

SB0559-APP_MACo_SUP.pdf

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Position: FAV



Senate Bill 559

Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 29, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 559. This bill provides much-needed State support to supplement federal aid in providing free in-class breakfast to Maryland students in need. The bill increases the annual State appropriation for the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program from \$7.5 million to just over \$12 million.

Research is clear: access to healthy, quality in-school meals improves students' educational experiences and learning performance. Furthermore, need and eligibility for free and reduced meals is growing statewide – as evidenced by the recently uncovered additional 111,000 students who should receive free and reduced school meals.

Counties are proud to partner with the state and federal government to help provide Maryland students in need with quality, in-class breakfast. Hundreds of Maryland schools across 23 counties currently participate in the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program (Baltimore City already has a universal breakfast program).

SB 559 provides additional annual State funding for this critical program, making a difference in the educational experience and lives of kids statewide. Counties welcome the additional support SB 559 would provide this program and our schools. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 559 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

MD Catholic Conference_SB 559_FAV HOUSE CROSS.pdf

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Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 29, 2023

SB 559

**Education – Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program –
Annual Appropriation**

House Appropriations Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 559. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state’s second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 559 would provide increased funding for the Maryland Meals for Achievement Program (MMFA), which affords schools with greater concentrations of low-income students the ability to provide breakfast to all students, free of charge. In doing so, continuity in feeding low-income students would be further ensured. This continuity would also provide participating low-income families with the ability to plan their budgets accordingly if their schools were to lose eligibility for MMFA.

Although Maryland is the wealthiest state in the country, one in eight households in Maryland face constant food insecurity. One in four households in Baltimore City are food insecure. Sadly, children and adolescents are not exempt from those statistics. School breakfast and lunch programs are essential to not only ending hunger, but for improving the health and educational outcomes of students.

Pope Francis has been very outspoken about the epidemic of food insecurity in our world. He has stated, “I invite you to make space in your heart for this emergency of respecting the God-given rights of everyone to have access to adequate food. We share what we have in Christian charity with those who face numerous obstacles to satisfy such a basic need.” He also invited “all of the institutions of the world, the Church, each of us, as one single human family, to give a voice to all of those who suffer silently from hunger, so that this voice becomes a roar which can shake the world.” (*Message for The Campaign Against Global Hunger*, December, 2013)

Maryland Catholic schools serve hundreds of breakfasts every day to their students through the MMFA program and/or the federal free breakfast and lunch programs. Our school community recognizes the important role that breakfast plays in sustaining students throughout the day and maximizing their learning potential. Nutrition programs such as MMFA assist in Catholic schools’ goal of addressing the needs of the whole child and are an important resource for students whose families are unable to provide them enough to eat. We request a favorable report for Senate Bill 559.

SB 559.Breakfast Meals for Achievement Funding HOU

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FAV

BILL: Senate Bill 559
TITLE: Education - Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation
POSITION: SUPPORT
DATE: March 29, 2023
COMMITTEE: Appropriations
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's boards of education, supports Senate Bill 559, which will ensure adequate funding for the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program by increasing the mandated appropriation required to be included in the annual state budget from \$7.5 million to \$12 million.

MABE recognizes the importance of developing healthy school environments, which includes providing high quality health and physical education programs as well as meeting the nutritional needs of students through school breakfasts, lunches, afterschool meals, and vending machine policies. The Maryland Meals for Achievement program, which began as a pilot in 1998, provides funding for schools with high concentrations of poverty to offer breakfast in the classroom daily to all students, regardless of family income. The program began in 1998 with six schools. In the 2022-2023 school year more than 580 schools are participating in the program.

Research has determined that the classroom breakfast program has a positive impact on student achievement, and is associated with decreases in tardiness and suspensions. Thousands of children from low-income households in Maryland depend on school meals for the nutrition they need to learn and grow. Unfortunately, for too long too many children and families have not taken advantage of school meal programs for reasons ranging from the cumbersome paperwork requirements to the stigma associated with participating. Fortunately, today Maryland has transitioned to using the already available Medicaid data to accurately determine the students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Federal and state standards for school nutrition continue to be reformed and enhanced to address the national epidemics of juvenile diabetes and obesity. At the same time, child hunger and inequitable access to healthy meals impacts far too many students as an obstacle to learning. Therefore, MABE also supports federal legislation and actions by the federal government to improve and increase funding for expanded access to high quality school meal programs.

Early in the pandemic, Congress gave the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) the authority to issue child nutrition waivers so that schools systems could adapt their meal programs to provide meals to students even as buildings were closed. These child nutrition waivers were to expire on June 30, 2022 which would have resulted in discontinuing breakfast, lunch and afterschool meal options for millions of students. MABE joined other state and national organizations in urging Congress to extend the child nutrition waivers so that school systems could continue to receive the federal reimbursements for the meals they serve. Thankfully, President Joe Biden signed the Keep Kids Fed Act to extend partial school meal flexibilities through the 2022-2023 school year five days before they were set to expire. However, in the absence of federal action, moving forward into FY 2024 and the 2023-2024 school year Maryland must lead by investing additional state funding to ensure the continued availability of universal access to school breakfasts and lunches for all students across the state.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 559.

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_SB0559.pdf

Uploaded by: Joshua Greenberg

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

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Legislative Officer

JOSHUA M. GREENBERG
Associate Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: **SB 559**

TITLE: Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom
Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation

SPONSOR: Senator Guzzone

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 29, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 559 – Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation. This vital legislation would provide enhanced funding for the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program.

No student should be left to attend school on an empty stomach. Students who do not receive proper nutrition generally score lower on exams, struggle more to pay attention in class, and overall experience lower quality of life. Students who cannot afford to purchase breakfast are left at a significant disadvantage which threatens their ability to perform and break out of the cycle of poverty. As a father and a former educator, Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski is committed to ensuring each and every student has their fundamental needs met.

Senate Bill 559 would significantly expand the availability of free meals to students by raising funds for the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program. If passed, this legislation would change the lives of students across the State who struggle with food insecurity. This is a significant step towards eliminating the barriers that keep Maryland's students from reaching their full potential.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 559. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

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Uploaded by: Maddie Long

Position: FAV



**Testimony in support of
Senate Bill 559: Education – Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom
Breakfast Program – Annual Appropriation**

**House Appropriations Committee
Position: Favorable**

March 29, 2023

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. We advocate for legislative and regulatory policy changes to further educational equity and build the technical capacity of everyday Marylanders to hold state and local officials accountable to their responsibilities. **Strong Schools Maryland stands in support of Senate Bill 559.**

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a World-Class system of public schools for our state’s students. We are making record-breaking investments in education and resources to support students for educational excellence. Through community school expansions and concentration of poverty grants, the Blueprint provides support and services that address the needs of children in communities with high poverty rates, high crime rates, and those that lack access to adequate health care and social services, with resources provided at the school level and in the community. HB 514 reflects these ideals by increasing funding for the Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) In-Classroom Breakfast Program.

Maryland currently leads the country in starting students’ days off right through the MMFA program. According to Maryland Hunger Solutions, in the

2022–2023 school year, 581 schools are participating in MMFA, which is up from 485 in the 2018–2019 school year.¹ Participating schools in the program have seen higher breakfast participation, improved student attendance, and improved student behavior.

Hungry students are more likely to score lower on standardized tests, repeat a grade, be suspended from school, get sick more often, and be hospitalized more frequently.² Maryland has now begun automatically adding students under Medicaid coverage to the free or reduced-price school lunches program. This new criteria of eligibility has identified a large blindspot in our counting of students in poverty. **We have been missing 1 in 9 students.**³ Appropriating more funds to the Maryland Meals for Achievement program will help expand access for Maryland students to receive the most important meal of the day.

Now more than ever, we must affirm our commitment to Maryland students and our educational investments through the Blueprint. Senate Bill 559 grants additional funds to our thriving MMFA program and sets students up for continuous success at the start of every day.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 559.

*For more information, contact Maddie Long:
maddie@strongschoolsmaryland.org*

¹ [Maryland Hunger Solutions](#)

² [No Kid Hungry](#)

³ [DLS 2023 Fiscal Briefing](#)