



# FIBER FAQ

## WHY FIBER?

Dietary fiber is essential for optimal health and disease prevention, and is found in foods we know support health: fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains. Deficiency is linked with type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, bowel diseases, and some cancers. Consumption of fiber-rich foods plays an important role in gut microbiome, which is also tied to chronic diseases like allergy, asthma, and more.

## WHY SCHOOL MEALS?

### The deficiency is nearly universal

Up to 97% of children\* are deficient in dietary fiber consumption

### The inadequacy is significant

Children in the U.S. consume only *half* the recommended minimum intake of fiber\*

### No standard exists

Despite naming a fiber a "nutrient of concern," the USDA has *no minimum standard* for fiber content in school meals

### The issue is widespread

Balanced's 2022 analysis of school meals found that school meals fall short of fiber adequacy by 20-35% on average

### The opportunity is huge

22.6 million children eat school lunch every day in the U.S. and 12.4 million consume school breakfast

\*NHANES 2015-2018

## HOW IT HELPS

In addition to decreasing the nutrient gap and promoting better overall health, achieving our campaign goals will positively contribute to:

### Academic Achievement

The Brookings Institution found that schools that commit to healthier menus see improved attendance, grades, test scores, and classroom behavior.

### Health Equity

Students of color are already disproportionately impacted by diseases that are linked to fiber-deficient diets, so setting standards for fiber content of school meals can support better health in those communities.

### Environment

Fiber is found in whole plant foods, which overall require less land and water to produce as compared to animal-source foods. Additionally, more seat time for students could decrease food waste.

## HOW TO SUPPORT

- Endorse the campaign as your organization and/or as an individual at [thebalanced.org.typeform.com/standforfiber](https://thebalanced.org.typeform.com/standforfiber)
- Share content like our [White Paper](#) within your network of contacts and/or on social media

Still have questions? Contact our Advocacy Manager at [andrea@balanced.org](mailto:andrea@balanced.org).