



**Contact:**

Emily Morgan  
[communications@norwalkps.org](mailto:communications@norwalkps.org)  
203-854-4007 office

Michelle Woods Matthews  
[mwoodsmatthews@norwalkct.gov](mailto:mwoodsmatthews@norwalkct.gov)  
203-957-2945 cell

## ***Norwalk Public Schools Maintains Free Breakfast and Lunch Meals for all Students this School Year***

Norwalk, Conn. – Today, October 7, 2025, Mayor Rilling and Superintendent Dr. Alexandra Estrella announced that funding was secured to maintain Norwalk Public Schools' (NPS) participation in the [Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\)](#), which will offer free breakfast and lunch meals to all students for the 2025–26 school year. The continuation of this program was made possible thanks to a generous philanthropic donation and matching funds from the City of Norwalk, as well as NPS funds.

At the start of the school year, families were required to apply for free and reduced-price meals through a meal application, unless they had already received a Direct Certification notice for SNAP, TFA, or free/reduced medical eligibility. The funding to continue the program was the result of collaboration between the City, Norwalk Public Schools and the District's philanthropic partners, ensuring that every student continues to have access to healthy, nutritious meals each day.

“We are grateful for this donation that will allow us to keep CEP in the district. Continuing CEP will significantly help address food insecurity among our students and ensure that every child has access to nutritious meals each day,” **said Dr. Estrella**. “This achievement comes after weeks of advocacy and collaboration with our philanthropic partners to secure the funding needed to sustain this program, and I’m very thankful to the Mayor for matching City funds. We know that healthy meals are essential to student success. Nutritious breakfasts and lunches help students focus, learn, and thrive.”

"Far too many kids in our community are food insecure, and access to free breakfast and lunch meals is the difference between being able to learn in school or going hungry." **Said Mayor Rilling**. "No child should go hungry, and every kid should have access to the same opportunity to learn and thrive in the classroom. This program has been critical for years, and I'm so grateful to the philanthropic donor who put forward these funds and pleased that Norwalk Public Schools was able to review their budget and secure the finances necessary to continue this vital program."

"I'm happy to learn that funding has been restored for Norwalk Public Schools' free breakfast and lunch meals program," **said Barbara Smyth, President of the Common Council**. "Our students



should always come first. We know that without access to nutritious meals, it's very challenging for them to learn in the classroom. This program helps close the food insecurity gap right here in our community and alleviates financial burdens on low-income families. I want to thank the philanthropic donor for recognizing this unmet need, Dr. Estrella for her efforts, as well as our Mayor, who stepped forward with funding for Norwalk Public Schools."

"The Norwalk Board of Education appreciates this generous offer from our philanthropic partner and the great work by Dr. Estrella to find these funds and work closely with Mayor Rilling and City leadership to make sure our students have the resources and support that they need to do their best every day," **said Diana Carpio, Chair of the Norwalk Board of Education.** "The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a federal option under the National School Lunch Program that enables eligible schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students, regardless of individual family income, without requiring household applications.

Under CEP, all students in Norwalk Public Schools will continue to receive their breakfast and lunch meals free for the remainder of this school year.

As a final step toward maintaining the Community Eligibility Provision, Mayor Rilling will seek approval of the funding from the Board of Estimate and Taxation and Common Council.