



PRESS RELEASE

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Public School Foundation Launches Fundraising Campaign to Ensure Every Student Remains Fed and Ready to Learn

Rapid City, SD ----

School districts across the country are struggling to pay off student lunch debt, and Rapid City Area Schools (RCAS) is no different. After a donation of \$25,000 by the Independent Insurance Agents of Rapid City, \$50,000 of Student Lunch Debt from the 2022-2023 school year remains unpaid. Because adequate nutrition is necessary for students to learn and develop, RCAS ensures every student who requests a lunch receives one, regardless of account balance. The Rapid City Public School Foundation (RCPSF) is committed to helping RCAS continue to serve lunch to every student every day through our Fed and Ready to Learn fundraising campaign.

After donating \$20,000 last year, Independent Insurance Agents of Rapid City made a \$25,000 donation to the Fed and Ready to Learn campaign and challenged the RCPSF to raise the remaining \$50,000. Independent Insurance agent, Mike Gould, said that he “hopes the South Dakota legislature helps solve this problem with a sustainable solution. No student learns well if they are thinking first about food. Our state has the ability and financial resources to feed students. It is time that they do so. Healthy nutrition for kids is an investment in our future.”

Black Hills Energy contributed \$5,000 to the initiative. “Black Hills Energy is proud to work with the Rapid City Public School Foundation to ensure children are served lunch regardless of their ability to pay,” said Michael Pogany, general manager of South Dakota electric operations. “No student should have to struggle to focus in class because they couldn’t afford lunch.”

“Part of the Rapid City Area School Foundation’s mission is to enhance and enrich the educational experience of students, and that begins with students who are fed and ready to learn. We are asking the community to meet this need so that RCAS can utilize its resources to enhance education programs and facilities,” states Kara Flynn, Executive Director of the Rapid City Public School Foundation. “Many people are working to solve this problem. RCAS Student Nutrition worked hard this summer to collect over \$70,000 from families with negative balances that could pay. There are also statewide coalitions working on legislation to help fund student lunches. In the meantime, we are committed to raising the final \$50,000 to cover the student lunch debt from the 2022-2023 school year.”

The Campaign will officially kick off at the November 7th RCAS Board of Education Meeting at 5:30 p.m. at RCEC (625 9th Street, Rapid City), 2nd floor.