



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,
Appropriations Committee
February 28, 2023**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**HB0514: FAVORABLE
Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program
- Annual Appropriation**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **HB0514 Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation** to expand availability of free breakfasts for vulnerable student populations.

HB0514 increases the required annual dollar amount the Governor must include in the budget for the Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) In-Classroom Breakfast Program from \$7.5 million to \$12 million. This program under current statute is available to schools that have at least 40% of the registered students eligible for the federal free or reduced-price meal program, making breakfast available to all students in the school in an effort to complement the federal funding received by the school.

The Howard County Public School System's (HCPSS) Food and Nutrition Services staff takes their role in the development of the whole child very seriously, meeting the crucial task of providing for the nutritional needs of our students. Students require healthy, nutritious meals on a daily basis in order to function effectively.

Currently, HCPSS has 24 schools under the MMFA program, where breakfast is served in the classroom. HCPSS Food and Nutrition Services staff indicates as of the October 31, 2022, counts for free and reduced-price meal programs, there will be 31 schools in Howard County over the 40% threshold. The additional funding allotted under HB0514 to potentially expand this program to those schools is supported for its benefit to more students in the county.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of HB0514 from this Committee.