

AN ACT regarding schools.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Childhood Hunger Relief Act.

Section 5. State policy and legislative intent. The General Assembly recognizes that hunger and food security are serious problems in the State of Illinois with as many as one million citizens being affected. These citizens have lost their sense of food security. Food insecurity occurs whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain. Hunger is a painful or uneasy sensation caused by a recurrent or involuntary lack of food and is a potential, although not necessary, consequence of food insecurity. Over time, hunger may result in malnutrition. It is estimated that just under 600,000 Illinois children experience hunger or food insecurity, meaning that they either go without eating meals, or their parents or guardians cannot provide the kinds of food they need. At present, the Illinois economy is steadily experiencing a 6% unemployment rate, people are being laid off who thought they had job security, and the unemployed are remaining unemployed beyond the terms of unemployment benefits. Emergency food providers throughout the State are experiencing an increase in the number of working poor families requesting emergency food. In October 2003, Illinois was ranked 48th in the nation in providing school breakfasts to low-income children of families who meet the criteria for free and reduced-price lunches. Because low-income children are not being adequately nourished, even to the point where many are arriving at school hungry, the General Assembly believes it is in the best interest of Illinois to utilize resources available

through existing child nutrition programs, to the fullest extent possible.

The General Assembly also recognizes a definite correlation between adequate child nutrition and a child's physical, emotional, and cognitive development. There is also a correlation between adequate nutrition and a child's ability to perform well in school. Documented research has proven that school breakfasts improve attendance and increase a child's readiness to learn. In this regard, the General Assembly realizes the importance of the National School Breakfast Program and the Summer Food Service Program as effective measures that must be widely implemented to ensure more adequate nutrition for Illinois children.

Section 10. Definitions. In this Act:

"Hunger" means a symptom of poverty caused by a lack of resources that prevents the purchasing of a nutritionally adequate diet resulting in a chronic condition of being undernourished.

"Food insecurity" means a limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.

"Food security" means ensured access to enough food for an active, healthy life.

"School Breakfast Program" means the federal child nutrition entitlement program that helps serve nourishing low-cost breakfast meals to school children. In addition to cash assistance, participating schools get foods donated by and technical guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture. Payments to schools are higher for meals served to children who qualify, on the basis of family size and income, for free or reduced-price meals. The program is administered in Illinois by the State Board of Education.

"Summer Food Service Program" means the federal child nutrition entitlement program that helps communities serve meals to needy children when school is not in session. The United States Department of Agriculture reimburses sponsors

for operating costs of food services up to a specific maximum rate for each meal served. In addition, sponsors receive some reimbursement for planning and supervising expenses. The program in Illinois is administered by the State Board of Education.

Section 15. School breakfast program.

(a) Within 90 days after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 93rd General Assembly and then each school year thereafter, the board of education of each school district in this State shall implement and operate a school breakfast program, if a breakfast program does not currently exist, in accordance with federal guidelines in each school building within its district in which at least 40% or more of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches based upon the count on October 31 of the previous year.

Using the data from the previous school year, the board of education of each school district in the State shall determine which schools within their districts will be required to implement and operate a school breakfast program.

(b) School districts may charge students who do not meet federal criteria for free school meals for the breakfasts served to these students within the allowable limits set by federal regulations.

(c) School breakfast programs established under this Section shall be supported entirely by federal funds and commodities, charges to students and other participants, and other available State and local resources, including under the School Breakfast and Lunch Program Act. Allowable costs for reimbursement to school districts, in accordance with the United States Department of Agriculture, include compensation of employees for the time devoted and identified specifically to implement the school breakfast program; the cost of materials acquired, consumed, or expended specifically to implement the school breakfast program; equipment and other approved capital expenditures necessary to implement the

school breakfast program; and transportation expenses incurred specifically to implement and operate the school breakfast program.

(d) A school district shall be allowed to opt out of the school breakfast program requirement of this Section if it is determined that, due to circumstances specific to that school district, the expense reimbursement would not fully cover the costs of implementing and operating a school breakfast program. The school district shall petition its regional superintendent of schools by November 15 to request to be exempt from the school breakfast program requirement. The petition shall include all legitimate costs associated with implementing and operating a school breakfast program, the estimated reimbursement from State and federal sources, and any unique circumstances the school district can verify that exist that would cause the implementation and operation of such a program to be cost prohibitive.

The regional superintendent of schools shall review the petition. He or she shall convene a public hearing to hear testimony from the school district and interested community members. The regional superintendent shall, by December 15, inform the school district of his or her decision, along with the reasons why the exemption was granted or denied, in writing. If the regional superintendent grants an exemption to the school district, then the school district is relieved from the requirement to establish and implement a school breakfast program.

If the regional superintendent of schools does not grant an exemption to the school district, then the school district shall implement and operate a school breakfast program in accordance with this Section by September 1 of the subsequent school year. However, the school district or a resident of the school district may appeal the decision of the regional superintendent to the State Superintendent of Education. No later than February 15 of each year, the State Superintendent shall hear appeals on the decisions of regional superintendents

of schools. The State Superintendent shall make a final decision at the conclusion of the hearing on the school district's request for an exemption from the school breakfast program requirement. If the State Superintendent grants an exemption to the school district, then the school district is relieved from the requirement to implement and operate a school breakfast program. If the State Superintendent does not grant an exemption to the school district, then the school district shall implement and operate a school breakfast program in accordance with this Section by September 1 of the subsequent school year.

A school district may not attempt to opt out of the school breakfast program requirement of this Section by requesting a waiver under Section 2-3.25g of the School Code.

Section 20. Summer food service program.

(a) The State Board of Education shall promulgate a State plan for summer food service programs, in accordance with 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1761 and any other applicable federal laws and regulations, by January 15, 2006.

(b) By the summer of 2006 and then each summer thereafter, it is strongly encouraged that the board of education of each school district in this State in which at least 50% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals operate a summer food service program or identify a non-profit or private agency to sponsor a summer food service program within the school district's boundaries.

(c) Summer food service programs established under this Section may be supported by federal funds and commodities and other available State and local resources.

Section 95. The School Breakfast and Lunch Program Act is amended by changing Sections 2.5, 4, and 5 as follows:

(105 ILCS 125/2.5)

Sec. 2.5. Breakfast incentive program. The State Board of

Education shall fund a breakfast incentive program comprised of the components described in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this Section, provided that a separate appropriation is made for the purposes of this Section. The State Board of Education may allocate the appropriation among the program components in whatever manner the State Board of Education finds will best serve the goal of increasing participation in school breakfast programs. If the amount of the appropriation allocated under paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of this Section is insufficient to fund all claims submitted under that particular paragraph, the claims under that paragraph shall be prorated.

(1) The State Board of Education may reimburse each sponsor of a school breakfast program an additional \$0.10 for each free, reduced-price, and paid breakfast served over and above the number of such breakfasts served in the same month during the preceding year, provided that the number of breakfasts served in a participating school building ~~by the sponsor~~ in that month is at least 10% greater than the number of breakfasts served in the same month during the preceding year.

(2) The State Board of Education may make grants to school boards and welfare centers that agree to start a school breakfast program in one or more schools or other sites. First priority for these grants shall be given to schools in which 40% ~~50%~~ or more of their students are eligible for free and reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.). Depending on the availability of funds and the rate at which funds are being utilized, the State Board of Education is authorized to allow additional schools or other sites to receive these grants. In making additional grants, the State Board of Education shall provide for priority to be given to schools with the highest percentage of students eligible for free and reduced price lunches under the National School Lunch Act. The amount of the grant shall be \$3,500 for each qualifying school or site in

which a school breakfast program is started. The grants shall be used to pay the start-up costs for the school breakfast program, including equipment, supplies, and program promotion, but shall not be used for food, labor, or other recurring operational costs. Applications for the grants shall be made to the State Board of Education on forms designated by the State Board of Education. Any grantee that fails to operate a school breakfast program for at least 3 years after receipt of a grant shall refund the amount of the grant to the State Board of Education.

(3) The State Board of Education may reimburse a school board for each free, reduced-price, or paid breakfast served in a school breakfast program located in a school in which 80% or more of the students are eligible to receive free or reduced price lunches under the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) in an amount equal to the difference between (i) the current amount reimbursed by the federal government for a free breakfast and (ii) the amount actually reimbursed by the federal government for that free, reduced-price, or paid breakfast. A school board that receives reimbursement under this paragraph (3) shall not be eligible in the same year to receive reimbursement under paragraph (1) of this Section.

(Source: P.A. 91-843, eff. 6-22-00.)

(105 ILCS 125/4) (from Ch. 122, par. 712.4)

Sec. 4. Accounts; copies of menus served; free lunch program required; report. School boards and welfare centers shall keep an accurate, detailed and separate account of all moneys expended for school breakfast programs, school lunch programs, free breakfast programs, ~~and~~ free lunch programs, and summer food service programs, and of the amounts for which they are reimbursed by any governmental agency, moneys received from students and from any other contributors to the program. School boards and welfare centers shall also keep on file a copy of all menus served under the programs, which together with all

records of receipts and disbursements, shall be made available to representatives of the State Board of Education at any time.

Every public school must have a free lunch program.

In 2001 and in each subsequent year, the State Board of Education shall provide to the Governor and the General Assembly, by a date not later than March 1, a report that provides all of the following:

(1) A list by school district of all schools, the total student enrollment, and the number of children eligible for free, reduced price, and paid breakfasts and lunches.

(2) A list of schools that have started breakfast programs during the past year along with information on which schools have utilized the \$3,500 start-up grants and the additional \$0.10 per meal increased participation incentives established under Section 2.5 of this Act.

(3) A list of schools that have used the school breakfast program option outlined in this Act, a list of schools that have exercised Provision Two or Provision Three under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1771 et seq.), and a list of schools that have dropped either school lunch or school breakfast programs during the past year and the reasons why.

In 2007, 2009, and 2011 ~~2001, 2003, and 2005~~ the report required by this Section shall also include information that documents the results of surveys designed to identify parental interest in school breakfast programs and documents barriers to establishing school breakfast programs. To develop the surveys for school administrators and for parents, the State Board of Education shall work in coordination with the State Board of Education's Child Nutrition Advisory Council and local committees that involve parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, business, and anti-hunger advocates, organized by the State Board of Education to foster community involvement. The State Board of Education is authorized to distribute the surveys in all schools where there are no school breakfast programs.

(Source: P.A. 91-843, eff. 6-22-00.)

(105 ILCS 125/5) (from Ch. 122, par. 712.5)

Sec. 5. Application for participation in programs. Applications for participation in the school breakfast program, the school lunch program, the free breakfast program, ~~and~~ the free lunch program, and the summer food service program shall be made on forms provided by the State Board of Education and filed with the State Board, ~~through the Regional Superintendent of Schools.~~

(Source: P.A. 91-843, eff. 6-22-00.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.