

Testimony in support of HB 0368 MMFA Flexibilities

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Good afternoon. My name is Jaime Hetzler and I'm the Director of Food and Nutrition for Baltimore County Public Schools.

I'll start by describing the process that my team encounters, to serve breakfast in elementary schools according to the **current** requirements. In the afternoon, the day prior to service, they pack individual coolers with food in one cooler and milk in another. So, for an elementary school with 20 classrooms, that's 40 coolers. They are then placed into large, dedicated refrigerators with individual paperwork printed for each classroom. In the morning, they deliver two bags to each room. Many classrooms are upstairs or outside in trailers, which doesn't allow for the use of a cart. So, the heavy bags are individually carried. Later, they return and pick up all the coolers from each room. As you can see, this process requires additional equipment, time, and staff. We provide one selection for each classroom, hope to get our leftovers returned, and expect teachers to properly account for meals.

This year, with staffing shortages, challenges purchasing equipment, and rising inflation, this model was simply too cumbersome. At BCPS, we **dropped** the MMFA program in **all** elementary schools and moved to grab and go service. This model has been very successful. The students can choose from a variety of items. It has decreased waste, improved quality, allowed for hot entrée items daily, removed the burden from teachers, and **increased** participation.

The grab and go service model still allows for students to eat in the classroom and breakfast after the bell. At BCPS, our participation in JUST the schools that went from in-classroom MMFA to grab and go, has increased 2.7% year to date. Our *district-wide* breakfast participation has **increased** 32% since last year. That's over **9 thousand** students per **day**. This year, we serve grab and go style in **100%** of our schools.

Thank you for your support in approving this bill.