

Testimony: HB: 166
FY 2020-21 Biennial Budget
Senate Finance Committee
Judy Mobley, President and CEO
Children's Hunger Alliance June 17, 2019

Introduction

Good Afternoon Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. 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 provide testimony to 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 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 highlights where Ohio ranks nationally relative to the USDA child nutrition programs. It is extremely disappointing that our current rank is 27th in school breakfast participation. In Ohio only 56% of children eligible for a free or reduced priced lunch currently participate in school breakfast. We know that all children have an opportunity to eat lunch at school but that is not the case with breakfast. There are many health and wellness benefits associated with children eating a healthy breakfast before the start of their school day. Children who do not eat breakfast on a daily basis are more likely to have behavioral, emotional and academic problems. Additionally, the School Breakfast Program is an evidence-based approach to address food insecurity. School breakfast participation is associated with lower body mass index and lower probability of obesity.

Most of the support the USDA provides to schools in the School Breakfast Program comes in the form of a cash reimbursement for each breakfast served. The reimbursement rates vary depending on if a student qualifies for free, reduced or full price meals. As high poverty schools increase their breakfast participation they will receive the highest total reimbursement as the majority of their students qualify for free or reduced-price meals helping to offset the cost of additional breakfasts served.

Children's Hunger Alliance partners with school districts to evaluate their existing breakfast model and help them implement best practices to 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 also receive written testimony from including Garfield Heights, Winton Woods and Newark City Schools.

In Ohio, schools have the option of offering students breakfast in the classroom as part of the school day. Section 3313.813, Food Programs – outdoor education centers, 3 (e) states that any school district board of education or chartered nonpublic school that participates in a breakfast program may offer breakfast to students in their classrooms during the school day. While this is a best practice the proposed legislation leaves the decision on breakfast model up to the individual 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 of attendees). The bill was developed to move Ohio's breakfast participation percentage towards the national standard which is 70% of the lunch participation rate for children that qualify for free or reduced-price meals. The language as drafted would in year one 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 as drafted by the House 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.

Senate Substitute Bill changes

While the Senate substitute version of Am. Substitute HB 166 retains the language requiring the establishment of a program under which high poverty schools must offer breakfast to all enrolled students, it eliminates the requirement for schools to move towards achievement of a 70% breakfast participation rate which is the national performance standard that Ohio and all other states are measured by. The language also allows districts to opt out of the program for financial reasons or if a district determines that they already have a successful breakfast program in

operation. We are concerned that these changes weaken the bill and would limit the growth in numbers of new students projected to be eating breakfast if this legislation is enacted.

We have been working with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to develop some improvements regarding the reporting requirements contained in the House passed language. These changes have been submitted by ODE for drafting in the Senate omnibus amendment through Senator Terhar's office (amendment SC 5069).

The proposed language would reinsert the 70% participation goal removed by the substitute bill. The amendment currently retains the financial opt out provision in ORC 3313.818 C (2). Since higher poverty schools will overwhelmingly benefit by receiving more federal reimbursements through increasing their student breakfast participation we would propose limiting the opt out provision to schools that are under "financial watch or fiscal emergency". The language that allows schools to opt out of the program if they determine they already have a successful breakfast program is a vague standard and would potentially allow districts to opt out for a variety of reasons other than successful breakfast participation. Since this provision runs contrary to the goals of the program, we would recommend that this portion of the language be eliminated.

We would appreciate the Finance Committee's support for this language contained in SC 5069 with the changes to ORC 3313.818 C (2) noted above.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to note that most of the support the USDA provides to schools in the School Breakfast Program comes in the form of a cash reimbursement for each breakfast served. The reimbursement rates vary depending on if a student qualifies for free, reduced or full price meals. As high poverty schools increase their breakfast participation they will receive the highest total reimbursement as the majority of their students qualify for free or reduced-price meals helping to offset the cost of additional breakfasts served.

Chairman Dolan 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 states have passed and are passing legislation to address this problem. Without this legislation Ohio will continue to fall further and further behind in this area that is critically important to the health and wellness of our children.

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*



The School Breakfast Program

National Rank

27th



The Summer Meals Program

National Rank

37th

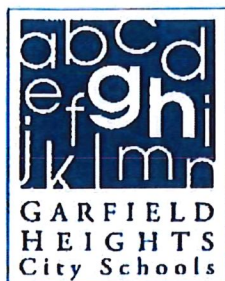


Afterschool Nutrition Programs

National Rank

48th

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



Terrance Olszewski
Superintendent of Schools

May 13, 2019

Allen D. Sluka
Treasurer/CFO/Business Services

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

Board of Education

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

Gary Wolske
President

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.

Christine A. Kitson
Vice President

Joan Chamberlin

Robert A. Dobies, Sr.

Joseph M. Juby

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

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.

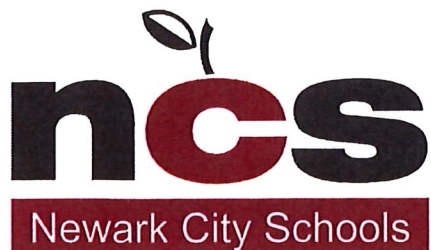
We are excited to report that the implementation of this breakfast in the classroom program in several of our schools has significantly increased overall breakfast participation. Our school nursing staff has reported that morning trips to the nurse’s office have decreased. Administrators and teachers 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.



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Senate Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee
Doug Ute, Superintendent
Newark City Schools
May 15, 2019

Good afternoon Chairman Terhar, Vice Chair Lehner, Ranking member Fedor, and members of the Senate Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee. My name is Doug Ute, Superintendent of the Newark City Schools in Licking County, I also serve on the Buckeye Association of School Administrators Executive Committee, this year serving as the Association President. Thank you for 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 percent participation in their low-income school breakfast program as compared to their low-income lunch participation.

The Newark City School District is an example of how schools can successfully expand the number of students eating breakfast. We believe that students who come to school hungry or worried about where they will get their next meal are unable to focus on learning. We want to remove that barrier and help kids to be well fed and feel safe and secure. We also want to remove any stigma that students may feel comes with receiving a free meal.

The process of delivering free breakfast to students has differed across our 12 school buildings, dependent on student ages and populations. We have found a lot of success in serving breakfast in the classroom, delivering the meals to each classroom and offering them to every single student. Some of our buildings use a "grab-and-go" method, where they will pick up breakfast in the cafeteria and take it to their classrooms, while some buildings have a more traditional breakfast in the cafeteria. The ultimate goal is that all students have the chance to eat breakfast at school, even if they are running a little late.

While staff members were apprehensive about the model of breakfast-in-the-classroom, the positives we were able to show during a trial period at one of our elementary schools helped to achieve buy-in from staff. We emphasized to our kitchen staff that jobs were being changed, rather than eliminated. One key about the breakfasts we offer in the classroom is that they are not messy. Teachers don't need to worry about spilled milk or other barriers. The breakfasts are also easy for kids to eat while completing early morning tasks.

We noticed immediate improvements in many ways during our trial period. More students were eating breakfast. Student trips to the nurse's office decreased, and students are able to concentrate more on their learning. Districtwide, our daily breakfasts served have increased from 850 3 years ago to about 3,500 today, out of 5,700 students attending a Newark school every day. Newark has a low-income population of nearly 61 percent. The initial student successes have continued on as we have broadened our outreach.

The program is also financially sound. Money provided through the federal breakfast program allows us to keep our food service budget balanced, while offering higher quality food to our students. Agencies like the Children's Hunger Alliance have been invaluable in providing support, onsite development and collaboration, while seeking out grants to help us fund the program.

I believe that all students should have the opportunity to eat a healthy breakfast, and that a full stomach helps with student learning, achievement and behavior. This program has been successful in Newark, and I believe it can be successful in districts all across Ohio.

In conclusion, Chairman Terhar and committee members, I would urge your support for the provisions included by the House in Amended Substitute House Bill 166 that would strengthen Ohio's School Breakfast Program.

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

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