



"Cultivating a collaborative, sustainable, and equitable food system for all Maryland communities."

February 6, 2024
2024 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY
SB0425: Maryland Meals for Achievement

BILL: SB0425: Maryland Meals for Achievement
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
POSITION: Testimony of Support of Senate Bill 0425

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record in support of Senate Bill 0425.

This letter is submitted on behalf of the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council. The Food System Resiliency Council was established by the Maryland General Assembly during the 2021 legislative session to bring together 33 appointed council members from across the state, all with different points of entry and expertise to work toward a more resilient food system and address the food insecurity crisis due to COVID-19.

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 decreased disciplinary problems².

This program was expanded in the last legislative session, and the increased flexibility provided through this legislation will ensure program sustainability and increased student access. Thank you for the opportunity to share our support of SB 0425.

Michael J. Wilson

Co-Chair, Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

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

<https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/SchoolandCommunityNutrition/Pages/about.aspx>

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>