



Hunger Matters for Students

March 2025

The Survey

Childhood food insecurity is a rampant issue across the United States, affecting 1 in 5 households. For many, this issue is exacerbated during school breaks, when the school meals that millions of children rely on are harder to obtain.

HelloFresh commissioned the *Hunger Matters for Students* report, a nationally representative survey for teachers, to better understand student hunger from those who see its effects every day.

The research covers:

- Teachers' concerns about student hunger, especially during school breaks
- What teachers are doing to combat food insecurity in their own schools
- Actions teachers would like to see taken in order to address student food insecurity



Key Finding #1: Teachers are deeply concerned about student food insecurity—and regularly seeing kids come to school hungry.

- Nearly 8 in 10 (78%) of teachers said they were concerned about food insecurity in the communities where they teach.
 - Nearly 4 in 10 (38%) said they were 'highly concerned.'
- Three-quarters (74%) of teachers see students come to school hungry at least monthly.
 - More than half (54%) see kids come to school hungry a few times a week or more.
 - Nearly one-quarter (24%) see kids come to school hungry every day.
- 6 in 10 teachers (61%) know firsthand that their students are experiencing hunger.
- Almost half (47%) of teachers have grown more concerned about food insecurity compared to the past 12 months.
- 2 in 5 teachers (43%) expect food insecurity for K-12 teachers to get worse in the next 12 months.
- Lack of focus (60%), difficulty concentrating (51%), sleepiness in class (50%), and lower academic achievement (44%) were cited as the primary issues teachers see as a result of children coming to school hungry.
- Rising cost of food (79%) and low household incomes (74%) were cited as the top barriers that teachers believe are preventing their students from getting enough to eat.



Key Finding #2: Teachers worry about their students' ability to access nutritious meals when they are not in school.

- 9 out of 10 teachers (89%) are concerned about students having enough to eat during school breaks.
- 85% agreed it is important that families with lower incomes receive extra help with buying groceries during school breaks.
- Nearly three-quarters (74%) said that, during school breaks, they worry about their student's ability to access nutritious meals.
- 2 out of 5 (40%) of teachers said their students come to them personally to discuss issues with hunger outside of the classroom.



Key Finding #3: Most teachers have personally taken action to address student hunger.

- Almost all (92%) of teachers have taken steps to address the problem of their students' hunger.
- Almost half (49%) personally provide students with food in the classroom.
- 44% have referred students and their families to resources in the school, such as school food pantries and backpack programs.
- More than a quarter (29%) have personally bought food for students to eat outside of the classroom.
 - Of these teachers, 78% have spent up to \$100 per month of their own money.



Key Finding #4: Most teachers would like to see more be done and believe that change should be driven at the policy-level.

- 88% of teachers agreed they would like to see more done about the current state of hunger and food insecurity in general.
 - 53% strongly agreed.
- 85% of teachers agreed they would like to see more done about the current state of hunger for K-12 students.
 - 53% strongly agreed.
- 81% agreed that ending student hunger should be a top priority for education administrators.
- Teachers viewed the state government (53%), federal government (52%), and local government (46%) as most responsible for fighting food insecurity for K-12 students.
- Teachers cited 'not knowing what steps to take' (35%) as the biggest challenge in their ability to address food insecurity directly with students.



Methodology

An online survey was conducted among 1,000 K-12 public school teachers between January 30 and February 3, 2025. 47% of respondents were elementary school teachers, 31% high school, and 22% middle school.



