



February 5, 2024

2024 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY
SB0425: Maryland Meals for Achievement

BILL: SB0425: Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program Alterations (Maryland Meals for Achievement Flexibility Act of 2024)

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

POSITION: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0425

BILL ANALYSIS: Clarifying that secondary schools participating in the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program may serve breakfast in any broadly accessible part of the school; and authorizing elementary schools participating in the Program, subject to certain approval and allowances, to serve breakfast in any broadly accessible part of the school, including from "Grab and Go" carts.

Dear Chair Feldman and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) urges you to **SUPPORT** the increased flexibility for the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program, a vital program in ensuring Maryland students have access to nutritious breakfast in the classroom.

The Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) program provides state funding to supplement federal meal reimbursements so that schools can offer breakfast in the classroom for all students who qualify at no charge. Schools that have at least 40 percent of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals are eligible. School administrators credit the MMFA with improving students' test scores, behavior, attendance, and wellbeing, and parents praise the program for assisting children to prepare for their academic day¹. In addition, research demonstrates that students participating in the Maryland Meals for Achievement program have better educational performance, improved health, and

¹ MSDE. "[Maryland Meals for Achievement.](https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/SchoolandCommunityNutrition/Pages/about.aspx)"

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decreased disciplinary problems².

Increasing flexibility around breakfast options will continue to bolster this key program which has proven to be an important resource for schools throughout Maryland. The continued strengthening of this program has proven to be hugely beneficial to students across the state. Increasing the flexibility within the program will allow schools to provide more options for Maryland students. **For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports SBo425 and urges a FAVORABLE REPORT for this bill.**

The Montgomery County Food Council is a nonprofit organization that serves as the primary connection point for businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and residents around food system issues in our County. We bring together over 2,000 local and regional partners in community-wide education, advocacy, and capacity building initiatives. Our work cultivates a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable local food system by enhancing food access for the over 100,000 at risk for hunger, expanding food education opportunities for all residents, supporting our County's farms and food and beverage businesses, and addressing the impact of local food production, distribution, consumption and recycling on our natural resources

For more information, please contact Michelle Caruso, Director of Policy and Partnerships, at the email and phone number below.

² No Kid Hungry, "[Maryland Meals for Achievement report](https://state.nokidhungry.org/maryland/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2019/11/MMFA-1page-2019.pdf)"
<https://state.nokidhungry.org/maryland/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2019/11/MMFA-1page-2019.pdf>

