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Illinois Senate unanimously passes SB2393, which would expand school breakfast for 175,000 low-income students

Advocates call for Governor to sign bill, which would take effect Jan. 1, 2017

CHICAGO (June 3, 2016) – The Illinois Senate earlier this week unanimously passed Senate Bill 2393, which would expand school breakfast for 175,000 low-income students by requiring some schools to serve “Breakfast After the Bell.” The bill utilizes federal funding and does not require additional funds from state government or local school districts. According to data from Rise and Shine Illinois, the bill will bring \$42 million in additional federal funds to Illinois. SB2393 unanimously passed the House on May 24; once the bill is sent to Gov. Bruce Rauner, he will have 60 days to sign the bill into law.

“Too many children in our state are at risk of spending much of the school day hungry,” said Sen. Don Harmon (D-Oak Park), who introduced SB2393 in January. “This bill expands a program that is already available in Illinois without adding costs for local school districts. Breakfast After the Bell is the most efficient way to reach more children so that they have the nutrition they need to thrive in school.”

SB2393 would expand federally funded school breakfast for 175,000 low-income students, the equivalent of 32 million meals, and would take effect Jan. 1, 2017. The increase in breakfast service would take place in the 2017-2018 school year, among schools with more than 70 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. SB2393 is endorsed by the Illinois School Management Alliance, the Illinois Parent-Teacher Association and The Ounce of Prevention. The concept for the bill was put together by the Illinois Commission to End Hunger’s No Kid Hungry Working Group, which released the Illinois School Breakfast Financial Sustainability Report in early 2016.

“As someone who has volunteered at pantries with my family, I’ve seen the effects of food insecurity firsthand,” said Sen. Sue Rezin (R-Peru), one of the bill’s initial co-sponsors. “It makes educational and fiscal sense to enable low-income children to start their school day with a nutritious meal.”

Illinois No Kid Hungry has been working to end child hunger and expand school nutrition programs statewide since 2012, when Washington DC-based Share Our Strength announced a partnership with the Illinois Commission to End Hunger and the Greater Chicago Food Depository. The school breakfast initiative later received private support from the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation and enabled the placement of five regional breakfast coordinators statewide as part of “Rise and Shine Illinois,” including: Central Illinois Foodbank, EverThrive Illinois, Illinois Coalition for Community Services, Illinois

Breakfast After the Bell (continued)

Hunger Coalition and St. Louis Area Foodbank. Illinois No Kid Hungry expands school infrastructure by offering grants of up to \$5,000 for implementation of Breakfast After the Bell programs. Illinois No Kid Hungry also advocates for the expansion of other underutilized federal meal programs, including summer and after-school meals.

“We are thankful for the widespread, bipartisan action taken on this issue by the General Assembly,” said Kate Maehr, Executive Director & CEO at the Greater Chicago Food Depository. “When children are hungry, they struggle to grow up into strong, healthy and productive members of our society, leading to long term costs to our community. That’s why this bill makes sense for our state.”

Share Our Strength and the Global Strategy Group conducted a poll of 500 Illinois teachers in April 2016 stating that, on average, serving Breakfast After the Bell takes less than 15 minutes. More than 9 out of 10 teachers said that they use this time to do necessary activities like take attendance or listen to classroom announcements. Three out of 4 teachers in Illinois see students coming to school hungry at least once a month.

“Breakfast After the Bell maximizes morning schedules and makes sure that every kid is equipped to tackle class for the day,” said Duke Storen, senior director at Share Our Strength. “Research shows that when a kid eats school breakfast, they do better on tests and are more likely to attend school, leading to a higher chance they will graduate.”

About Rise and Shine Illinois

The Rise and Shine Illinois campaign is a partnership of several anti-hunger organizations, with support from the national child hunger organization Share Our Strength (No Kid Hungry) and the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation. Illinois No Kid Hungry is a public-private coalition working to end childhood hunger in Illinois by ensuring all children get the healthy food they need, every day. Launched in 2012 as partnership with Share Our Strength and the Illinois Commission to End Hunger, the campaign is working to connect children with effective nutrition programs, like school breakfast and summer meals, while teaching families how to cook healthy food on a limited budget.

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