

Welcome!

Lunch and Learn:

CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL PROGRAM

February 27, 2025



CAROLINE MENJIVAR

CALIFORNIA STATE SENATOR • 20TH DISTRICT



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Important Information About This Webinar

This webinar is being recorded

- Your microphone, video, and chat has been disabled and will remain so for the duration of this webinar, other than the question and answer section.

Have a question?

- Submit it using Zoom's Q&A function!

Presentation and Resources

- All registrants will receive the webinar recording, presentation, and any follow-up resources after the webinar.



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Panelists



Marchon Tatmon
Associate Director, Policy
and Advocacy, SF-Marin
Food Bank



Erin Primer
Director of Food Services,
San Luis Coastal Unified
School District



Carter Beardsley
Senior, Kern High School
District, and Region 8
President, California
Association of Student Councils



Kellyanna Miller
Area F Director, California
School Employees
Association



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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Nutrition Policy Institute

California School Meals for All

Findings from Nutrition Policy Institute's Evaluation Study

Lunch and Learn

February 27, 2025

WENDI GOSLINER, DRPH, RD

California and Multi-State Study



Students
n = 1230



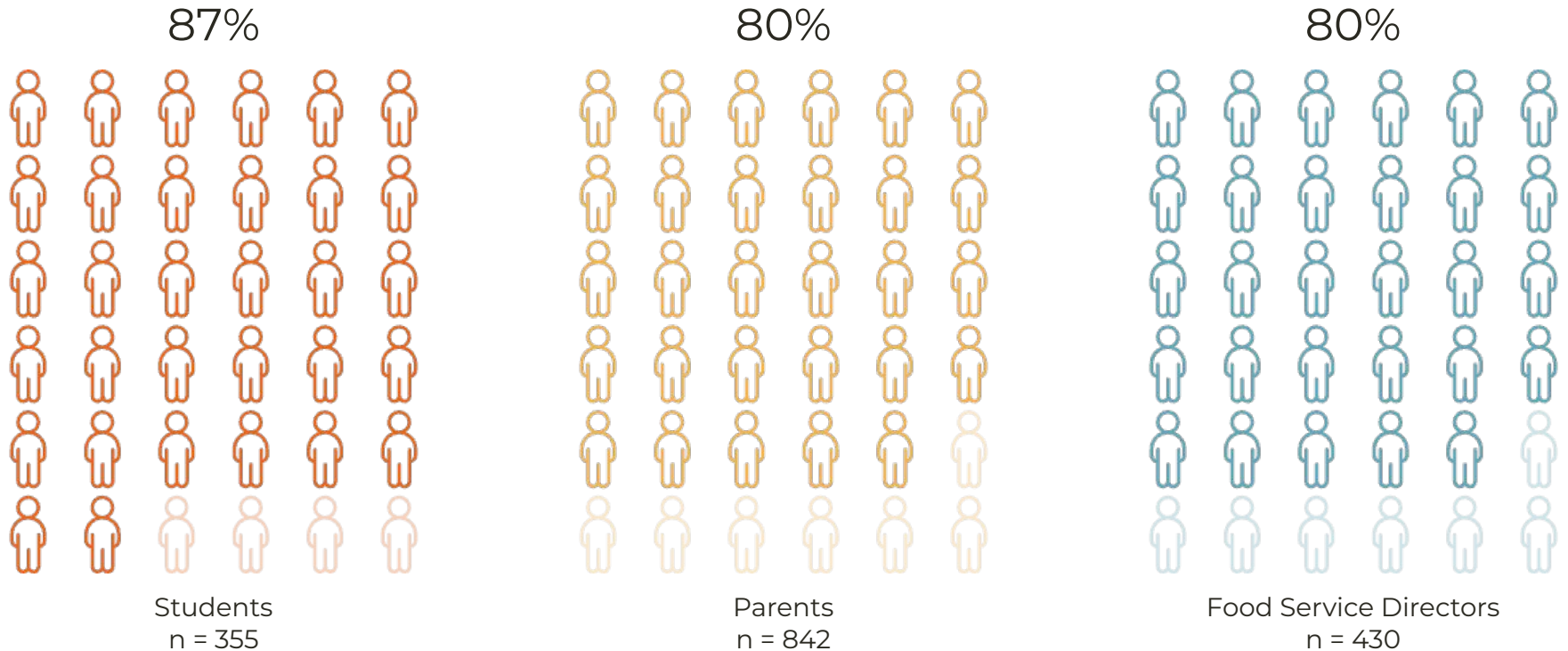
Parents
n = 3377



Food Service Directors
n = 1225

In 2022-23, we collected data in California and 7 other states
3 states (CO, MA, ME) were also implementing School Meals for All and 4 (AZ, IL, NJ, TX) were not

CA Students, Parents, and Food Service Directors Overwhelmingly Support School Meals for All*



*Food Service Directors reported anticipating a decline in participation if SMFA ended; parents and students reported support for meals being free of charge for all students

School Meals for All Increases Meal Participation

Participation in School Meals for All States is



>20

Percentage points higher than
in States that ended it

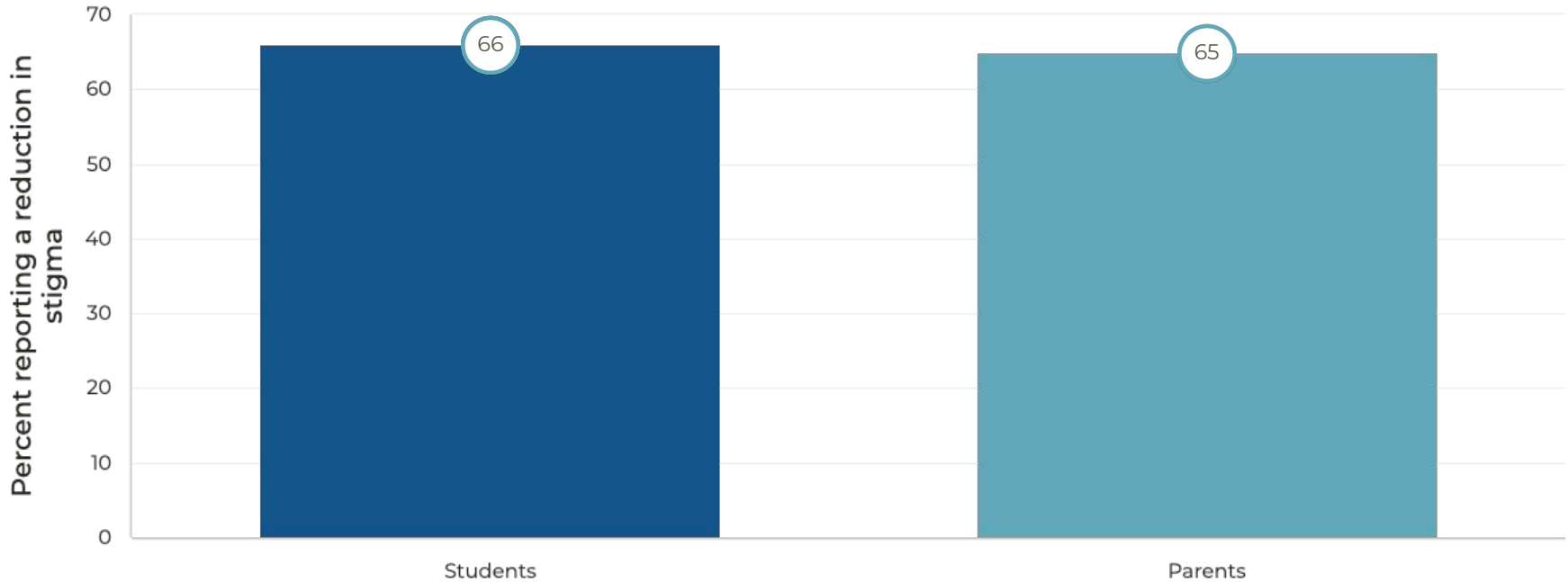
School Meals for All is Associated with Less Hunger

Families in School Meals for All states reported being less at risk of hunger than families in states without SMFA. Students near-eligible for free meals benefit the most.

“I think it helps with parents if they can't afford to feed their children”

High school student

Most Students and Parents Say School Meals for All Reduces Stigma



Parents reported their student did not feel stigmatized because meals were free for all; students reported not being embarrassed to eat school meals

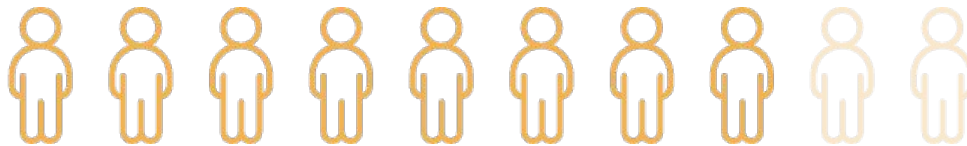
What CA Educators Say about SMFA (n=250)

84



Helps students do better academically

80%



Improves attentiveness in the classroom

69%



Improve students' behavior

In a teacher's words...

“... the biggest impact for me is how their behavior and their ability to learn in the classroom has been affected pretty greatly by having just nutrition available to them readily,”

First grade teacher in California

School Meals for All Reduces Student Meal Debt

Most CA Food
Service Directors
report a reduction
in meal debt

66%

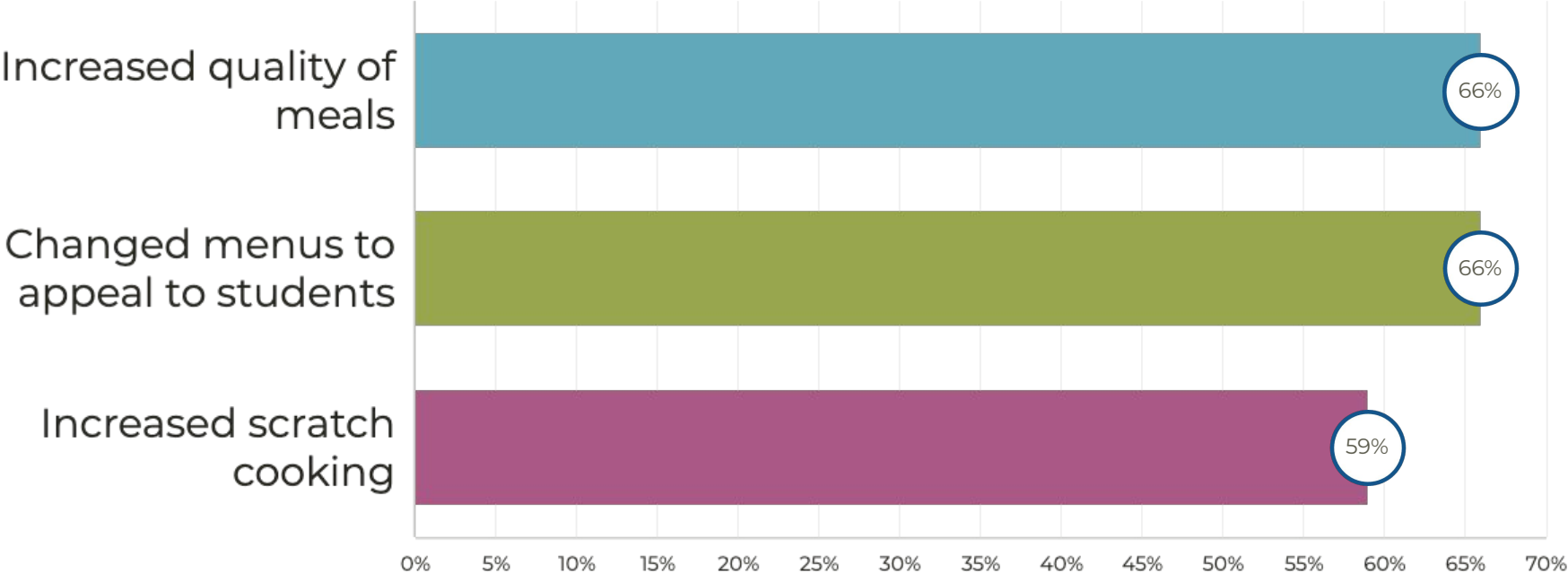
"It's a huge relief. It's huge not having to make the phone calls, not having to be collections. We want to feed kids, we don't want to collect. Not having that has been less stressful by a hundred percent as far as not just me, all the way down to the lady that sees the kid in front of them."

-- California Food Service Director, 2023

Less meal debt means more \$ available to meet other educational goals



Most Food Service Directors Report Improving School Meals



School Meals Have Improved Thanks to California's Additional Investments

Districts that had received and spent grant funds awarded for new kitchen infrastructure and training reported:

- Sourcing more locally grown produce
- Cooking more freshly prepared meals onsite
- Beginning to improve meager foodservice staff salaries and benefits
- Improving cafeterias and shortening lunch lines

In Conclusion, California's School Meals for All Has:



Increased meal participation



Reduced hunger, stigma and meal debt, particularly helping families at or near free or reduced price meal eligibility



Improved school meal quality, supporting local agriculture and beginning to improve foodservice labor conditions

Thank You!

Wendi Gosliner, DrPH, RD

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https://npi.ucanr.edu/School_Meals_for_All/