

Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors: Supervisors Martinez, Clancy stand in solidarity with Y.E.S. school lunch justice campaign

Posted on Monday, Jul 11, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MILWAUKEE – Youth Empowered in the Struggle (Y.E.S.), the youth arm of Voces de la Frontera, is seeking an overhaul of the lunches served at Milwaukee Public Schools through its School Lunch Justice Campaign.

Supervisors Juan Miguel Martinez and Ryan Clancy, Y.E.S. Director of Youth Organizing Ari Antreassian, and a student representing Y.E.S. will speak at a press conference outside of the Milwaukee County Courthouse (901 N. 9th St.) on Tuesday, July 12 at noon to demand more progress from MPS. They will be joined by students from the Y.E.S. program in Racine and Milwaukee.

“For some children, the food they eat at school may be the only full meal that they eat all day, so it is imperative that we provide our youth with fresh, nutritious meals that are in line with their religious and dietary needs,” said Supervisor Martinez. “I applaud these students for advocating for better conditions in our schools not only for themselves, but also the many underpaid cafeteria staff they demand receive wage increases.”

“The work that these students have taken on – and the early victory that they’ve realized – is impressive,” said Supervisor Clancy. “Advocacy around food justice is vital in all institutions, from our public schools to our correctional facilities, because food is a basic human right. I’m grateful for their work and proud to be able to recognize them in this way.”

“We would like to thank the Milwaukee County Board for its act of solidarity and publicly supporting our School Lunch Justice demands,” said Eliza Palacios of the Hamilton High School Y.E.S. Chapter. “In particular, we would like to thank Supervisor Martinez and Supervisor Clancy for putting forward the citation in support. The clock is ticking. The school board and administration have indicated support for Y.E.S School Lunch Demands, however we need real progress and a real plan to implement these demands. We are calling on the city, state, and national leaders to join the struggle to provide healthy, appealing, and culturally sensitive food for the children of MPS. We need to ensure that the pressure continues, and the resources are available to make this happen.”

The students’ demands include that MPS and the MPS Board of Directors:

- Provide fresh school lunch that is cooked at the school by food service staff with locally sourced ingredients
- Provide more lunch options simultaneously
- Put a system in place that identifies and accommodates students’ personal, religious, and medical dietary needs
- Provide larger, more filling meals that leave students ready to learn, instead of hungry
- Hire more lunch staff to cook the meals and increase their wages
- Establish regular meetings with YES members to ensure demands are met and implemented with student voices at the table

The campaign was prompted after Y.E.S. surveyed more than 1,000 MPS students and found that the most pressing need cited was addressing school lunches. Y.E.S. circulated a petition outlining their demands, which garnered more than 21,000 signatures.