

**Testimony: HB: 166**  
**FY 2020-21 Biennial Budget**  
**Senate Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee**  
**Steve Denny, Executive Director of Business Affairs**  
**Mark Docter, Child Nutrition Director**  
**Winton Woods City Schools**  
**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 Steve Denny, and I am the Executive Director of Business Affairs for Winton Woods City Schools. I'm here today to present on behalf of our Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Anthony G. Smith. Mark Docter, the Director of Child Nutrition for Winton Woods City Schools is also appearing to provide testimony. We 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.

**Body of Testimony**

Winton Woods City Schools is an example of how schools can successfully expand the number of students eating breakfast. All students in grades Preschool through twelfth grade are served breakfast daily. Our schools are committed to ensuring that all children have access to a nutritious breakfast every day. With the support of the Children's Hunger Alliance

and Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom, both Winton Woods Intermediate School and Winton Woods Middle School launched universal breakfast in the classroom at the start of the 2018-2019 school year, reaching a combined student body of over 1,000 students in grades kindergarten through eighth.

These changes to our breakfast program were prompted by our firm belief that every child in our care deserved the advantage of a healthy breakfast meal.

Our Child Nutrition Director Mark Docter will provide more detail and additional information about our program.

Feeding children is a big part of our mission to provide a quality education to all of our students. I also can share my own personal experiences of growing up in a family of eight children with a single mother who held down three jobs just to support us. There were many days that I went to school hungry and looking back, I can see how this affected my focus and desire for learning. This personal experience from my childhood I can clearly see reflected in many of the children we serve. I wanted to ensure that all students in the district had access to nutritious food ahead of their school day to optimize learning and growth. We had an opportunity to offer breakfast to a greater number of students and had help with a great support team here at Winton Woods City Schools to make a difference in these children's lives.

To achieve this objective, we changed from a cafeteria-style serving model to Breakfast in the Classroom by using a mobile breakfast cart, which allowed students to pick up their meal quickly and afforded them more time to relax before class and enjoy their breakfast.

We had near unanimous positive buy-in from the administrative staff and teachers from all the schools. There were some initial concerns about food waste and spillage of milk. However, by strategically adding trash cans in the hallways, we were able to keep the extra trash contained and spillage was kept to a minimum. The addition of share bowls to recover & repurpose sealed excess food items was also helpful in managing concerns about waste.

We were able to increase participation at both the middle and high school as well. Winton Woods City Schools offered free universal “Grab & Go” breakfast at the middle school, which increased overall breakfast participation from 34% in October of 2017, to 59% in October of 2018.

At the High School, we introduced fresh-made smoothies and iced coffee, which showed an increase in participation. We also set up a second serving line closer to the lobby, which allowed the students to “grab & go” to class as well.

We are excited to report that the implementation of this breakfast in the classroom program in several of our schools has significantly increased overall breakfast participation. Our school nursing staff has reported that morning trips to the nurse’s office have decreased. Administrators and teachers have also commented that tardiness to school has decreased and student attitudes about school have been positively impacted. All of this contributes to increased time in class, decreased counterproductive behaviors and more instructional time which we know positively correlates with increased academic performance. For a project-based and problem-based school district like ours, this increased time on task is vital for harnessing the power of this interactive and collaborative model of educational delivery since it gives students more time to work productively in groups and on project deliverables such as student-led presentations.

While it is too early into implementation to observe trend data that shows increases in school attendance or test scores, we believe there is an associated impact here and we plan to study this over time.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, at Winton Woods City Schools, our mission is to ensure that ALL students achieve their highest potential. Providing healthy meal options for students quite literally sets the table for this to occur. Chairman Terhar and committee members, we would urge your support for the provisions included by the House in Am. Sub. HB 166 which would strengthen Ohio's School Breakfast program.

We would now be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.