

SB 559_ Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement

Uploaded by: Alexa Thomas

Position: FAV



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
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BILL: SB 559

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

DATE: February 22, 2023

POSITION: Support

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation / Education, Energy, and the Environment

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, **supports** Senate Bill 559.

This legislation increases the annual appropriation for the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program from \$7,550,000 to \$12,050,000.

According to Maryland Hunger Solutions, Maryland leads the country in ensuring that students can start the day ready to learn with the Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) program. This program provides state funds to leverage and supplement federal funds for breakfast in the classrooms for all students. A school is eligible when at least 40% of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

PSSAM strongly supports this legislation and the State's generous participation. Based on our experiences during Covid in feeding students and families, we are extremely confident that all eligible schools will be able to implement such an ambitious program effectively and efficiently.

The research on free meals for all students is vast and universally confirms the positive impact on student achievement, including academics and behavior. According to Madelein Levin and Jessie Hewins, the authors of *Universal Free School Meals: Ensuring That All Children are Able to Learn*, their findings include increased participation in meal programs, in part due to the removal of the stigma of "free lunch." In addition, there is no room for error in identifying food-challenged students with the elimination of paper applications. Students in school meal programs are also more likely to eat healthier foods, including fruits, vegetables, and milk. In

turn, these healthier eating habits positively impact lower childhood obesity. Removing the transaction of paying for meals also results in more time for students to eat. According to Levin and Hewins, families also benefit strongly from free meal programs as it reduces their financial burden of purchasing two meals a day for their children.

Lastly, research shows that a consistently well-fed student is a better student, test-taker and participant in school. Participation in the free meal programs is also linked to fewer absences, increased attention span, decreased tardiness and behavior problems, and overall, an improved school environment.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 559 and urges a favorable report.

SB 559 - Maryland Food Bank - SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Anne Wallerstedt

Position: FAV

SB 559

**Primary and Secondary Education – Breakfast and Lunch Programs – Universal Expansion
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 22, 2023**

SUPPORT

Senate Bill 559 fully funds the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program by increases its annual appropriation from \$7,550,000 to \$12,050,000.

The Maryland Food Bank estimates that 1 in 3 Marylanders are at risk of food insecurity. A person who is food insecure does not have consistent access to healthy and nutritious food on any given day, and this problem persists in every area of the state. There are also communities and populations who are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, including families with children and communities of color. The causes of food insecurity are complex and often include additional factors such as low income, lack of reliable transportation, and missing community resources such as grocery stores.

The economic stability of a child’s family should not dictate whether they are able to eat nutritious food every day, yet for too many Marylanders this is the reality. 2 in 5 Maryland families making less than \$35,000 a year are considered food insufficient. However, it is not just families in the lowest income bracket who are struggling. 37% of all Marylanders are currently finding it difficult to afford their basic household necessities – including food, and more alarming is that 40% of Maryland families report that their children are not eating enough because food is unaffordable.

The Maryland Food Bank sees firsthand the absolute beneficial impact of meals that are served while children are at schools or other safe community centers through our Supper Club, which served 480,000 meals at 34 sites to children after school in FY 22, and our Summer Club, which served 73,000 meals at 41 sites to children during the summer of 2022. Further, we operate food pantries at 178 K-12 schools across the state, where we distributed the equivalent of 2.2 million meals last year. The sheer magnitude of need is present in these programs, and the Maryland Food Bank knows that our efforts, while substantial, cannot alone solve child food insecurity in the state, as a crucial time of day for children to eat is missing – namely, breakfast.

Maryland has a real opportunity to equitably even the education field for thousands of students who may need their schools to provide them the only healthy meals their family can afford. By ensuring that schools who want to participate in the MMFA program can provide breakfast to students in the way that makes the most practical sense – whether in the classroom or “grab-and-go,” it removes any stigma that might be perceived and ensures that all children start the day with the same foundation of nutritious foods that can fuel their learning.

The Maryland Food Bank appreciates your consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 559.

NKH MD_MD SB 0559_Statement of Support_FINAL - Wri

Uploaded by: Ayesha Holmes

Position: FAV



MARYLAND

SB0559 Testimony IN FAVOR
Ayesha B. Holmes, Maryland Director
aholmes@Strength.org

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Re: Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Senate Bill 0559

February 22, 2023

Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Committee,

No Kid Hungry Maryland writes in support of SB 0559 which proposes an increased investment of \$4.5 million to allow for all eligible schools to participate in the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program or MMFA.

Through the No Kid Hungry Maryland campaign, we work with partners, lawmakers, educators, and businesses to identify and eliminate the barriers that may prevent children and families from accessing healthy and nutritious meals. In 2022, approximately 1 in 8 children in Maryland could face hunger this year, and programs like MMFA and school breakfast play a critical role in reducing food insecurity for children and Maryland families. However, in June 2022, our partners at the MD Food Bank report that in Maryland, roughly 50% of families, making less than \$35,000 are food insecure, and overall income brackets, almost 19% are facing food insecurity.¹ This data, tells us that a significant number of children in Maryland risk facing hunger this year. Programs like MMFA and school breakfast play a critical role in reducing food insecurity for children and Maryland families.

The policy outlined in SB 0559 is proven and effective. MMFA is an important tool with a proven track record across the state, but at current funding levels, there are more than 120 eligible schools that could benefit from MMFA left out of the program.

Research shows that when kids start the day hungry, it's harder to focus in class. Hunger can impact a child's ability to achieve. This shows up in lower test scores, lower attendance, and other negative outcomes. School Breakfast is critical to a child's health and academic success. The traditional method of serving the meal before the school day starts, however, can be ineffective. As a result, in Maryland, about 30% of children are able to take advantage of breakfast, when served before the start of the school day.

Breakfast After the Bell is a proven and effective strategy to make sure kids from low-income families can get the food they need to thrive. Making breakfast a part of the regular school day,

¹ MFB-Strategy-Group-Research-Report-Food-Insecurity-in-Maryland.pdf



MARYLAND

just like lunch, has a powerful effect on kids. MMFA makes it possible for schools to serve breakfast in a manner is efficient and effective in increasing a child's ability to participate.

What started as a modest breakfast pilot project in 1998 with just six schools has grown to benefit more than 600 schools 24 years later. MMFA has had a lasting positive impact on students across the state, both in ending hunger and in academic achievement.

To be eligible for MMFA funding, a school must have at least 40% of its students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. MMFA enables these schools to offer all students school breakfast at no cost; it also helps schools shift the time they serve breakfast, serving it after the bell as part of the school day.

MMFA works! Nearly 64% of students in MMFA schools participate in the school breakfast program, compared with 31% of students in Maryland public schools that do not participate. Studies also show that students who eat breakfast after the bell demonstrate better educational performance, improved health, and a decrease in discipline problems.

An additional \$4.5 million over the next four fiscal years in the Maryland State Department of Education's Aid to Education Budget for MMFA would permit 100% of high-poverty schools not utilizing the federal Community Eligibility Program to participate by FY 2024.

It also makes economic sense for Maryland schools. An increase in participation due to MMFA investments could improve our schools' food and nutrition services budgets and provide a significant return on investment for the state.

No Kid Hungry Maryland encourages the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee to favorably report out on SB 0559, so that more students can start the school day ready to learn.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. Should you have any questions, or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 410-205-1016 or at aholmes@strength.org.

With Gratitude,

Ayesha B. Holmes
Maryland Director
No Kid Hungry

SB559CarlaGarcia_fav..pdf

Uploaded by: Carla Garcia

Position: FAV

Carla Garcia- Community School Liaison for South Lake Elementary in Montgomery County, MD

I strongly support the Maryland Meals for Achievement bill which is an essential investment for the health and academic success of our South Lake scholars. South Lake Elementary, located in the heart of Gaithersburg, Maryland, is home to over 820 students and out of those students, 82% qualify for free or reduced lunch and breakfast. Our students rely on breakfast in the classroom because food insecurity is one of the top trending issues within our community. As a Community School Liaison, I receive calls and texts from parents inquiring about food distributions and resources on a daily basis. This access to universal breakfast in each classroom has been proven to positively impact the attention span, attendance, and scores of our students.

Many of our South Lake families are immigrants who are working 2 to 3 jobs and are barely getting by. A single mom, Maria, who immigrated from El Salvador last fall, currently has a first grader at South Lake. She works 7AM-7PM and relies on the school to nutritiously feed her child. This first grader starts his day at 6:00AM where he is dropped off at a local babysitter's apartment alongside 8 other children. Breakfast is not provided by the babysitter unless an additional fee is paid which is not financially feasible for Maria. Once this child arrives to school, he is eagerly greeted by Mrs. Ricketts at the door and a tray full of food, milk, and juice boxes. The funding to support Maryland Meals for Achievement is vital for our community and we need to continue this across our state.

MAND Testimony 2023 - Support - Senate Bill 559 -

Uploaded by: Daniel Shattuck

Position: FAV

MARYLAND ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS



Date: February 22, 2023
Bill: Senate Bill 559 - Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation
Committee: Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair
Position: **Support**

The Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND) represents nearly 1200 Registered & Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists in the state who work in a variety of facilities and agencies to provide education related to nutrition for the benefit of the health our citizens. We would like to support **Senate Bill 559 - Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation.**

The bill will Increase “the appropriation required by the Governor for the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program from \$7,550,000 to \$12,050,000 in the annual budget bill.”

Food insecurity disrupts food intake or eating patterns due to a lack of money or resources. Food insecurity among children has been associated with adverse health, social, and academic outcomes. Consequently, in 2015, 16.6% of households with children were classified as food insecure (adults, children, or both) in 7.8 percent of all families with children (1). The incidence of food insecurity increased during the Covid pandemic by 18%. Child nutrition programs improve diet quality, and academic performance for low-income and food-insecure households.

School meal programs such as this and other child nutrition programs improve food security. They do so by augmenting overall household resources and providing children with a regular source of nutritious meals. Understanding the role that school meal programs play in the dietary adequacy of children at risk for food insecurity helps assess program effectiveness. (2)

The Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recognizes that many of the populations we serve are at risk for food insecurity. The Academy's policy recommendations for healthy food systems and access includes Food Security. Increasing access to affordable, healthy foods in communities and schools, helps to link healthy food to positive health outcomes.

For these reasons, we support the goals and aims of **Senate Bill 559** and ask for a FAVORABLE report.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dr. Glenda L. Lindsey, Dr. PH, MS, RDN, LDN
Public Policy Coordinator
glendalindsey@msn.com

Ashley Lewis, RDN
MAND President
president@eatwellmd.org

References:

1. Katherine Ralston, Katie Treen, Alisha Coleman-Jensen, and Joanne Guthrie; Children's Food Security and USDA Child Nutrition Programs United States Department of Agriculture Summary https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84003/eib-174_summary.pdf, Retrieved February 15, 2022
2. Wolfson JA, Leung CW. Food insecurity and COVID-19: disparities in early effects for U.S. adults. *Nutrients*. 2020;12(6):1648. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu12061648> Crossref, Google Scholar

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_SB0559.pdf

Uploaded by: Elisabeth Sachs

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
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: Budget and Taxation

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 22, 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.

MD Catholic Conference_SB 559_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE**

February 22, 2023

SB 559

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

**Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
Senate Education, Energy & The Environment 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.pdf

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FAV

BILL: Senate Bill 559
TITLE: Education - Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation
POSITION: SUPPORT
DATE: February 22, 2023
COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation
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.

MD Hunger Solutions - Support for SB 559 - Maryland

Uploaded by: Julia Gross

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 559

Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation
Budget and Taxation Committee
February 22, 2023

Maryland Hunger Solutions respectfully urges your support of SB 559 so that more high-poverty schools will have access to state funds to provide school breakfast after the bell at no cost to all their students.

SB 559 aims to fully fund Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA), which is an existing state-funded program that allows schools with 40 percent or higher free and reduced-price meal enrollment to serve school breakfast at no cost to all of their students in the classroom or through another after the bell model, such as “grab and go” or second chance breakfast.

The National School Breakfast Program a critical tool in combatting childhood hunger. Decades of research show that children who participate in school breakfast are less likely to experience food insecurity, demonstrate improved academic performance, consume a healthier overall diet, and are less likely to be late to or absent from school.¹

Despite these important benefits, the School Breakfast Program fails to reach many low-income students who need it most. In fact, during the 2019-2020 school year, only 62.1% of school lunch participants also participated in school breakfast.²

The reason for this is simple. In many schools, school breakfast is served in the cafeteria before the school day begins. As a result, many of the students miss out on school breakfast due to transportation issues like incompatible bus or family schedules. In addition to the timing of meal service, the cost of the meal and stigma associated with the program also often prevent students from participating.

Since its creation in 1998, MMFA has succeeded in increasing access to and participation in the School Breakfast Program by targeting and removing all three of these main barriers, ensuring that students are able to start their day well-nourished and ready to learn. Unfortunately, due to a lack of state funding, not every eligible school is currently able to participate in MMFA.

SB 559 will strengthen MMFA by providing the funding needed to allow all eligible schools to receive funds to serve breakfast after the bell at no cost to students and their families.

It’s time for the state to make this important investment in the health and academic success of Maryland children this upcoming school year and for years to come.

As such, Maryland Hunger Solutions urges a favorable report on SB 559. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Food Research and Action Center, Breakfast for Learning (Available at <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/breakfastforlearning-1.pdf>) and Breakfast for Health (Available at <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/breakfastforhealth-1.pdf>).

² Maryland Hunger Solutions, 2020 Maryland School Breakfast Report (Available at <https://www.mdhungersolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/MDHS-Breakfast-Report-2021.pdf>).

SB559_TestimonySupport_CapitalAreaFoodBank_2.22.23

Uploaded by: Julia Lemp

Position: FAV

Julia Lemp, Advocacy and Public Policy Specialist, Capital Area Food Bank
SB559 – Maryland Meals for Achievement
Budget and Taxation Committee
Hearing Date 2/22/2023 at 1pm
Testimony of SUPPORT

Chair Guzzone and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Capital Area Food Bank, we offer our support for SB559 to increase the Maryland Meals for Achievement Appropriation to provide in-classroom breakfasts to more Maryland students.

The Capital Area Food Bank serves over 200,000 food insecure residents in the two largest counties in Maryland, Prince George's and Montgomery. Last year, we distributed over 23 million meals to Maryland clients through a partner network of over 180 nonprofit organizations and more than 150 direct distribution sites.

Each year, the Capital Area Food Bank releases a Hunger Report – a comprehensive study that looks at food insecurity across the food bank's service area. One key finding from our 2022 Hunger Report was that Households with children are twice as likely to be affected by food insecurity. Survey results revealed that 49% of all households with children across the region experienced food insecurity at some point during the last year, as opposed to only 25% of households without children.

Households with young people have long been overrepresented among those served by the food bank. For parents and grandparents raising children and young adults in a region with a high cost of living, budgets can easily become stretched, and data tell us that when resources are tight, food is frequently one of the first things to be cut back.

That's why the food bank operates out-of-school and summer meal distributions, to help support families in getting the meals and groceries they need to thrive. However, we also know many of the families we serve rely on in-school meals, including in-classroom breakfasts, as a reliable, healthy source of food for their children.

The Maryland Meals for Achievement program is a successful state program that allows high-poverty schools to provide free in-classroom breakfast to all students. Over 600 schools currently participate in the program. However, approximately three hundred additional high-poverty schools are eligible, but unable to participate in MMFA due to insufficient funding. This means students from low-income households are going without the meals they need to focus on their education, maintain healthy happy lifestyles, and support their overall well-being.

This bill will increase the MMFA appropriation by \$4.5 million, allowing for **all** eligible schools to participate in the program. Maryland must support students in ensuring they have the foods they need to thrive, especially the most important meal of the day – school breakfast. We strongly encourage a favorable report on SB559, and welcome any questions from the committee. Thank you.

SB 559_MD Center on Economic Policy_FAV .pdf

Uploaded by: Kali Schumitz

Position: FAV

Expanding Maryland Meals for Achievement Would Feed More Students

Given before the Budget and Taxation and Energy, Education and the Environment Committees
Position Statement in Support of Senate Bill 559

Free breakfast offered at school is often the only way many Maryland children are able to get a healthy start to the day. Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) helps schools where 40 percent or more of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals by giving all students an adequate opportunity to eat a healthy breakfast. Eating breakfast is essential to helping children succeed in school and, in turn, helps Maryland's long-term economic success.ⁱ However, due to limited funding, many schools that are eligible and apply to participate in the program are not able to. Senate Bill 559 would ensure that there is funding each year for MMFA to reach more students who need breakfast. **For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports Senate Bill 559.**

In the traditional school breakfast program model, breakfast is served before the start of the school day. However, due to transportation issues, such as school bus routes and family schedules, many students do not arrive in school on time to eat breakfast before the first bell. As a result, those students stay hungry for the rest of the morning despite having access to free breakfast at their school.

Low-income students may also face stigma when participating in the free breakfast program, which may deter them from getting the food and nutrition they need. Maryland Meals for Achievement has helped alleviate both of these issues by providing all students' access to breakfast free of charge after the first bell so that more of them can start the day off right.

Currently, 581 schools are participating in the MMFA up from 485 schools which participated in school year 2018-2019.ⁱⁱ However, there are 618 public schools in Maryland that qualify for the program, excluding schools that are able to provide free school meals to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision. Maryland should continue to increase funding for this program so that more qualifying schools can participate and serve more students.

Ensuring that students who need it have access to meals at school is an effective way for Maryland to help struggling families make ends meet. Providing funding for more eligible schools to participate in Maryland Meals for Achievement program would feed more students. Studies show that students who regularly eat breakfast perform better academically, have fewer behavioral problems, which ultimately helps ensure that students stay in school and earn the diplomas they need to go onto higher education or enter the workforce. Maryland is especially dependent on skilled and highly educated workers, so it is essential we're doing everything we can to ensure the success of the next generation of Maryland workers.

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Committee give a favorable report to Senate Bill 559.

Equity Impact Analysis: Senate Bill 559

Bill summary

House Bill 514 would increase the annual appropriation for the Maryland Meals for Achievement program to \$12 million. If approved, Senate Bill 559 would ensure that all eligible schools can participate in the program.

Background

The Maryland Meals for Achievement program provides breakfast in the classroom for all students at no cost to their family. A school is eligible when at least 40 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. During this current school year, 581 schools currently participate in the program. However, there are 618 public schools in Maryland that qualify for the program, excluding schools that are able to provide free school meals to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision. Despite having access to free breakfast, many students cannot arrive to school in time to eat breakfast and those students will stay hungry for the rest of the morning. Schools that have been able to participate in the program have reported significantly higher participation in their breakfast program. As a result, these schools have seen improvement in student attendance as well as improvement in student behavior. Maryland should continue to increase funding for this program so that more qualifying schools can participate and serve more students.

Equity Implications

Due to transportation issues such as school bus routes and family schedules, many students do not arrive at school in time to eat breakfast before the first bell. Additionally, low-income students may also face stigma when participating in the free breakfast program, which may deter them from getting the food and nutrition they need. When kids forgo eating breakfast, they remain hungry for the remainder of the morning and this can directly impact their academic performance. Data shows that students of color benefit the most from school meal programs. Maryland ensuring that students who need it have access to meals at school is an effective way to help struggling Marylanders.

Impact

Senate Bill 559 would likely **improve racial and economic equity** in Maryland.

ⁱ Food Research and Action Center, Research Brief: Breakfast For Learning <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/breakfastforlearning-1.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Maryland Hunger Solutions, Maryland Meals for Achievement. <https://www.mdhungersolutions.org/federal-nutrition-programs/school-breakfast-program-sbp/maryland-meals-for-achievement/>

SB0559-BT_MACo_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Kinnally

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 559

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

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget and Taxation and Education,
Energy, and the Environment Committees

Date: February 22, 2023

From: Brianna January and Kevin Kinnally

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.

FR Official 22-23 (CEP schools adjusted).pdf

Uploaded by: Laurie Taylor-Mitchell

Position: FAV

Site#	Site Name	Enrollment	Free	Reduced	Paid	Total F/R	F&R %	CEP 22-23
1302	Arbutus Elem	387	350	0	37	350	90.44%	Yes
1356	Arbutus Middle	970	474	71	425	545	56.19%	No
1307	Baltimore Highlands Elem	523	523	0	0	523	100.00%	Yes
1517	Battle Grove Elem	322	322	0	0	322	100.00%	Yes
1215	Battle Monument School	62	52	0	10	52	83.87%	Yes
1206	Bear Creek Elem	468	468	0	0	468	100.00%	Yes
0303	Bedford Elem	296	283	0	13	283	95.61%	Yes
1205	Berkshire Elem	471	471	0	0	471	100.00%	Yes
0062	Campfield Ely CHHD Lrn/Dev	352	321	0	31	321	91.19%	Yes
1106	Carney Elem	522	507	0	15	507	97.13%	Yes
1001	Carroll Manor Elem	358	23	5	330	28	7.82%	No
0069	Catonsville Ctr Alt Studies	60	60	0	0	60	100.00%	Yes
0101	Catonsville Elem	649	307	34	308	341	52.54%	No
0174	Catonsville High	1729	663	73	993	736	42.57%	No
0151	Catonsville Middle	805	273	51	481	324	40.25%	No
0408	Cedarmere Elem	549	287	49	213	336	61.20%	No
0113	Chadwick Elem	606	593	0	13	593	97.85%	Yes
1107	Chapel Hill Elem	565	107	20	438	127	22.48%	No
1212	Charlesmont Elem	385	385	0	0	385	100.00%	Yes
1507	Chase Elem	358	315	0	43	315	87.99%	Yes
0404	Chatsworth School	293	83	31	179	114	38.91%	No
1574	Chesapeake High	1047	1012	0	35	1012	96.66%	Yes
1511	Chesapeake Terrace Elem	330	111	19	200	130	39.39%	No
0207	Church Lane Elem of Tech	307	276	0	31	276	89.90%	Yes
0853	Cockeysville Middle	840	291	61	488	352	41.90%	No
1503	Colgate Elem	502	502	0	0	502	100.00%	Yes
0916	Cromwell Valley Reg Magnet	396	118	21	257	139	35.10%	No
0075	Crossroads Center	30	30	0	0	30	100.00%	Yes
1525	Deep Creek Elem	417	417	0	0	417	100.00%	Yes
1557	Deep Creek Middle	752	752	0	0	752	100.00%	Yes
0216	Deer Park Elem	414	382	0	32	382	92.27%	Yes
0254	Deer Park Middle and Mgnt	1322	1084	0	238	1084	82.00%	Yes
0112	Dogwood Elem	490	490	0	0	490	100.00%	Yes
0872	Dulaney High	1821	505	96	1220	601	33.00%	No
0953	Dumbarton Middle	1073	305	36	732	341	31.78%	No
1202	Dundalk Elem	743	743	0	0	743	100.00%	Yes
1273	Dundalk High	2193	1977	0	216	1977	90.15%	Yes
1251	Dundalk Middle	860	825	0	35	825	95.93%	Yes
1575	Eastern Technical High	1262	238	74	950	312	24.72%	No
1502	Edgemere Elem	387	148	25	214	173	44.70%	No
0104	Edmondson Heights Elem	559	559	0	0	559	100.00%	Yes
1405	Elmwood Elem	465	452	0	13	452	97.20%	Yes
1508	Essex Elem	459	300	32	127	332	72.33%	No
0204	Featherbed Lane Elem	544	544	0	0	544	100.00%	Yes
0501	Fifth District Elem	280	38	8	234	46	16.43%	No
0308	Fort Garrison Elem	272	52	9	211	61	22.43%	No
0403	Franklin Elem	409	156	23	230	179	43.77%	No
0472	Franklin High	1504	683	112	709	795	52.86%	No
0451	Franklin Middle	1153	622	96	435	718	62.27%	No
1404	Fullerton Elem	411	211	27	173	238	57.91%	No
1255	Gen John Stricker Middle	745	745	0	0	745	100.00%	Yes
0975	George Washington Carver Ctr	984	205	56	723	261	26.52%	No
1518	Glenmar Elem	278	236	0	42	236	84.89%	Yes
0407	Glyndon Elem	537	494	0	43	494	91.99%	Yes
1451	Golden Ring Middle	903	839	0	64	839	92.91%	Yes
1210	Grange Elem	483	483	0	0	483	100.00%	Yes
1111	Gunpowder Elem	510	183	34	293	217	42.55%	No
1313	Halethorpe Elem	273	238	0	35	238	87.18%	Yes
0912	Halstead Academy	515	515	0	0	515	100.00%	Yes
0911	Hampton Elem	773	295	44	434	339	43.86%	No
0915	Harford Hills Elem	396	208	39	149	247	62.37%	No
1515	Hawthorne Elem	491	491	0	0	491	100.00%	Yes

Site#	Site Name	Enrollment	Free	Reduced	Paid	Total F/R	F&R %	CEP 22-23
0209	Hebbville Elem	450	391	0	59	391	86.89%	Yes
0772	Hereford High	1225	125	25	1075	150	12.24%	No
0855	Hereford Middle	903	95	17	791	112	12.40%	No
0214	Hernwood Elem	327	259	0	68	259	79.20%	Yes
0115	Hillcrest Elem	652	196	28	428	224	34.36%	No
1253	Holabird Middle	912	884	0	28	884	96.93%	Yes
1113	Honeygo Elem	711	170	46	495	216	30.38%	No
1002	Jacksonville Elem	502	22	9	471	31	6.18%	No
0105	Johnnycake Elem	552	547	0	5	547	99.09%	Yes
1109	Joppaview Elem	528	252	40	236	292	55.30%	No
1572	Kenwood High	1908	1739	0	169	1739	91.14%	Yes
1104	Kingsville Elem	301	25	10	266	35	11.63%	No
1311	Lansdowne Elem	598	598	0	0	598	100.00%	Yes
1371	Lansdowne High and Bus Adm	1410	1215	0	195	1215	86.17%	Yes
1351	Lansdowne Middle	869	790	0	79	790	90.91%	Yes
0973	Loch Raven High	891	446	57	388	503	56.45%	No
0954	Loch Raven Technical Acad	781	696	0	85	696	89.12%	Yes
1217	Logan Elem	529	529	0	0	529	100.00%	Yes
0803	Lutherville Laboratory	377	128	8	241	136	36.07%	No
0410	Lyons Mills Elem	622	287	37	298	324	52.09%	No
0111	Maiden Choice School	118	100	0	18	100	84.75%	Yes
1512	Mars Estates Elem	316	316	0	0	316	100.00%	Yes
1506	Martin Blvd Elem	247	247	0	0	247	100.00%	Yes
0814	Mays Chapel Elem	565	163	24	378	187	33.10%	No
1403	McCormick Elem	340	340	0	0	340	100.00%	Yes
0070	Meadowood Educ Ctr	19	19	0	0	19	100.00%	Yes
1556	Middle River Middle	978	888	0	90	888	90.80%	Yes
1520	Middleborough Elem	295	138	12	145	150	50.85%	No
1514	Middlesex Elem	373	373	0	0	373	100.00%	Yes
0307	Milbrook Elem	348	321	0	27	321	92.24%	Yes
0271	Milford Mill Academy	1324	1083	0	241	1083	81.80%	Yes
0217	New Town Elem	809	440	54	315	494	61.06%	No
0473	New Town High	1316	627	96	593	723	54.94%	No
1207	Norwood Elem	524	505	0	19	505	96.37%	Yes
0252	NW Acad of Health Sciences	759	679	0	80	679	89.46%	Yes
0910	Oakleigh Elem	502	497	0	5	497	99.00%	Yes
1534	Oliver Beach Elem	148	65	14	69	79	53.38%	No
1519	Orems Elem	366	332	0	34	332	90.71%	Yes
1473	Overlea High	1365	1267	0	98	1267	92.82%	Yes
0402	Owings Mills Elem	745	662	0	83	662	88.86%	Yes
0452	Owings Mills High	1199	706	82	411	788	65.72%	No
0810	Padonia International	565	395	53	117	448	79.29%	No
0972	Parkville High	2200	1215	158	827	1373	62.41%	No
1452	Parkville Middle	999	478	74	447	552	55.26%	No
1272	Patapsco High and Ctr for Arts	1312	1204	0	108	1204	91.77%	Yes
1105	Perry Hall Elem	443	162	53	228	215	48.53%	No
1171	Perry Hall High	2029	801	122	1106	923	45.49%	No
1151	Perry Hall Middle	1754	598	113	1043	711	40.54%	No
0371	Pikesville High	895	352	62	481	414	46.26%	No
0352	Pikesville Middle	967	779	0	188	779	80.56%	Yes
0921	Pine Grove Elem	503	212	23	268	235	46.72%	No
0957	Pine Grove Middle	916	446	71	399	517	56.44%	No
0811	Pinewood Elem	555	64	14	477	78	14.05%	No
0909	Pleasant Plains Elem	527	527	0	0	527	100.00%	Yes
0808	Pot Springs Elem	436	179	29	228	208	47.71%	No
0210	Powhatan Elem	241	238	0	3	238	98.76%	Yes
0601	Prettyboy Elem	400	45	4	351	49	12.25%	No
0202	Randallstown Elem	330	305	0	25	305	92.42%	Yes
0272	Randallstown High	1159	584	96	479	680	58.67%	No
1406	Red House Run Elem	615	550	0	65	550	89.43%	Yes
0406	Reisterstown Elem	507	305	37	165	342	67.46%	No
1310	Relay Elem	609	312	34	263	346	56.81%	No

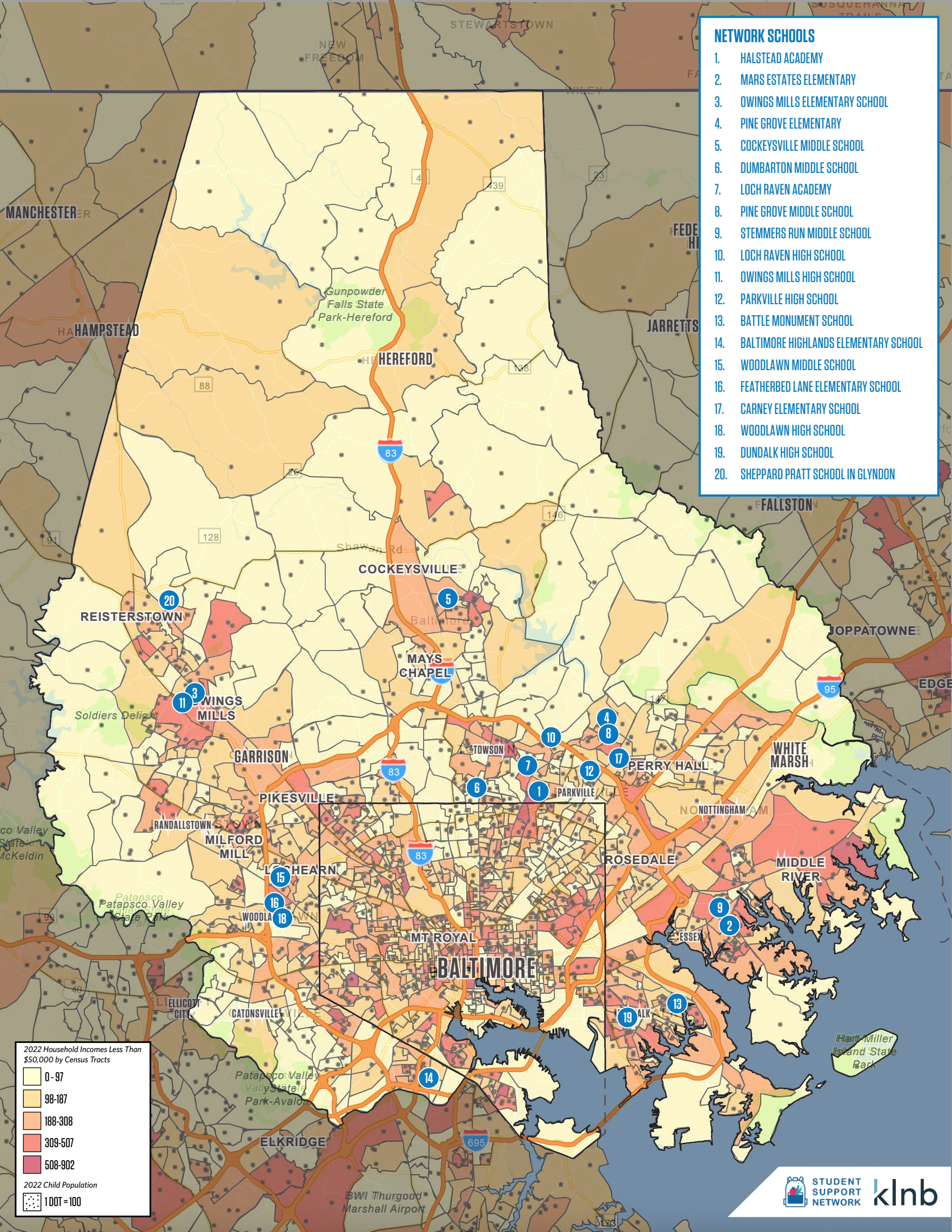
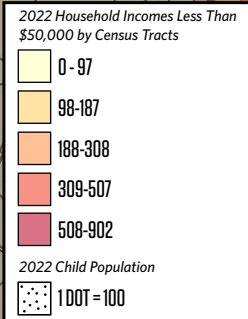
Site#	Site Name	Enrollment	Free	Reduced	Paid	Total F/R	F&R %	CEP 22-23
0809	Riderwood Elem	395	37	3	355	40	10.13%	No
0922	Ridge Ruxton School	104	55	4	45	59	56.73%	No
0852	Ridgely Middle	1061	186	36	839	222	20.92%	No
1308	Riverview Elem	546	546	0	0	546	100.00%	Yes
0907	Rodgers Forge Elem	396	46	4	346	50	12.63%	No
0072	Rosedale Center	52	52	0	0	52	100.00%	Yes
1407	Rossville Elem	613	309	46	258	355	57.91%	No
1527	Sandalwood Elem	450	450	0	0	450	100.00%	Yes
1216	Sandy Plains Elem	538	538	0	0	538	100.00%	Yes
0206	Scotts Branch Elem	469	469	0	0	469	100.00%	Yes
1531	Seneca Elem	368	334	0	34	334	90.76%	Yes
1110	Seven Oaks Elem	470	179	27	264	206	43.83%	No
0701	Seventh District Elem	346	48	5	293	53	15.32%	No
1409	Shady Springs Elem	373	369	0	4	369	98.93%	Yes
0155	Southwest Academy	739	692	0	47	692	93.64%	Yes
0801	Sparks Elem	472	50	9	413	59	12.50%	No
1573	Sparrows Point High	1146	447	57	642	504	43.98%	No
1559	Sparrows Point Middle	561	272	33	256	305	54.37%	No
1554	Stemmers Run Middle	838	838	0	0	838	100.00%	Yes
0905	Stoneleigh Elem	664	115	18	531	133	20.03%	No
0353	Sudbrook Magnet Middle	929	395	70	464	465	50.05%	No
0310	Summit Park Elem	328	97	15	216	112	34.15%	No
1513	Sussex Elem	430	430	0	0	430	100.00%	Yes
0405	Timber Grove Elem	543	502	0	41	502	92.45%	Yes
0805	Timonium Elem	452	63	15	374	78	17.26%	No
0971	Towson High	1676	383	60	1233	443	26.43%	No
1505	Victory Villa Elem	659	659	0	0	659	100.00%	Yes
0908	Villa Cresta Elem	637	330	37	270	367	57.61%	No
1533	Vincent Farm Elementary	735	339	45	351	384	52.24%	No
0813	Warren Elem	379	193	38	148	231	60.95%	No
0219	Watershed Public Charter	287	93	20	174	113	39.37%	No
0304	Wellwood International Mgmt	462	255	42	165	297	64.29%	No
0925	West Towson Elem	382	41	1	340	42	10.99%	No
0102	Westchester Elem	659	169	27	463	196	29.74%	No
0175	Western Sch of Tech/Env Sci	942	297	80	565	377	40.02%	No
0103	Westowne Elem	676	381	24	271	405	59.91%	No
0923	White Oak School	51	51	0	0	51	100.00%	Yes
0213	Winand Elem	451	395	0	56	395	87.58%	Yes
0256	Windsor Mill Middle	626	495	0	131	495	79.07%	Yes
0211	Winfield Elem	420	407	0	13	407	96.90%	Yes
0116	Woodbridge Elem	451	272	37	142	309	68.51%	No
0311	Woodholme Elementary	696	612	0	84	612	87.93%	Yes
0172	Woodlawn High Ctr for PreEng	1815	1670	0	145	1670	92.01%	Yes
0253	Woodlawn Middle	633	628	0	5	628	99.21%	Yes
0205	Woodmoor Elem	554	552	0	2	552	99.64%	Yes
		111,000	70,276	3,401	37,323	73,677	66.38%	

SSN_Heat_Map_Network_Schools_2022Final.pdf

Uploaded by: Laurie Taylor-Mitchell

Position: FAV

- ### NETWORK SCHOOLS
1. HALSTEAD ACADEMY
 2. MARS ESTATES ELEMENTARY
 3. OWINGS MILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 4. PINE GROVE ELEMENTARY
 5. COCKEYSVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL
 6. DUMBARTON MIDDLE SCHOOL
 7. LOCH RAVEN ACADEMY
 8. PINE GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL
 9. STEMMERS RUN MIDDLE SCHOOL
 10. LOCH RAVEN HIGH SCHOOL
 11. OWINGS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL
 12. PARKVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
 13. BATTLE MONUMENT SCHOOL
 14. BALTIMORE HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 15. WOODLAWN MIDDLE SCHOOL
 16. FEATHERBED LANE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 17. CARNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 18. WOODLAWN HIGH SCHOOL
 19. DUNDALK HIGH SCHOOL
 20. SHEPPARD PRATT SCHOOL IN GLYNDON



SB0559_COG FARM Committee_Fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Lindsay Smith

Position: FAV



February 21, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 559 – Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation

Dear Senator Guzzone:

On behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) [Food and Regional Agriculture Member \(FARM\) Policy Committee](#), we are writing to offer our support for SB 559 – Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation. As the association of local governments in the metropolitan Washington region, COG supports measures that will strengthen programs that support childhood nutrition and well-being. This includes using federal, state, and local legislative efforts to make access to school meals free for all students in the region.

SB 559 would increase the Governor’s required annual appropriation to support Maryland Meals for Achievement’s (MMFA) In-Classroom Breakfast Program from \$7,550,000 to \$12,050,000 in the annual budget bill. MMFA provides state funding to supplement federal meal reimbursements so that participating schools can offer free breakfast in the classroom for all students. It also supports investments in the minor equipment required to do this. Participating schools see higher breakfast participation and improved student attendance and behavior. We know that good nutrition is one foundation for being ready to learn. A school is eligible to apply when at least 40 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. MMFA has never been fully funded. Increased funding would allow a greater number of eligible schools to participate.

COG’s FARM Policy Committee is supportive of SB 559 – Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation for its expanded investment in childhood food security, nutrition, and well-being.

Please contact Lindsay Smith, COG’s Regional Food Systems Planner at (202) 962-3309 or lsmith@mwcog.org if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Stehle'.

Jon Stehle
Chair, FARM Policy Committee
Councilmember
City of Fairfax, Virginia

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Kennedy'.

Kate Kennedy
Vice Chair, FARM Policy Committee
Councilmember
City of College Park, Maryland



C:
Monica Beyrouiti Nuñez, Government Relations Manager, COG

WA- SB 559 - MMFA - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Klingenmaier

Position: FAV



Welfare Advocates

Founded 1979

228 W. Lexington Street — Suite 220 • Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3432

Phone: 667-600-3356 • Email: klingenmaier@cc-md.org

Senate Bill 559

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

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee & Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

February 22, 2022

Support

Welfare Advocates is a statewide coalition of social service organizations, advocacy groups, faith communities, and community members, whose mission it is to educate about and advocate for an adequate safety net and public policies that support families moving towards economic stability.

Welfare Advocates strongly supports SB 559, which increases the annual appropriation for the Maryland Meals for Achievement program from \$7,550,000 to \$12,050,000.

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed our programs, our economy and our communities. Before the pandemic, one in ten Marylanders lived at or below the Federal Poverty Line. When the pandemic began, safety-net program caseloads skyrocketed as more individuals and families in Maryland tumbled into economic insecurity. The pandemic has laid bare longstanding inequities in our systems and put a spotlight on the entrenched gaps and barriers that have long existed in our programs and policies to address and end poverty, especially for communities of color that have disproportionately borne the brunt of the pandemic due to systemic racism and historic disinvestment. It takes the longest for those with the lowest incomes to recover from economic crises, and the state should make critical investments in programs that are proven to ameliorate poverty, like Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA).

MMFA is a state-funded, in-classroom breakfast program that provides access to regular, healthy breakfast meals in schools across the state. By providing access to free breakfast to all students in participating schools, MMFA reduces barriers, such as cost and stigma, to breakfast participation. For 25 years, Maryland has provided this critical support to students in high-poverty schools, and MMFA is a nationally recognized best practice with a long track record of reducing food insecurity among students.

Unfortunately, current funding for MMFA does not allow all eligible schools to participate. Schools where 40% or more of the students are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price School Meals can apply to be an MMFA school. Current funding for the program allows 616 schools to participate, yet another 123 schools are eligible and not yet participating due to insufficient funding for the program. Especially with rising costs of inflation, now is a pivotal moment to expand access to free breakfast as part of the school day to all schools eligible for MMFA.

Maryland Meals for Achievement is an essential investment in the health, wellbeing, and academic success of Maryland's children. Offering breakfast in the classroom at no cost to all students supports equity in the classroom by making sure every child has the nutrition they need in order to excel. School meals are an essential component to education, and are linked to reduced food insecurity, improved academic achievement, improved school attendance, and improved overall health. SB 559 is a smart investment for the future of our students, and also the future of our State.

WA appreciates your consideration, and respectfully urges a favorable report on SB 559.

Submitted by Lisa Kligenmaier, Chair of Welfare Advocates

SB 559 Support.pdf
Uploaded by: Maddie Long
Position: FAV



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

**Budget and Taxation Committee
Position: Favorable**

February 22, 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](#)

FSRC - MMFA - SB-559 HB-514.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael J Wilson

Position: FAV

February 20, 2023

2023 Session Support Testimony

HB0514/SB0559: Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program
- Annual Appropriation

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

POSITION: Testimony of Support for House Bill 514

BILL ANALYSIS: Fully funds the Maryland Meals For Achievement Program for in-classroom breakfast

SIGNED: Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FRSC)

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record **in SUPPORT of H.B. 0514**. This letter is submitted by the Co-Chair of the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) on behalf of the Council and does not necessarily represent the views of the State of Maryland. The FSRC was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 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 towards a common goal of a more resilient food system and address the food insecurity crisis due to COVID-19. One of the key mandates of this council was to develop equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the Maryland food system.

The FSRC believes this legislation will advance the goal of ensuring that all eligible schools will be able to provide in classroom breakfast. Providing breakfast in the classroom ensures that breakfast is available for all students, helping to reduce food insecurity, increase nutrition, and eliminates the stigma associated with before the bell programs. We urge a favorable report for H.B. 514.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Wilson
Chair, Communications and Coordination Committee of the
Food System Resilience Council

SB0559_FAV_Montgomery County Food Council.pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Caruso

Position: FAV



February 22, 2023

2023 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY
SB0559: Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast

BILL: SB0559: Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation

POSITION: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0559

BILL ANALYSIS: Increasing the appropriation required by the Governor for the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program from \$7,550,00 to \$12,050,00 in the annual budget bill.

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

The Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) urges you to **SUPPORT** the increased appropriation 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. The current 2022-2023 school year has 581 participating schools across the state, up from 485 in the 2018-2019 school year. Montgomery County has one of the highest rates of participation in the state, with 91 schools and over 58,000 students receiving free breakfast in the classroom each school day.

Increasing the appropriation amount in the annual budget bill will continue to bolster this key program. Past additions to the bill have proven successful such as the Maryland Meals for Achievement for Teens Act of 2017, which expanded access in middle and high schools and allows a

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



one-year grace period for schools that are participating in the program but fall below the 40 percent free and reduced-price meals eligibility threshold.

According to No Kid Hungry, in 2020 473 Maryland schools were eligible for participation in the program but were unable to participate due to the current funding. The lack of funding means that more than 130,000 students across the state are in schools that are unable to implement this program. Based on Montgomery County Public Schools' 2022 free and reduced-price meal (FARMS) rate data, there are 26 schools that have a FARMS rate above 40 percent but are not currently MMFA schools. If these schools were added to MMFA, an additional 28,286 children would be eligible for free in-classroom breakfast. Studies show that students participating in the Maryland Meals for Achievement program have better educational performance, improved health, and decreased disciplinary problems²¹.

School breakfast can have a powerful impact on children facing hunger and the traditional method of offering breakfast before school is often ineffective at capturing all students. Providing in-classroom breakfast has proven to be a success through the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Class Breakfast Program and supporting this increase in annual appropriations will allow for more eligible schools to be able to provide this service to their students. **For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports SB0559 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 Massa Cressall, Interim Executive Director, 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>



MLMLB SB559 in favor.pdf

Uploaded by: Pamela Brown

Position: FAV



**Local power, collective voice
for Maryland's children, youth and families**

February 21, 2023

SUPPORT – SB559 - Education - Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Local Management Boards, I am writing in support of SB559. Local Management Boards in each county and jurisdiction in the State of Maryland conduct needs assessments of their communities. We know that the pandemic left many vulnerable families struggling to afford the basic necessities every day. Often families have to choose to eat at a food bank so they can afford to pay their rent. Children and youth across the state of Maryland need access to free meals at school to help bridge the gap between family income and the high price of food related to inflation. If our children are to learn they must eat!

SB559 will expand an already proven best practice for students in Maryland. Maryland Meals for Achievement is for schools with 40% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals. This bill would add \$4.5 million to the budget, allowing 123 more eligible schools to participate in the program. This would allow for 100% of the high poverty schools in Maryland to be served, offering more opportunity to every child in Maryland to be successful. Local Management Boards create and support programming to address children's hunger needs, and this bill will further the efforts of LMBs.

We urge you to support SB559, the Maryland Meals for Achievement program, to improve children's health and wellbeing in schools.

Sincerely,

Pamela M. Brown, PhD
Legislative Chair

SB559_MSEA_Zwerling_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Samantha Zwerling

Position: FAV

**Testimony SUPPORT of Senate Bill 559
Education – Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 22, 2023**

**Samantha Zwerling
Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 559, which increase the state appropriation for Maryland Meals for Achievement and give students more access to breakfast.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

“Hungry children cannot be expected to fully engage in their learning if they are distracted by their empty bellies. By ensuring that all students have access to healthy school meals, we are making a significant investment in our state’s most precious resource. Providing every child in our state with the nutritious meal their growing bodies need to thrive not only helps them be better prepared to learn, it’s also the right and humane thing to do.”
- Cheryl Bost, President, Maryland State Education Association

Educators know all too well that, for far too many of our students, the only source of a nutritious meal they might have access to in a day is at their school. Few things are more gut wrenching to educators than seeing their students suffer, particularly for the want of the sufficient amount of food their growing bodies need to survive and thrive. Hungry children experience real and lasting health impacts that can put their physical, mental, and cognitive development at risk as well as their social-emotional functioning. These impacts lead to deleterious effects such as poorer academic and behavioral outcomes for the children in our schools. Hungry children cannot be expected to fully engage in their learning if their attention is rapt by the rumbling and discomfort in their empty bellies.

The State must do whatever practicable to make feeding children easier and this bill is a meaningful effort toward that goal.

MSEA urges a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 559.

MAP - Support for SB 559 - Maryland Meals for Achi

Uploaded by: Stacey Jefferson

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 559

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

*Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
February 22, 2023*

Submitted by Kali Schumitz and Mark Huffman, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

211 Maryland

Baltimore Jewish Council

Behavioral Health System Baltimore

CASH Campaign of Maryland

Energy Advocates

Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Family League of Baltimore

Fuel Fund of Maryland

Job Opportunities Task Force

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services,
Inc.

League of Women Voters of Maryland

Loyola University Maryland

Maryland Center on Economic Policy

Maryland Community Action
Partnership

Maryland Family Network

Maryland Food Bank

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Paul's Place

St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore

Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

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Mark Huffman, Co-Chair

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Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports SB 559, which provides additional state funding to ensure that all eligible schools are able to use the Maryland Meals for Achievement program to provide breakfast after the bell at no cost to all students in the school.

School meal programs are one of the nation's first line defenses against childhood hunger. In fact, extensive research shows that students who participate in the School Breakfast Program experience a multitude of positive outcomes, including:

- Decreased risk of food insecurity;
- Improved concentration, test scores, and academic performance;
- Healthier overall dietary intake;
- Fewer absences, tardiness, and visits to the school nurse.¹

Despite these benefits, too many low-income students in our state miss out on starting their day with a nutritious breakfast due to barriers such as the stigma associated with the program, the cost of the meal, and the timing that breakfast is available.

Schools that implement Maryland Meals for Achievement are able to remove all three of these barriers at once by providing breakfast at no cost in an after the bell model, which gives more students access to the critical nutrition they need, mitigating inequities and reducing stigma in the process.

Serving breakfast after the bell is a proven strategy to increase access to breakfast and therefore helps students learn, grow, and achieve to their highest potential.

Unfortunately, Maryland Meals for Achievement is not currently fully funded, meaning there are eligible schools that are unable to participate due to insufficient state funding for the program. SB 559 will increase funding so that all eligible high-poverty schools in the state have the option to benefit from this successful program.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 559.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.

¹ Food Research & Action Center (2016). Research Brief: Breakfast for Learning. Available at <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/breakfastforlearning-1.pdf>

SB559CIF_fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Steven Mandel

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY OF THE CRITICAL ISSUES FORUM (CIF) OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
BEFORE THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF SB 559: MARYLAND MEALS FOR ACHIEVEMENT
IN-CLASSROOM BREAKFAST PROGRAM - ANNUAL APPROPRIATION
FEBRUARY 22, 2023**

FAVORABLE

CIF is a coalition of three synagogues in Montgomery County, Kol Shalom, Adat Shalom, and Temple Beth Ami, that include over 1750 households and three denominations of Judaism: Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist. CIF serves as a vehicle for our congregations to speak out on policy issues, such as food insecurity, that relate to our shared values, including the Jewish traditions that emphasize the sanctity and primacy of human life. CIF provides this testimony in support of SB 559, which would fully fund the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program (MMFA), and thus permit more high-poverty schools to offer universal free breakfast after the bell to their students. It is no secret that hunger challenges a child's ability to learn.

CIF recognizes that even before the COVID pandemic, there were a large number of families, particularly families of color, that struggled with food insecurity. The pandemic only increased the number of families struggling with covering basic needs, such as food. According to the FRAC dashboard of August 2022 (based on the USDA Household Pulse Survey), 14.9% of Black households, 16.3% of Latinx households, and 13.8% of households with a high school education or less in Maryland were food insufficient. Recent inflation and rising food costs have been particularly challenging for families with limited incomes. Research shows that hungry children do not learn as well as children who are well-nourished, and hunger also affects their physical and emotional well-being. Food Research and Action Center (2021), "School Meals are Essential for Student Health and Learning," available at <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/School-Meals-are-Essential-Health-and-Learning.pdf>.

A report of the Council of Economic Advisors, Executive Office of the President of the United States (December 2015) emphasizes that for children especially "the costs extend beyond the immediate concerns for hunger; insufficient access to food jeopardizes children's long-term health, educational performance and life chances." The report specifies that food insecurity among children has been associated with numerous adverse health and developmental outcomes, including iron deficiency anemia, poor academic performance, and behavioral

issues. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/documents/SNAP_report_final_nonembargo.pdf. The evidence of the harms of food insecurity among children is overwhelming. More specifically, the Food Research and Action Center has identified numerous studies that support the beneficial, cumulative effects of **breakfast** on students' health and learning, including universal, free breakfast in the classroom. FRAC Research Brief: Breakfast for Health (October 2016); FRAC Research Brief: Breakfast for Learning (October 2016).

Fortunately, research also shows that participation in government nutrition programs, including school meals programs, supports children's health and learning. One such proven program is Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA). MMFA currently provides state funding to allow certain, but not all, high-poverty schools to serve free breakfast to **all students, in the classroom**. MMFA thus increases access to this all-important meal because it eliminates any cost of the meal for all families, reduces the stigma for those students who had been receiving a free or reduced-price breakfast, and does not require that breakfast be served in the cafeteria before the start of the school day. Research has shown that students at MMFA schools have increased participation in the school breakfast program, and demonstrate better educational performance, improved health, and fewer behavioral issues. See <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED523998.pdf>.

SB 559 would enhance the effectiveness of this successful program by providing the necessary funding for **all** eligible schools, including those schools currently on the waiting list, to participate. Under current funding levels, 616 Maryland schools participate in MMFA. An additional \$4.5 million would allow 123 more schools to participate.

Members of CIF were privileged to attend the 20th anniversary celebration of MMFA at South Lake Elementary School in Gaithersburg. At that school-wide event, students, teachers, and administrative staff extolled the value of offering universal, free breakfast in the classroom. We witnessed first-hand children eating a nutritious breakfast and learning together in their classrooms at the start of the school day.

This is one timely, cost-effective step the State can take to provide access to a nutritious breakfast to our most needy students. Nearly 64% of students in MMFA schools participate in the school breakfast program, compared to 31% in other Maryland schools. **This morning meal makes a difference.**

The Critical Issues Forum respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 559.

