

An Act To Promote Academic Achievement through Hunger Relief for Maine Children

There is no reduced-price category for school breakfast.

All students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals get breakfast, free of charge, at school.

LR 1526 aims to do the same for school lunch.

Current situation

- 6% of Maine students qualify for reduced-price meals.
- They qualify automatically for a free school breakfast but must pay something for school lunch
- Many students who qualify for reduced-price meals come from food-insecure households that often cannot afford even the low-cost meal.

About reduced-price meals

While students who qualify for free meals have access to no cost breakfast and lunch at school, students who are eligible for reduced-price meals and their families must pay for lunch meals. Even at reduced prices the cost of a meal often means that some students cannot afford a meal, because of their family's situation. The student is stuck in the middle—unable to afford a meal at school, but not far enough below the poverty line to qualify for a free meal. The result is a hungry student.

Hungry children cannot learn

- Childhood food insecurity negatively impacts brain development.
- Studies find that children who do not have access to sufficient food have significantly lower math scores are more likely to repeat a grade, to have seen a psychologist, and to have difficulty getting along with other children.
- Teenagers without access to sufficient food are more likely to have seen a psychologist, to have been suspended from school, and to have difficulty getting along with other children.
- School meals are the main source of nutrition for many children.
- Maine should make sure that all children have access to good food, and every chance for a better education.

Let's improve education outcomes for Maine kids by increasing access to nutritious meals at school for children in need.

This bill is supported by:



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