

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Item 7: Department of Education Food Service Equipment

To: Ways and Means Full Committee
From: Education Subcommittee
Carrier: Senator Frederick

The Education Subcommittee recommends that the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means approve, retroactively, a request from the Department of Education to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for \$269,737 to make competitive grants to local school districts for the purchase of food service equipment.

The “Equipment Assistance Grants for School Food Authorities” program allocates \$30 million for fiscal year 2023 among the 50 states for making grants to local school districts that participate in the National School Lunch Program to purchase food service equipment. The program enables school districts to buy new food service equipment that will allow them to prepare more school meals from scratch, improve food safety, and serve healthier school meals. Since 2009, ODE has granted funds through this program to more than 160 school districts and nonprofits.

The agency was not aware of a new federal grant application process for this program, and missed providing ten-day advance notice to the Legislature before applying for the grant. Having corrected its processes, the agency requests retroactive approval to apply. No state match is required for this grant. If awarded, ODE will return to the Legislature to request Federal Funds expenditure limitation to spend the grant award.

The Education Subcommittee recommends approval.