



Maryland SB 818 & HB 1235

Education- Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program- Eligibility and Annual Appropriation

Position: **Support**

Marla LeTourneau -State Legislative Chair, Maryland School Nutrition Association

The Maryland School Nutrition Association (MdSNA) represents the thousands of school food service employees across the State of Maryland who served over 30 million meals to students last year. As State Legislative Chair of the Association, this testimony is presented to provide them a voice.

Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) is a successful state-funded program that provides universal access to breakfast in the classroom in high-poverty schools. MMFA contributes to long-term success by ensuring that all students can start the day ready to learn. MMFA eliminates the barriers to participation in school breakfast including stigma, the cost of the meal, and the timing that breakfast is available.

Unfortunately, many schools have free and reduced-price eligibility rates that are rising above the 40% threshold. Those children should receive the same benefits as those that have been in the program over the last nearly two decades. This Bill, by adding additional funding, allows schools that qualify to join the program and will ensure students who are hungry are fueled and ready to learn.

The second part of this Bill is requesting schools that drop below the 40 percent free and reduced-price range to have a one-year grace period before losing the MMFA program. For schools that are able to minimally enter the program, there are occasions when their meal eligibility rate dips below the 40% minimum rate required to be in the program. It would be in the children's best interest to continue another year to see if the numbers will change. There could be extenuating circumstances that caused the fluctuation. Breakfast in the classroom is not only routine for them, but in some cases the only breakfast they will receive.

Therefore, the Maryland School Nutrition Association requests a **favorable** report on SB 818 & SB 1235

Thank you for your time and attention to reviewing this testimony.