

Wednesday, February 22, 2023
SB0557/HB0628
Favorable



Honorable Committee Members -

We, the Education Association of St. Mary's County urge you to move forward with HB0628 and SB0557 to support Universal Breakfast and Lunch for school students. As educators, we know the significance of students having access to breakfast and lunch in school- we have seen the impact free meals had on students prior to this year. Providing equal access to free school meals ensures every child is nourished and ready to learn.

When districts returned to paid meals this year, it significantly burdened families still struggling to make ends meet. With increased food and labor costs, school districts across the state will be forced to increase meal prices next year. Families with multiple children are already struggling with the increased prices of groceries, gas, and other necessities; it's time we give these families the help they need. While the school meal application process works for most families, the application form only collects income data. It does not accurately reflect all families' constraints with rent increases, medical bills, and increased utility bills.

We know students cannot learn when hungry, which is why the Maryland Meals for Achievement program has helped millions of students start their days with a healthy breakfast. With National School Breakfast Week around the corner, we urge this committee to vote in favor of this important initiative to provide free breakfast and lunch for millions more students across the state of Maryland.

Thank you for your time,

Kaitlin Fraer & Elaine Deems
Legislative Committee Chairs
Education Association of St. Mary's County