

**ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION - 2026**  
**COMMITTEE STATEMENT**  
**LB966**

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**Hearing Date:** Tuesday February 17, 2026  
**Committee On:** Education  
**Introducer:** Cavanaugh, M.  
**One Liner:** Adopt the Hunger-Free Schools Act

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**Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:**  
Advanced to General File

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**Vote Results:**

<b>Aye:</b>	6	Senators Conrad, Hughes, Hunt, Juarez, Meyer, G., Sanders
<b>Nay:</b>	1	Senator Lonowski
<b>Absent:</b>		
<b>Present Not Voting:</b>	1	Senator Murman

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**Testimony:**

**Proponents:**

Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, M.  
Tim Royers  
Katherine Poehling  
  
Edward T Ventura Jr.  
Anahi Slazar  
Randi Ezeafulukwe  
Rene Carrillo  
Alicia Christensen  
Daniel Russell  
Eric Savaiano  
Connor Herbert

**Representing:**

Opening Presenter  
Nebraska State Education Association  
Omaha Education Association, Nebraska School Board Association  
Nebraska State Education Association  
Voices for Children in Nebraska  
Self  
Self  
Together  
Stand for Schools  
Nebraska Appleseed  
Nebraska Commission on African American Affairs

**Opponents:**

**Representing:**

**Neutral:**

**Representing:**

\* ADA Accommodation Written Testimony

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**Summary of purpose and/or changes:**

LB 966 creates the Hunger-Free Schools Act and the Hunger-Free Schools Program. The bill requires qualified schools to provide breakfast or lunch at no cost to students who qualify for reduced-price meals, and directs the State Department of Education to reimburse schools for the difference between federal free-meal and reduced-price reimbursement rates.



Section-by-Section Bill Summary:

Section 1. Names sections 1 to 6 of the bill as the Hunger-Free Schools Act.

Section 2. Amends section 79-10,137 to incorporate such section into the act and to restate intent that every student deserves access to healthy food during the school day.

Section 3. Defines terms used in the bill as follows: 1) Department refers to the State Department of Education; 2) eligible meal is a free breakfast or lunch served to a student who qualifies for reduced-price meals under federal child nutrition programs; 3) federal reimbursement rate is the variable payment schools receive for meals based on the type of meal; and 4) qualified school is a public or nonprofit private school that participates in federal meal programs and does not provide free meals to all students.

Section 4. Creates the Hunger-Free Schools Program wherein qualified schools must serve eligible meals during the school day and report the number of such meals to the department.

Section 5. Directs the department to annually reimburse each qualified school for eligible meals served during the second preceding school fiscal year in an amount equal to the difference between the federal reimbursement rate for a free meal and the rate for a reduced-price meal.

Section 6. Authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to implement the act and expresses the Legislature's intent to appropriate General Fund dollars.

Section 7. Repealer.

Section 8. Outright repeals sections 79-10,138 and 79-10,139 which provide for state-level reimbursement from the General Fund for school breakfast programs at five cents per breakfast served. These sections are replaced with the creation of the new act and program.

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Dave Murman, Chairperson

