

INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2017-033

REQUESTING THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REFER TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION A STUDY TO EVALUATE THE NEED FOR SCHOOL-LEVEL NUTRITION DATA, THE IMPACT OF PROVIDING BREAKFAST-AFTER-THE-BELL PROGRAMS, AND THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION AND OTHER UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NUTRITION MODELS ON SCHOOL BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION AMONG HIGH-NEED ARKANSAS STUDENTS.

WHEREAS, more than nineteen percent (19%) of Arkansans struggle to provide enough food for their families and more than twenty-six percent (26%) of Arkansas children are food insecure, meaning they do not have consistent access to adequate food; and

WHEREAS, more than sixty-three (63%) of Arkansas public school students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals, yet many of those low-income students are not eating the nutritious school breakfast offered due to barriers such as social stigma, late buses or carpools, long cafeteria lines, and tight class schedules; and

WHEREAS, eating breakfast as part of the school day is associated with positive student behavioral health and academic outcomes such as improved concentration in class, lower rates of chronic absenteeism, fewer classroom disruptions, and less frequent visits to the school nurse; and

WHEREAS, Breakfast-after-the-Bell programs, such as Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab and Go Breakfast, and Second Chance Breakfast, are proven meal delivery methods to boost school breakfast participation and related positive outcomes and are recommended by the Governor's Healthy Active Arkansas plan as an effective means to reduce childhood obesity; and

WHEREAS, adopting the Community Eligibility Provision of the United States Department of Agriculture would allow eligible low-income school districts to serve all students breakfast and lunch at no charge, and when combined with a Breakfast-after-the-Bell program, could maximize students'

1 school breakfast participation and enhance the nutrition budgets of the
2 school districts these students attend through increased meal reimbursements;
3 and
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5 WHEREAS, Arkansas schools have realized an increase in the number of
6 breakfast meals served to low-income students of three million six hundred
7 thousand (3,600,000) meals served and a federal meal reimbursement increase
8 of ten million four hundred thousand dollars (\$10,400,000) since 2011, when
9 Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign partners began supporting school districts to
10 offer Breakfast-after-the-Bell programs and, more recently, to adopt the
11 Community Eligibility Provision; and
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13 WHEREAS, although Arkansas ranks seventh in the nation in low-income
14 students eating school breakfast as compared to lunch, an additional fifteen
15 thousand nine hundred five (15,905) of those students struggling with hunger
16 would be served if Arkansas reached the goal of seventy percent (70%)
17 participation rate of low-income students eating school breakfast compared to
18 school lunch participation, and school districts would realize an additional
19 four million three hundred thousand dollars (\$4,300,000) in federal meal
20 reimbursements for school nutrition budgets of school districts; and
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22 WHEREAS, regarding the connection between student nutrition and
23 academic performance, there is a need for more data that would enhance our
24 understanding of the true positive impact of school breakfast participation
25 on student health, behavioral and academic success,
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27 NOW THEREFORE,

28 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE NINETY-FIRST
29 GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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31 THAT the Arkansas Legislative Council refer to the House Committee on
32 Education a study to evaluate the need for school-level nutrition data, the
33 impact of providing Breakfast-after-the-Bell programs, and the impact of the
34 Community Eligibility Provision and other United States Department of
35 Agriculture nutrition models on school breakfast participation among high-
36 need Arkansas students.

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Respectfully submitted,

Representative Clarke Tucker
District 35

By: PIL/PIL