

## Krueger, Mary (Rosie)

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**From:** Jeffrey Francis <jfrancis@vtvsa.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 16, 2021 8:11 AM  
**To:** Krueger, Mary (Rosie)  
**Cc:** Jay Nichols; Sue Ceglowski  
**Subject:** From Jeff Francis, Sue Ceglowski, Jay Nichols Re: Task Force on Universal School Lunch seeking comments from your organization

**EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.**

Dear Rosie,

Thank you for responding to my request for more information and clarification regarding your invitation to Sue Ceglowski (VSBA), Jay Nichols (VPA) and myself to contribute to the work of the Task Force on Universal School Lunch.

Like you (and practically everyone else) Sue, Jay and I have been extremely busy but we have found some time to respond to the invitation to share our views.

First and foremost, on behalf of our respective associations, we want to stress that we believe in proper nutrition and utilization of local products when it comes to students, their health and well-being and all related matters.

With respect to the issue of paying for school meals, we stand by our original position that the source of funds should be the General Fund. The issue of providing healthy meals and good nutritional opportunities for Vermont's children is a matter of societal interest and should not be left to the education system or education taxpayers particularly at a time when, despite federal funds and surpluses, operating budgets are stressed and certain priorities for public education such as facilities, pension fund shortfalls and workforce shortages are being neglected or insufficiently addressed.

Regarding the matter of what data should be collected to qualify for federal funds based on student poverty and the means by which the data should be collected, the frequency of collection, and how this data should be reported to the Agency of Education, we have not had the time or opportunity to confer with our respective members on those questions and do not expect to have that time in advance of November 16.

That stated, as the Task Force considers options around data, we would ask that the processes for collection, administration and reporting be kept to the absolute minimum required to collect accurate data. Unfortunately, in too many instances, the process burdens (on the field) of any new and popular initiative are underestimated and misunderstood in an effort to obtain results that are sought. We know that you know that well, and respectfully ask that you serve as an objective expert in that regard.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to weigh in. This is important work that we all support and we are pleased for the chance to be sure that the realities for the public education system, which is under immense pressure, are understood and appreciated.

Best,

Sue Ceglowski, VSBA  
Jeff Francis, VSA  
Jay Nichols, VPA

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On Thu, Oct 28, 2021 at 5:17 PM Krueger, Mary (Rosie) <[Mary.Krueger@vermont.gov](mailto:Mary.Krueger@vermont.gov)> wrote:

Hello everyone,

I am reaching out in my role as chair of the Task Force on Universal School Lunch, created by the legislature last spring in Act 67. The legislature created the task force to write a report with recommendations on how, not later than the 2026-2027 school year, to achieve the goal of providing universal school lunch for all public school students at no cost to the students or their families. Specifically, the task force is asked to:

- (1) recommend funding sources for universal school lunch;
- (2) recommend what data should be collected by local education agencies, school districts, and schools to qualify for federal funds based on student poverty, the means by which the data should be collected, the frequency of collection, and how this data should be reported to the Agency of Education and the frequency of this reporting;
- (3) consider how other states offer and fund universal school meals at no cost to students or their families; and
- (4) meet with Vermont's federal delegation to discuss what changes could be made to federal law and regulations to more readily facilitate universal school meals

The legislature asked the task force to collaborate with your organizations on this work. Because of the small size of the task force (just myself, AAFM Dep. Sec. Alyson Eastman, and DCF Commissioner Sean Brown), and the other demands on everyone's time as a result of the ongoing pandemic, we are trying to be as efficient in our work as possible. **We would like to ask that if your organization has any thoughts, ideas or concerns about the above questions that you submit written testimony to the task force by Friday, November 19<sup>th</sup>.** We will then individually read whatever is submitted and invite you to testify at a later meeting only if we have any additional questions about what you've submitted. All of this will then be incorporated into the written report that AOE is drafting for the task force.

Your comments on recommended funding sources and recommended data regarding metrics of student poverty are particularly welcome! We'd also appreciate hearing if your organization has any general thoughts, recommendations, or concerns about Universal Meals that have not already been brought to the legislature's attention during last year's testimony on the various Universal Meals efforts.

You can email any written testimony to me. The task force is pretty informal, so bullet points or brief statements are fine – please don't stress about it being in a particular format, as long as it accurately represents your organization's views. Submissions will be posted publicly on the task force's webpage.

Everyone is bcc'd, but these are the organizations receiving this email: Hunger Free Vermont, The Vermont Superintendents Association, The School Nutrition Association of Vermont, The Vermont School Boards Association, The Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, The Vermont Principals Association, and The Vermont-National Education Association.

Thanks, all!

Rosie

Rosie Krueger, State Director of Child Nutrition Programs, Vermont Agency of Education

(pronouns: she/her)

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Email: [Mary.Krueger@Vermont.gov](mailto:Mary.Krueger@Vermont.gov)

Vermont Child Nutrition Programs Website: <http://education.vermont.gov/student-support/nutrition>

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Questions about COVID-19? Dial 2-1-1

