



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
1217 S. Potomac Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: HB 386

TITLE: Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Alterations (Maryland Meals for Achievement Flexibility Act of 2024)

DATE: January 31, 2024

POSITION: Support

COMMITTEE: House Ways and Means Committee

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** House Bill 386.

If approved by the Maryland State Department of Education and a county board of education, this legislation allows elementary schools to serve breakfast in any broadly accessible part of the school, including from “grab and go” carts after the arrival of students to the school, provided that students are allowed to consume the meal in the classroom after the start of the school day.

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 program and the State’s generous participation. The research on eating breakfast is vast and universally confirms the positive impact on student achievement, including academics and behavior. 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.

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** House Bill 386 and urges a favorable committee report.