



To: House Committee on Education
From: Matt Newell-Ching, Public Affairs Director
Subject: Statement of Support for HB 2760 and HB 2765 With the Intent to Amend
Date: April 8, 2019

"Research and experience show us that school meals
boost student achievement, attendance, graduation, and earnings later in life."
-Joint Committee on Student Success, Students Ready and Able to Learn Workgroup

One in three kids who live in a food insecure household in Oregon don't qualify for free school meals. On top of that, most students arrive at school after breakfast has been served.

To address this, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon urges passage of HB 2760 and HB 2765 with the intention to amend in the Joint Committee on Student Success (JCSS). As you may have seen, because of the strong connection between school meals and student achievement, the JCSS framework released last week includes a statewide initiative on school meals that we hope aligns with these two bills.

Below is a summary of the current amendment request. This request was developed in consultation with parents, community members, and a broad range of education stakeholders to design a policy that's great for kids.

Universal Access to School Meals - (HB 2760 - below reflects current amendment request)

- **Community Eligibility:** Creates a state fund to maximize the number of schools that can serve meals to all kids at no charge and without applications through the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).
 - Preliminary estimates indicate that 761 schools with the highest need would be able to serve meals to all kids at no charge (currently 335 schools).
 - The fund would fill the gap between federal funding for CEP and the equivalent of full reimbursement per meal.
 - For example, in a district that creates a CEP group that would receive federal funding for 70% of full meal reimbursement, the state fund would reimburse a district for costs up to the remaining 30% of the full reimbursement.
 - Schools eligible for the fund include both currently-participating and new CEP schools.



Universal Access to School Meals - (HB 2760 - continued)

- Family Eligibility: Targeted assistance for students at Non-CEP schools to align eligibility for free meals to eligibility for children's health insurance.
 - At schools not eligible to participate in CEP (estimated at 484 schools), uses state funding to increase income eligibility for students so it is consistent with eligibility for children's health insurance (300% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)).
 - Currently students in Oregon are eligible for meals at no charge up to 185% FPL, but one in three kids experiencing food insecurity lives in a household above this line. Preliminary estimates are that more than 48,000 students in Oregon would benefit.
 - Conducts a feasibility study to determine if Oregon can start a categorical eligibility program to directly certify students for meals at no charge who are currently enrolled in state Children's Health Insurance - similarly to current Direct Certification with SNAP and other programs.
- Effective school year 2020-2021.

Breakfast After the Bell - (HB 2765 - below reflects current amendment request)

- Removes barriers to accessing school breakfast relating to scheduling for students at schools with high rates of poverty .
- Requires schools with 70% or higher Free/Reduced eligible students to offer breakfast after the opening bell.
 - Gives schools flexibility to define which service location/model is best for each school (cafeteria, grab and go, classroom, second chance, and models approved by ODE).
 - Schools can apply for a waiver if there's already 70% of kids eligible for F/R meals participating in breakfast relative to lunch participation.
- Starts a grant fund to fund one-time small equipment purchases necessary for implementation.
- Effective School Year 2020-2021.