meal programs daily. School meals ensure that millions of children receive the nourishment they need to learn, grow, and thrive. And with student engagement, we can do even more.

By building on 80 years of success and evolution to better serve today's students, U.S. school meals have the opportunity to advance a new generation of student well-being. And youth engagement and perspectives are crucial to this evolution.

GENYOUTH's most recent Youth Insights survey, conducted in the fall of 2024, drilled into the "why" of youth eating behaviors, nutritional knowledge, and, especially, the school meal experience — with an eye toward the unrealized potential of raising school meals to the next level of benefit to students.

School meals have long served as a cornerstone of student nutrition, but what if they could do even more? Imagine meal programs that not only nourish but also tackle food insecurity head-on, create inviting spaces where students can connect and thrive, and support social and emotional well-being. Most importantly, what if students played a bigger role in shaping the experience? The potential is there. How we unlock it is the next big question.



School meals may be the healthiest meal many children eat in a day,

yet according to students, there are more opportunities to provide them with a joyful, pleasant, and inclusive eating experience in school that makes them feel respected and sets them up to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.



New GENYOUTH insights reveal:

- ▶ Students — especially those experiencing, or at risk of, food insecurity — want expanded access to school meals.
- ▶ Youth want to learn more about healthy eating.
- ▶ And they want a chance to inform and influence how and what is offered in school meals.

Yet too many students today say:

- ▶ Lunch at school is not about enjoying your food; it's about quickly refueling.
- ▶ They don't have easy access to nutritional information about school-provided meals.
- ▶ They have too little time to eat.
- ▶ They dread school lunch.
- ▶ They don't have an opportunity to provide input on school meals.

★ **LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUTH PERSPECTIVE — AND SOLUTIONS — WITHIN THIS BRIEF.**

Today's students have a strong sense of responsibility for their health and wellness. We know because we ask them. GENYOUTH **INSIGHTS** elevates youth voice through original, timely research on topics that matter to students and to healthy, high-achieving schools.

This report was produced in counsel with David Bersoff, PhD, Head of Research at the Edelman Trust Institute.

School Meals: Praiseworthy Past, Essential Present

CHANGING WITH THE TIMES.

Since its founding in 1946, the National School Lunch Program has addressed child nutrition and food security in the United States, with schools receiving federal financial reimbursements for providing nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free lunches. The Child Nutrition Act of 1966 established the School Breakfast Program, and further expansion in the 1970s brought free and reduced-price meals for low-income students. The introduction of nutrition standards based on Dietary Guidelines for Americans came in 1994, while the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 reinforced the important role of dairy, and emphasized fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lower sodium and fat, and caloric guidelines by age group. Most recently, school nutrition standards were updated in 2024.

Bottom line? School meals are fulfilling their intended purpose, and more — providing nourishment for our country’s youth as a safeguard to ensure a strong future. In fact, [research](#) from Tufts University finds that school meals deliver the healthiest meals that children eat. And today school meals are an essential part of a whole-child community by promoting health, well-being, academic success, a positive social-emotional climate, and lifelong nutrition awareness.

MAKING A GREAT PROGRAM GREATER.

School nutrition programs have moved in positive directions. Their creativity includes innovative menu planning; partnerships with local farmers and producers; addition of features such as salad bars, smoothies, yogurt parfaits, and flavor stations; adapting to new meal and nutrition guidelines; and valuing student feedback and engagement. Also evolving are new technologies to simplify meal payment processes and the expansion of pandemic-era waivers to allow free school meals for all students, which is still available in some states post COVID, while a number of states have made “healthy school meals for all” a statewide policy

priority. These are all examples of school meal programs’ adaptability and commitment to innovation — all while facing budget and infrastructure constraints.



“School breakfast and lunch are powerful tools in the fight against child hunger and key drivers of health and academic success. When students have a voice in meal planning and access to nutritious, culturally relevant options, they are more likely to eat during the day.

“Still, too many children miss out. Offering Healthy School Meals for All students at no charge ensures that every child is well-nourished and ready to learn.”

Crystal FitzSimons, Interim President,
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)

Meeting Today's Students' Needs and Preferences

A DIFFERENT WORLD.

The students eating school meals today are a very different population than those in 1946. Demographically, the U.S. student population today is more ethnically and culturally diverse than ever, with correspondingly varied dietary needs and preferences. And as with consumers in general, students' expectations around food quality, variety, and choice have evolved. Fresh, sustainable, quality, customizable food is what youth expect in 2025.

Additionally, one in five U.S. students today is food insecure, and within some populations that figure is one in four, with concerning increases in food insecurity noted recently. And most children, whether facing food insecurity or not, are not meeting nutrition guidelines, falling short of recommendations for dairy, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, leading to shortfalls in key nutrients including calcium, vitamin D, potassium, and fiber.

When it comes to social and emotional well-being, the CDC's 2023 [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) indicated that 40% of U.S. high school students report experiencing persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. The need for [connectedness](#) and a safe, supportive environment within school communities, the CDC says, is urgent.

“Most restaurants have Yelp or some way to post customer reviews. It’s interesting we don’t have it at schools so students could share what they’d like more. This would give the people who make the food data to help them think about how to make things better. That would be cool.” High school student, CA

THE RISE OF GEN ALPHA

HEALTHY MEALS

Gen Alpha refers to those born from around 2010 to 2024 — in other words, today’s children and teens. Mostly the children of Millennials, Gen Alpha is the first group to be born entirely in the 21st century. Gen Alphas have an increased awareness of health-conscious choices. They integrate technology into their relationship with food, including apps for tracking, learning about, or purchasing food. They grew up in a world in which sustainability and ethics around things like climate and environmental challenges were at the forefront when it comes to food. Cuisine to them is global — courtesy of increased exposure to different cultures through the internet, social media, and the fact that they themselves are the most diverse generation ever. Many tend to have adventurous, surprisingly sophisticated palates.

Toward the Next Generation of Youth Nutrition

Notwithstanding all the good school meals have done for nearly a century, their potential is under-realized with the current generation of students. Hurdles exist that impede access to and participation in school meals. For many students the cafeteria is a place of anxiety, or even dread. And while youth are eager to provide valuable input as active participants in school meal planning, their voice is seldom sought. So how do school meals evolve to provide access, robust participation, and a better lunchroom experience, all with enthusiastic student input and engagement?

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

Approximately 95,000 U.S. schools participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), providing meals to over 28.6 million students daily—75% of whom qualify for free or reduced-price meals. This adds up to 4.1 billion school lunches served each year. The School Breakfast Program (SBP) operates in about 90,000 schools, reaching 14.45 million students daily, with 80% of those eating school breakfast qualifying for free or reduced-price meals. Schools serve 2.4 billion breakfasts annually — only half the number of school lunches served.

“By using our collective creativity, school meals can get exponentially better for everyone.” High school student, CA

Despite the extensive reach of these programs, disparities persist in participation rates and the equitable distribution of benefits. While students from low-income families qualify for free or reduced-price meals under national programs, the qualification threshold may exclude families who are just above the poverty line or “on the cusp” of qualifying, limiting their access to meals. And even with subsidies, some families still find the reduced prices challenging to afford.

Schools in rural or remote areas may have fewer resources to support robust meal programs, while urban schools may face challenges with overcrowding or logistical hurdles in distributing meals. Finally, despite eligibility, some low-income families do not

enroll their children in the school meal program due to lack of awareness, confusion about the application process, or a desire to avoid perceived stigma. For too many students, the rituals of the cafeteria may include shaming and social anxiety.

Nevertheless, there’s much to applaud in recent years, including:

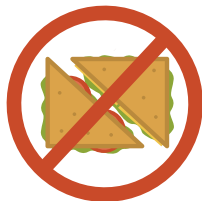
- **Extending Healthy School Meals for All.** During the COVID-19 pandemic, temporary waivers allowed for free school meals for all students nationwide, leading to increased participation and reduced child hunger when students returned to the classroom. Reductions in the perceived stigma for students from lower-income households were reported, with families no longer experiencing unpaid meal charges and debt. Advocates argue that reinstating free healthy school meals for all would help ensure that all students have access to nutritious meals without stigma or financial barriers.
- **Overcoming financial barriers.** Processing fees associated with cashless payment systems have historically imposed additional costs on low-income families. To address this, the USDA announced the elimination of such fees for students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, effective in the 2027-2028 school year.
- **Breakfast innovations.** Grab and Go school breakfast offerings have successfully boosted participation, and there remains enormous potential to further improve school breakfast access by expanding Grab and Go and other [alternative breakfast service models](#) that make breakfast participation more convenient.



GENYOUTH Insights reveal:

Missing Out. Fostering expanded access to school meals is a critical strategy to improve the health and nutrition of all youth, especially youth at greatest risk of poor nutrition and food insecurity. Yet too many students are missing out on good nutrition.

- ▶ Food-insecure youth are more likely to participate in healthy, nutritious school meals: 77% of food-insecure youth eat school-provided breakfast at least weekly, compared to 54% of students who are not food insecure.
- ▶ However, food-insecure youth are far more likely to skip lunch and dinner — making access to and participation in school-provided meals all the more important: 42% of food-insecure youth skip lunch at least weekly, compared to 27% of students who are not food insecure.
- ▶ Alternative school breakfast models are a proven way to increase access and participation, yet only about one-third of students say their school provides Grab and Go breakfast; just 9% offer Breakfast in the Classroom; and 4% offer Breakfast after the Bell.



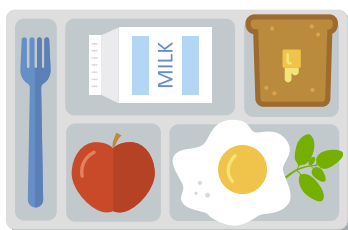
42%	 	27%	Skip lunch at least weekly	
8%	 	2%	Skip lunch daily	
26%	 	10%	Skip dinner at least weekly	■ Food insecure students
6%	 	2%	Skip dinner every day	■ Food secure students

Expanded Meals: High Demand, Low Access among Those Who Need Them Most.

Food insecure youth and marginally food secure youth* would take advantage of expanded school-provided meal programs if available.

- ▶ For example, currently, only 16% of marginally food secure youth participate in after- or before-school meals/snacks, but more than three in four at-risk youth not currently participating would use this program if available.
- ▶ 79% of food insecure youth and 59% of marginally food insecure youth would participate in a summer meal program if available.

PERCENT OF STUDENTS NOT CURRENTLY USING THESE SCHOOL-PROVIDED MEAL PROGRAMS, BUT WHO SAY THEY WOULD IF AVAILABLE:



81%	 	78%	Free meals for all students during the school day
79%	 	76%	After- or before-school meals/snacks
79%	 	56%	Summer meals
79%	 	56%	Take-home food to eat at supper
83%	 	68%	Take-home food to eat over the weekend

■ Food insecure students ■ Marginally food secure* students

*Marginally food secure youth experience one or two USDA-defined indicators of food insecurity (students classified as food insecure experience at least three indicators).

“School meals are so important because they set us up for life. When there’s a positive culture inside the school cafeteria, it makes students feel safe and included. The school meal can be a positive part of their day to help them connect socially and recharge.”

2024 GENYOUth Intern, GA

DELIGHT OR DREAD? THE EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL MEALS

Recent studies have explored American students' experiences and satisfaction with school lunches, revealing insights into participation rates, satisfaction levels, and factors influencing their perceptions. One [study](#) showed that satisfaction with school meals decreases as grade levels increase. Another [study](#) found that 87% of teenagers (ages 12-18) would be more likely to participate in school meals if they knew their school gathered feedback from students about how to improve them.

Yet another [study](#) looked at the important but sometimes overlooked topic of cafeteria design, insisting that the design of the cafeteria offers an opportunity to significantly influence the lunch experience: "A good meal in a depressing environment is a depressing meal," the report says flatly, noting that, "in many schools, meals take place in dreary multipurpose or outdated spaces, some used only temporarily for lunch."

"So what I would like to see, a dream, would be restaurant-style bowls with all the nutrients in one meal — all your vegetables, all your protein, all your grains in one place. That way you can pick and choose and make it more appealing. If this could be part of school lunch somehow, it would be amazing."

High school student, FL



GENYOUTH Insights reveal:

Students are looking for a clean, comfortable, pleasant lunchtime experience, and a lunch period that gives them time to refuel, recharge, and socialize with friends.

Student dissatisfaction centers around both the food itself and the overall cafeteria experience.

FOOD INSECURE STUDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO DREAD OR OTHERWISE DISLIKE SCHOOL LUNCH PERIOD.

- 52%** | **18%** AGREE: I dread lunch period.
- 66%** | **46%** AGREE: My lunch in school is the meal I enjoy least in my day.
- 61%** | **40%** AGREE: Lunch at school is not about enjoying your food. It's about consuming the calories you need quickly to get through the rest of your day.
- 30%** | **19%** AGREE: I have 19 minutes or less of seated time to eat lunch at school.

What youth want most out of a school meal experience:

- ▶ Higher quality ingredients; improved freshness, taste, and serving temperatures; food with more visual appeal; and a greater number of food options.
- ▶ Unrushed, pleasant surroundings, and a setting that encourages social interaction with peers.
- ▶ A welcoming cafeteria space.
- ▶ Being able to modify what is served to better suit their tastes.
- ▶ Having staff/administrators eat with students in the cafeteria.

WHAT WOULD "HELP A LOT TO MAKE LUNCH PERIOD A MORE FUN AND ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCE" FOR YOUTH?

- 66%** | **57%** If the food I had to eat tasted better.
- 58%** | **42%** If I felt more satisfied and full after eating my meal.
- 54%** | **55%** If I could modify what was served to better suit my tastes.
- 48%** | **44%** If I had more control over what I was being given to eat.
- 40%** | **22%** If I didn't have to worry about being bullied or hassled.
- 37%** | **24%** If the food was healthier.
- 31%** | **17%** If I didn't feel self-conscious about getting a free school lunch.
- 27%** | **10%** If teachers/coaches ate lunch with us.

■ Food insecure students ■ Food secure students

YOUTH PARTICIPATION: A VALUABLE AND UNTAPPED RESOURCE

Youth as change-agents for healthy schools was a novel concept two decades ago — the idea that students can and should play a lead role in creating and participating in solutions that affect their health and well-being in their school communities. Today, empowered youth are a driving force in many education and public health initiatives. When it comes to creating healthier schools, students can be their own best innovators and advocates, as numerous researchers have documented.

“Even young children,” say Torres-Harding et al., “can successfully and meaningfully participate in... school-based activism projects.” Participation in projects by younger children, they say, facilitates a sense of community and empowerment. Bozsik et al. remind us that, “While youth are often thought of as beneficiaries of policies, programs, and decision-making, youth are also stakeholders and active participants in their own lives and the lives of their communities and society.” Youth benefit from this participation in key ways, write Zeldin et al., “particularly when the experience is situated within supportive adult relationships and a sense of safety.”

Student involvement in planning and selecting school lunch menus is recognized as a valuable strategy to enhance meal participation and satisfaction. A student feedback [toolkit](#) emphasizes that 87% of teenagers (ages 12-18) would be more likely to participate in school meals if they knew their school gathered feedback from students to improve them.

Schools can establish student advisory councils or committees to collaborate with nutrition services staff, ensuring that menu offerings align with student preferences while meeting nutritional guidelines. This collaborative approach can enhance the appeal of school meals and encourage higher participation rates.

Finally, a recent [qualitative study](#) reminds us that, “Centering on students... not only affirms the importance of their experiences and perspectives but also provides crucial information for truly understanding what is important to change in the cafeteria and how.”



GENYOUTH Insights reveal:

When it comes to encouraging healthy eating, a good place to start is giving young people a sense of agency over what is being served.

Engaged students — those who have an opportunity to provide input on school meals — are much more satisfied with their meal and dining experience.

Yet, only 17% of students report having a chance to give input on school menu options.

- 77% | 60%** Satisfied with school-provided breakfast
- 77% | 51%** Satisfied with school-provided lunch
- 90% | 73%** AGREE: On most days, I consider lunch at school to be a positive food experience.
- 68% | 39%** AGREE: My lunch at school is the meal I enjoy the most in my day.

POSITIVELY RATE SCHOOL FOOD BASED ON:

- 68% | 36%** Variety of choices available
- 69% | 42%** Overall healthiness
- 73% | 44%** Freshness
- 76% | 43%** Visual appearance
- 73% | 43%** Taste

■ Engaged students* ■ Non-engaged students



***Engaged students** self-report that they can give input into menu planning and food choices and/or provide feedback/ratings on school meals.



Knowledge Matters

There are currently no federal mandates requiring nutrition education in U.S. schools. Yet according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nutrition education should be a vital part of any comprehensive health education program; it empowers children and youth with knowledge and skills to make healthy eating choices.

According to the [CDC](#), U.S. students generally receive fewer than eight hours of classroom nutrition education each school year, far below the 40–50 hours that are needed to change behaviors. Prior GENYOUth research on [Youth and the Future of Food](#) revealed that a majority of youth look to schools as their source for nutrition education. And other GENYOUth research on [Fostering Wellness in Youth](#) and [Youth Voice: Empowering Positive Change](#) underscored the fact that getting youth thinking about healthy eating and equipping them with what they need to know seem to be powerful drivers of eating healthy overall.

But the latest GENYOUth Insights survey reveals that:

- ▶ Fewer than half of youth (43%) say they have easy access to nutrition information about school-provided meals.
- ▶ There is an opportunity to leverage [MyPlate](#) as a tool to educate students on what and how much to eat from each of the food groups over the course of the day.

THE POINT: Even when students are eager to have agency over their food choices, without adequate nutrition education and experiences they can lack knowledge and ability to make healthier choices. Grade-appropriate nutrition education is part of the solution. Additionally, school meals themselves serve as a living textbook, offering an opportunity to educate young people on how to build healthy meals and eating patterns.

“In my school, I can’t think of a time when they’ve actually just talked with us about how important eating healthy is.”

High school student, FL

Getting It Right

There are schools and districts across America that, through innovation, creativity, and a commitment to out-of-the-box thinking around school meals, are already taking school meals to the next level.

HERE ARE A FEW GLIMPSSES:

LOCAL SOURCING, SOARING SALES

West New York, New Jersey, is a densely populated urban district that serves 8,000 students, the majority from Spanish-speaking households. During COVID, the district began purchasing “hyper-local” from town bakeries and restaurants to avoid supply chain disruptions and support the local economy. Today, a local bakery creates special whole grain Telera and Cemita rolls for their Torta Mexicana. The local pizzeria provides fresh pizza dough for all secondary schools,

while a small French bakery supplies daily bread and pastries. Students express enthusiasm for these authentic, locally served meals during feedback sessions with the school nutrition team. This approach provides students with familiar flavors and items from local restaurants, benefiting the district, local business, and students. As a result, school lunch participation has significantly increased, with local items selling out daily.

CASE STUDY 1

MY TRAY, MY WAY

Fairfax County, Virginia, school nutrition service team members are firm believers in ensuring every student feels included and seen as part of the school meal program. They are rolling out new tools to help students build their tray to align with their dietary preferences, including kosher, Halal, vegetarian, and other choices. Colorful menu cards make it easy for students to see what food groups are included in each offering and allow students to “build my tray, my way.” Meanwhile, salad bars are a staple in all Fairfax County schools to allow students access to unlimited fruits and vegetables while customizing their options based on their tastes.

CASE STUDY 2

“The value of student engagement in school meals cannot be overstated. Unless you ask students to give you their ideas, you’ll never know why they eat or don’t eat, or what you can do to increase their participation.”

Donna S. Martin, EdS, RDN, SNS, FAND,
Leading School Nutrition Authority; Past President,
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

STUDENTS VOTE EXPO STYLE

Hillsborough County, Florida, school nutrition staff look forward to one particular day every year: their annual Student Nutrition Taste Test Expo. This event brings students from all over the county to sample new menu items such as Korean meatballs, cherry blossom chicken, and BBQ hoagies, in addition to new breakfast items. The district’s goal is to offer students a variety of forward-thinking and contemporary menu items that are nutritious and meet the needs for all of the students in the district. As one student noted, “If students get to choose their own food, they will be more cooperative with teachers and because they have their own food, they will eat it and be healthier!” Student engagement is a vital part of developing the Hillsborough County menu year after year.

CASE STUDY 3

“Engaging youth in school meal programs can spark their curiosity about the power of nutritious foods to support their well-being. When students make the connection between what they eat and how they feel, they are empowered to make nutrient-rich choices, including dairy foods, that can help benefit their growth, learning and play.”

Katie Brown, EdD, RD, President, National Dairy Council

“Staff members typically like to engage with students during lunch. The principal might come over to somebody who’s sitting by himself and ask ‘how you doing mentally?’ It creates a connection with staff.”

High school student, FL



“My school allows us to go outside during lunch so we can walk around a little bit and talk to our friends who we don’t sit with. I think it’s a really good thing that our school does to promote socializing during lunch time.” High school student, LA

“My school has a bunch of tables outside where we’re surrounded by nature. We have a creek and it’s a really nice environment for eating my lunch.”

High school student, CA

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

GENYOUTH's survey findings point to many opportunities for enhancement of school meals around inclusive access, the school meal experience itself, and student engagement. Even small efforts can pay off.

SEEK MORE STUDENT INPUT.

Schools should regularly engage students and allow them direct participation in menu planning and the experience of school meals.

CULTIVATE INCLUSIVENESS.

Approach school meals in a way that provides access to all with dignity and positivity.

THINK ABOUT LONGER LUNCH PERIODS.

At some schools, students have as little as 20 minutes for lunch, including time in the line. Giving student at least 20 minutes of seated time to eat improves nutrition and enjoyment, in addition to reducing food waste.

INTRODUCE FLEXIBLE AND CUSTOMIZABLE OPTIONS.

Expanding salad bars, build-your-own meals, Grab and Go options, and global flavors increases appeal.

STRENGTHEN NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE.

Grade-appropriate nutrition education should include opportunities to learn and practice healthy eating during school meals.

CONSIDER THE CAFETERIA ENVIRONMENT.

Lunch venues should be pleasant and welcoming, rather than rushed atmospheres, and should foster a sense of community.

“A relatively simple change could be to make the salad bar a little bit more available in the line, just so that more people can see and have access to it.”

High school student, VA

AND THOSE WORKING WITH AND IN SCHOOLS ALSO POINT TO OTHER IMPORTANT NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

► **Free school meals for all.** Free school meals help reduce stigma for students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals and creates a more inclusive and connected cafeteria. All students can benefit from the nutritional value that school meals provide.

► **Funding and infrastructure support.** Schools face steep challenges in feeding our children, including the need for better kitchen equipment, staffing, and budgets to serve fresh, scratch-cooked, and culturally diverse meals.

► **School meals as a vital part of whole child education.** In addition to visiting the cafeteria and eating with students, school administrators can work on busing schedules and time constraints to ensure adequate time and space for school meals.

► **Engaged community and business partners.** Local partners can help provide schools with equipment and resources they need to feed students; engage students in product innovation activities; and be an ally and resource to school leaders, educators, staff, and students.

Listening to Those We Serve

There is universal agreement that, since their advent, the USDA's school meal programs have played a crucial role in fighting childhood hunger and improving nutrition among American youth, and should be lauded for that fact. Nevertheless, even the most honored programs can and should adapt to evolving student health, cultural, economic, and well-being needs and opportunities.

Insights from GENYOUTH's most recent national youth survey suggest that youth today expect healthier, fresher, and more culturally diverse meals. Schools can grow meal participation and student satisfaction by addressing the physical, social, and emotional aspects of how youth engage with food in the school setting. Findings illuminate an under-utilized resource for realizing positive change in school meals: the wisdom of youth themselves.

As a society, we can and should be doing better when it comes to launching youth on the road to a life of healthful eating. School meals, and the programs through which they are delivered, have the opportunity to evolve to meet the moment, and youth perspectives are crucial to this evolution. The first step is in the school building at mealtime.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY. The GENYOUth Insights survey *Fueled by Students: Unlocking the Full Potential of School Meals* data featured in this report included a representative sample of 1,028 middle, junior, and senior high school students from public, private, and parochial schools, ages 13-18 from public, private, and parochial schools. The survey design was informed by GENYOUth advisory committee and Youth Council members. All differences reported between segments of the data are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Thank you to the GENYOUth National Youth Council and Youth Insights Advisory Council experts who provided invaluable perspective on this report.

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GENYOUth is a 501c3 national nonprofit dedicated to helping school children thrive by living a well-nourished and physically active life. A catalyst for youth health and wellness, GENYOUth has supported over 77,000 U.S. schools to equip them with the resources needed to ensure millions of children have equitable access to nutrition and physical activity. Founded by America's dairy farmers and the NFL, GENYOUth convenes a network of private and public partners, including Fortune 100 companies and foundations to ensure all children are nourished and active to be their best selves. With a commitment to end student hunger, GENYOUth provides nutrition grants to increase access to healthy school meals among food insecure students. To learn more and support GENYOUth visit [GENYOUthnow.org](https://genyouthnow.org) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X \(Twitter\)](#).