



**Testimony: HB: 166
FY 2020-21 Biennial Budget
Senate Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee
Judy Mobley, President and CEO
Children's Hunger Alliance
May 15, 2019**

Introduction

Good Afternoon Chairman Terhar, Vice Chair Lehner, Ranking member Fedor, and members of the Senate Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee. My name is Judy Mobley and I am the President and CEO of Children's Hunger Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to the alleviation of childhood hunger in Ohio. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today in support of language included by the House in Amended Substitute House Bill 166 that would increase participation in the School Breakfast Program by ensuring that all high-poverty public schools in Ohio are working to reach the national benchmark of 70% participation in their free and reduced-price school breakfast program.

Background

In your packet you have a document titled *Ohio: Program Performance*. This document was provided by one of our National Anti-Hunger Partners, Share Our Strength, No Kid Hungry who you will also hear testimony from this afternoon. It highlights where Ohio ranks relative to the USDA nutrition programs, which is currently 27th in school breakfast participation. In Ohio only 56% of children eligible for a free or reduced priced lunch currently participate in school breakfast. Children's Hunger Alliance partners with school districts to evaluate their existing breakfast model and implement best practices that increase breakfast participation in a cost-effective manner. We have many examples of the success this type of collaboration can achieve some of whom you will hear or receive written testimony from today (see attached letter from Garfield Heights and example from Newark City Schools).

Description of Legislation

The language contained in Amended Substitute HB 166 was originally introduced late last session as House Bill 734 by Representatives LaTourette and Lipps after a series of meetings with education and other key interested parties (see attached list). The bill was developed to move Ohio's breakfast participation towards the national standard of 70% free/reduced lunch participation. The language as drafted would initially only apply to schools with 70% of their enrolled students eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The bill would, in subsequent years, phase in schools with 60% and 50% of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

As schools are phased in, the bill states that those schools not reaching the 70% participation threshold after one year or showing a 10% increase over the prior school year must submit a plan for increasing participation within 30 days of receiving notification from the Ohio Department of Education. It is

important to note that the bill does not mandate that a school utilize a particular breakfast model, and does not require that this information be on the school report card.

The language in the bill also requires the Ohio Department of Education to maintain certain reporting requirements. These include:

- Publishing a list of schools impacted
- Annually providing data on the ODE website by district and school breakfast model
- Monitor schools to ensure compliance and provide technical assistance
- Annually provide written notice of school participation rate
- Annually provide a report on the status of implementation and program effectiveness

Based on October 2018 data, if Ohio schools with poverty at 50% or higher collectively reach the national benchmark of 70% breakfast participation, 3 years after passage of the bill, over 40,000 additional students would have access to breakfast. Based on current rankings, this would move Ohio from 27th into the top ten nationally for its breakfast participation.

Included in your packet is a copy of written testimony in support of the legislation from the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Chairman Terhar and committee members, I would urge your support for the provisions included by the House in Amended Substitute HB 166 that would strengthen Ohio's School Breakfast program and have the ability to make Ohio a national leader in this area thereby helping more children start their day ready to learn.

Other organizations and schools in favor of this legislation will now provide testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have either now or at the conclusion of all the testimony.

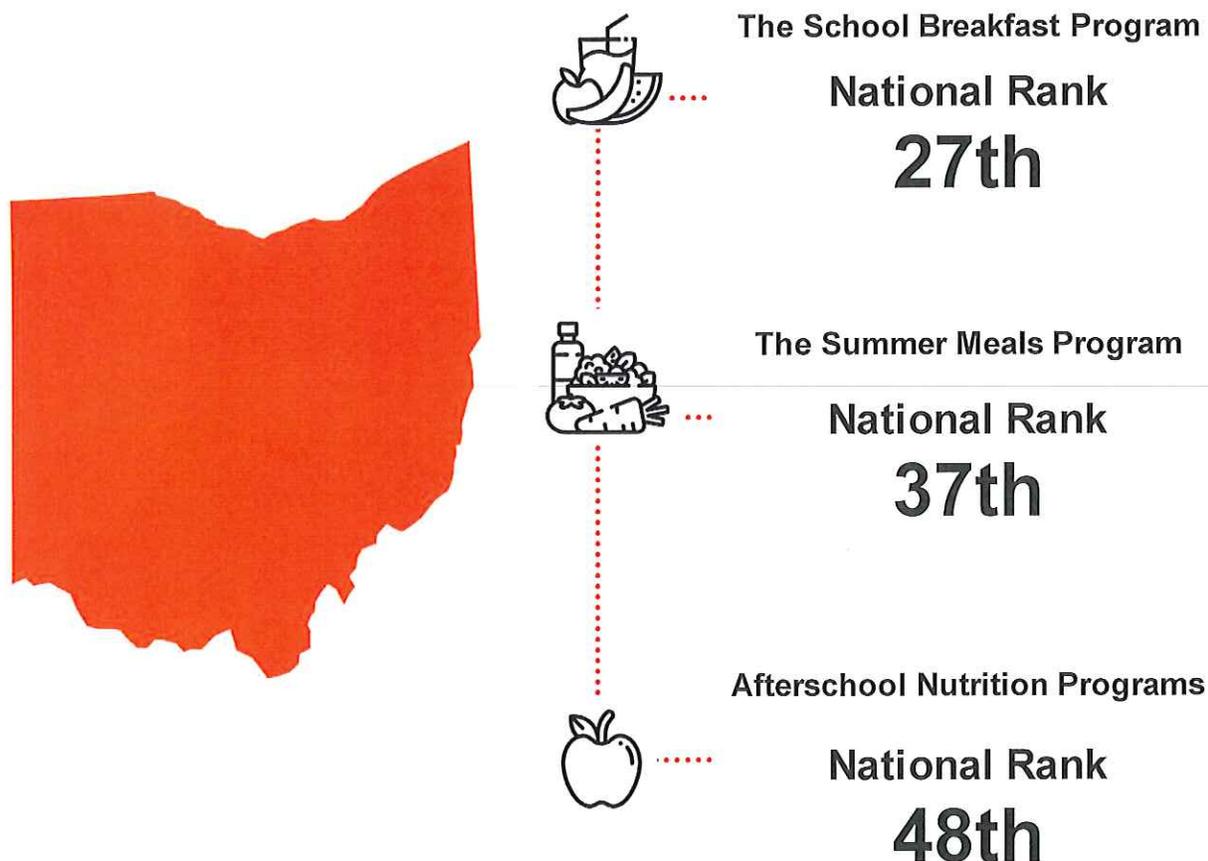
Ohio: Program Performance

20.3%

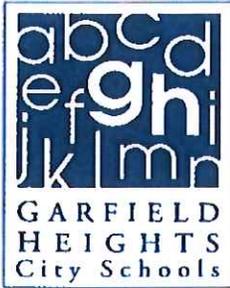
of all children in Ohio live in food-insecure homes.

One out of every five kids in Ohio is growing up in a family that struggles with hunger. State and federal nutrition programs can help kids get the nutrition they need, but these programs are severely underutilized. Closing the participation gap in these programs can help end childhood hunger and bring new resources into the state.

Participation in National Nutrition Programs*



*Ranked among 50 states and Washington, D.C., with #1 with highest participation rates. Sources listed on final page.



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Chairman Terhar, Vice Chairman Lehner, Ranking Member Fedor
Members of the Senate Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee
State of Ohio Senate

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Primary and
Secondary Education Subcommittee

My name is Allen Sluka and I am the Treasurer and Director of Business Services
for the Garfield Heights City Schools. Garfield Heights is a first ring suburb of the
City of Cleveland.

I am writing you in support of the language included by the House in Amended
Substitute House Bill 166 that would increase participation in the School Breakfast
Program by ensuring that all high poverty public schools in Ohio are working to
reach the national benchmark of 70% participation in their free and reduced-price
school breakfast program.

Garfield Heights City Schools is a prime example of a high poverty school district
that has made a conscious effort to expand its breakfast program to all students in
the district. We have applied for grants and introduced breakfast in the classroom
to four of our five school buildings. Being a high poverty district, I have witnessed
first hand the value of our students receiving a hot, healthy, and nutritious breakfast
each morning. I have also seen participation in the breakfast program increase
dramatically over the past year and a half. No child should start their school day
hungry.

I ask you to please support the provisions included by the House in Amended
Substitute HB166 that would strengthen Ohio's School Breakfast program for all
the high poverty students in Ohio schools.



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Sincerely,

Allen D. Sluka

Treasurer/Director of Business Services



**Breakfast & Summer Success Story:
Newark City Schools Leverages Federal Funds
to Offer Breakfast for All and to Launch
Summer Feeding**

In the 2014-2015 school year, the average daily participation in school breakfast at Newark City Schools was 817 students, just 33% of the total eligible kids. Doug Ute, Superintendent of Newark City Schools, knew this had to change: “We know that learning requires a healthy and attentive student, and that becomes difficult if a child is sitting in the classroom with an empty stomach.”

With consultation from Children’s Hunger Alliance, the school realized many of the children were unable to get to the cafeteria and receive a meal before classes began, resulting in low breakfast participation. In response, we awarded the district a \$25,000 mini grant to help the school district implement Breakfast in the Classroom. After the success of a pilot in a single elementary school in 2016, the district opted to offer free breakfast for all students and brought breakfast into the classroom at all seven elementary schools. As a result, average daily participation increased, jumping from 33% to 70%.

In 2018, Children’s Hunger Alliance also assisted Newark City Schools in applying for a Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom grant, providing them an additional \$60,000 to help make breakfast more accessible in the middle and high schools.

Based on this success, the district turned its focus to expanding summer feeding options for the under served children in community. In order to evaluate how to best utilize the available funds to increase access to summer meals, Children’s Hunger Alliance assisted the district in piloting a mobile summer feeding program.

Seven school buses traveled to 21 stops two days a week in the month of June 2018. On average 150 children visited the buses to eat. The district is working on plans to purchase a vehicle that will travel throughout Newark beginning the summer of 2019 and provide meals to children five days a week. This work will be funded by reimbursements received as a result of school breakfast improvements.

Newark City Schools Breakfast Program Impact

School Year	Number of Breakfasts Served
2015-2016	214,236
2016-2017	423,344
2017-2018	565,955

Breakfast Legislation Stakeholder List

Ohio House

- Contact: Michael Crum
- Contact Nick Derksen

Share Our Strength (SOS)

- Contact: Bernadette Downey, Senior Advocacy Manager
- Eleni Towns, Senior Field Manager

Food Research Action Center (FRAC)

- Contact: Etienne Melcher Philbin, Senior Policy Analyst

Ohio Department of Education (ODE)

- Contact: Devin Babcock, Legislative Liaison
- Contact: Jennie Stump

Ohio Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

- Contact: Sue Owen, Executive Director

Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA)

- Contact: Tom Ash, Director of Government Relations

Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO)

- Contact: Barb Shaner, Legislative Advocacy Specialist

Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA)

- Contact: Jennifer Hogue, Director of Legislative Services
- Contact: Jay Smith
- Contact: Will Schwartz

Ohio Education Association (OEA)

- Contact: Melissa Clark, Government Relations
- Contact: Matt Dotson

Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT)

- Contact: Darold Johnson, Legislative Director

Children’s Hunger Alliance (CHA)

- Contact: Judy Mobley, President and CEO
- Contact: Scott Neely, Director of Government Affairs
- Contact: Heather Loughley, Director, School & Summer Nutrition

Children’s Defense Fund (CDF)

- Contact: Ashon McKenzie, Policy Director

Voices for Ohio’s Children

- Contact: Brandi Slaughter, CEO
- Contact: Kelley Smith

Ohio School Breakfast Challenge (OSBC)*

- Contact: Mike Collins, President MCG Strategies

Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO)

- Contact: Amy Rohling McGee, President
- Contact: Rebecca Carroll

Human Services Chamber of Franklin County (HSC)

- Contact: Michael Corey, Executive Director

School Nutrition Association of Ohio (SNA)

- Contact: Tracey Hogan, Executive Director

American Academy of Pediatrics

- Contact: Melissa Wervey, CEO Ohio Chapter
- Contact: Renee Dickman

Action for Healthy Kids

- Contact: Kristen O’Connor

American Dairy Association Midwest

- Contact: Scott Higgins, President and CEO
- Contact: June Wedd, Vice President of Marketing

Little Miami Schools

- Contact: Rachel Tilford

Cincinnati Public

- Contact: Jessica Shelly

*Note: Ohio School Breakfast Challenge also includes American Dairy Association, ODE, SNA, CHA, Action for Healthy Kids

Testimony: HB: 166
FY 2020-21 Biennial Budget
Senate Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee
Etienne Melcher Philbin, Senior Policy Analyst
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
May 15, 2019

The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) supports language included by the House in Amended Substitute House Bill 166 that would increase participation in the School Breakfast Program by ensuring that all low-income public schools in Ohio are working to reach the national benchmark set by FRAC of 70% participation in their School Breakfast Program.

FRAC is the leading national nonprofit organization working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eradicate hunger and undernutrition in the United States. FRAC has worked for decades to improve and strengthen the federal School Breakfast Program and other child nutrition programs through federal and state legislation and works extensively with federal, state, and local government agencies, schools, private nonprofits and other stakeholders to ensure that the programs reach the children who need them. We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 166, critically important legislation that will improve low-income children's access to a healthy school breakfast so they are well nourished and able to learn at the start of the school day.

Research shows that not only are well-nourished children better learners, but they are also better test-takers and more active participants in school—more likely to arrive at school on time, to behave and be attentive in class.¹ Children experiencing hunger have been found to have lower math scores and be more likely to repeat a grade.² Teens experiencing hunger are more likely to have been suspended from school and have difficulty getting along with other children.³ The nutrient-rich foods provided through the school meal programs, which must meet federal nutrition standards, also can help reduce participants' risk of obesity. A nationally representative study found that school breakfast participation was associated with a significantly lower body mass index (BMI), an indicator of excess body fat.⁴ Further, school meal participants are less likely to have nutrient deficiencies, and are more likely to consume fruit, vegetables, and milk at breakfast and lunch.⁵

¹ Murphy, J.M. "Breakfast and Learning: An Updated Review." *Journal of Current Nutrition and Food Science* 2007; 3(1): 3-36.

² Alaimo, K, Olson, C.M., Frongillo, E.A. Jr. "Food Insufficiency and American School-Aged Children's Cognitive, Academic, and Psychosocial Development." *Pediatrics* 2001; 108(1):44-53.

³ Id.

⁴ Gleason, P.M. and Dodd, A.H. (2009). School breakfast program but not school lunch program participation is associated with lower body mass index. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 109 (2 Supplement 1), S118-S128.

⁵ Clark, M.A. and Fox, M.K. (2009). Nutritional quality of the diets of U.S. public school children and the role of the school meal programs. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 109 (2 Supplement 1), S44-S56.

(Public Law 111-296), expired on September 30, 2015, the programs continue to operate. In recent years, when structural changes to the programs have been proposed, bipartisan support to maintain the programs has thwarted these efforts due to the nation's commitment to ensure that children in this country do not go hungry and to safeguard the health and well-being of low-income children.

A commitment at the state-level to making breakfast a priority, through HB 166, will mean more children will have the opportunity to eat a healthy breakfast at school each day. It also will mean much more federal funding supporting the health and well-being of Ohio's children. Ensuring that students start the school day with a healthy school breakfast also will support student success. FRAC strongly supports HB 166 and urge Chairman Terhar and committee members, to support the provisions included by the House in Am. Sub. HB 166 that would strengthen Ohio's School Breakfast program.