

(11/1/23 District Administrator's Corner Article)

Project Lunchbox- 1st annual fund drive to fund meals for students

Food security is a topic that may be foreign to most...many of us have what we need. Yet, it is an unfortunate reality for many families in Wisconsin schools.

As a district, River Valley has experienced an increase of families that have specific needs to ensure that students have breakfast and lunch. As a result, River Valley has experienced an increase in students being classified as "economically disadvantaged" by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 34.3% of River Valley students have completed the necessary paperwork and are classified as having this challenge in their household. The percentage is increasingly higher for our youngest students. The reality of this problem is making sure each child can afford breakfast and/or lunch. There are families that have to make a choice of whether or not to fund their student's account.

The River Valley School District is asking you to consider the need to feed children. Our mission is simple—we are asking for donations to eliminate lunch debt and fight against student food insecurity. The River Valley School District Board of Education understands that life is unpredictable and financial circumstances may be out of a family's control. So, the district is initiating an annual fund drive during November to provide financial assistance to families experiencing food insecurity.

Simply address a check to the **River Valley School District** and note that it is to be added to **Project Lunchbox**. We will apply all of your funds to a specific account set up for the sole purpose of feeding River Valley children school breakfast or lunch.

There are also things we can do as a state. We could continue the conversations of fully funding and expanding eligibility for reimbursement of the school food programs. We could fund farm-to-school grant programs to get locally-produced foods into cafeterias. We could invest in connecting Wisconsin food banks and pantries with Wisconsin producers to provide food to families experiencing food insecurity. As a state, we could eliminate eligibility barriers to food benefits by funding the school resources, rather than building barriers that jeopardize the youngest in our community. But all of these elements take long conversations and policy changes.

So, let's start small and find some immediate solutions for kids in The Valley. During this time of great thanksgiving, consider funding some meals for students who will greatly appreciate the caring from their greater community. Again, address the funds to the **River Valley School District - Project Lunchbox, 660 West Daley Street, Spring Green, WI, 53588** or stop by and we will be happy to help. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Sincerely,

Loren Glasbrenner, District Administrator
River Valley School District