

Feeding Maryland's Kids

Fighting Hunger in Maryland Conference
October 24, 2017

1. *Tam Lynne Kelley, Maryland Hunger Solutions*
2. *Alison Maurice, Food Research & Action Center*
3. *Brian Ralph, Food & Nutrition Services Director
of Howard County Public Schools*
4. *Senator Richard S. Madaleno (D-18)*



Feeding Maryland's Kids: Improving Access to School Meals

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7th Annual Fighting Hunger in Maryland Conference
October 24, 2017



Presentation Overview

1. Community Eligibility

- ✓ How it works
- ✓ Benefits
- ✓ Participation trends

2. Unpaid Meal Fees

- ✓ Why this is an issue
- ✓ Best Practices

3. Breakfast After the Bell

- ✓ Best practice: Maryland Meals for Achievement
- ✓ How it works
- ✓ Benefits



Community Eligibility: How it works

Allows high-poverty schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students without collecting school meal applications (FARM forms)

Schools are reimbursed based on the proportion of low-income children in the school or district

Any school district can use this option if at least one of its schools has 40% or more students certified for free meals without an application (called “Identified Students”)

A district may implement community eligibility in one school, a group of schools or district-wide.

Resource:

[FRAC Facts: Community Eligibility Provision](#)

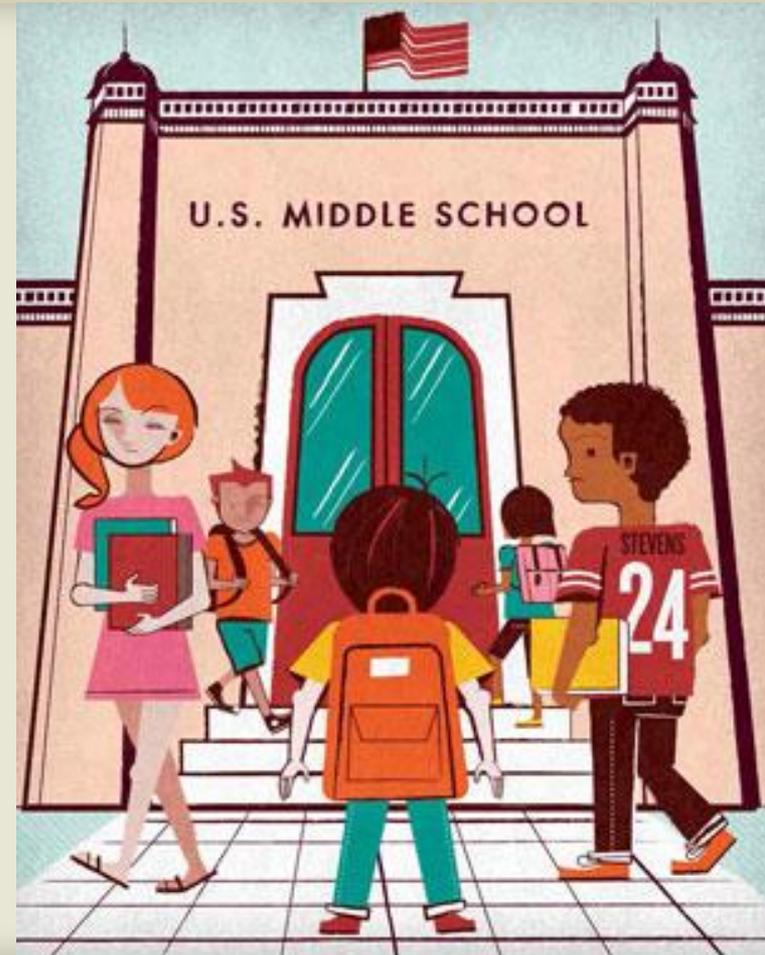
Community Eligibility: Benefits

- Less administrative work
- No school lunch fees
- Participation in school meals increases
- Facilitates implementation of breakfast after the bell
- Improves the financial viability of school nutrition department



Community Eligibility: How School Districts Can Participate

- Individual school with 40% or more “Identified Students”
- Group or multiple groups
 - ✓ Districts may group schools in any way; no limit on number of groups
 - ✓ Must have combined 40% or more Identified Students
- Entire school district can participate as a single group as long as it has 40% or more Identified Students



Community Eligibility: Who are “Identified Students”?

Children certified for free meals without a school meal application

- Directly certified children in households that participate in:
 - ✓ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - ✓ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Cash Assistance (TANF)
 - ✓ Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
 - ✓ Medicaid, in certain states
- Children who are certified for free meals without application because:
 - ✓ in foster care
 - ✓ in Head Start
 - ✓ homeless
 - ✓ migrant

Community Eligibility: How Reimbursement Works

Identified Student Percentage (ISP) x 1.6 = % meals reimbursed at “free” rate. The rest are reimbursed at “paid” rate.

Percentage Identified Students	Percentage Free	Paid
40%	64%	36%
45%	72%	28%
50%	80%	20%
55%	88%	12%
60%	96%	4%
65%	100%	0

Community Eligibility: Continues to Grow Nationwide

- SY 2014-2015: 14,214 schools; 6.7M kids
- SY 2015-2016: 18,247 schools; 8.6M kids
- SY 2016-2017: 20,721 schools; 9.7M kids



Resource:
[Community Eligibility Continues to Grow in the 2016-2017 School Year](#)

Community Eligibility: Working in Maryland

- SY 2013-2014
 - 6 schools participating, enrolling 2,000 students
- SY 2014-2015:
 - 23 schools participating, enrolling 7,624 students
- SY 2015-2016:
 - 227 schools participating, enrolling 97,000 students
- SY 2016-2017:
 - 229 schools participating, enrolling 98,000 students
- SY 2017-2018:
 - 242 schools participating, enrolling 103,500 students

National average: 55% of eligible schools participating

Number of Schools Using Community Eligibility and the Number of Students Attending These Schools in Maryland

Community Eligibility Creates Hunger-Free Schools in Maryland

2013 - 2014
School Year



2,000 Students



6 Hunger-Free
Schools



2014 - 2015
School Year

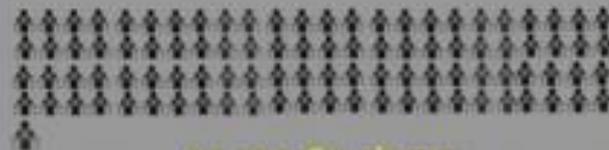


7,500 Students

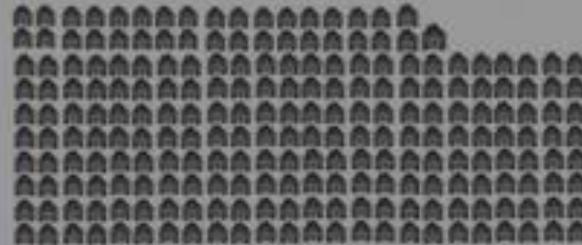


23 Hunger-Free Schools

2015 - 2016
School Year



97,000 Students



227 Hunger-Free Schools

Unpaid School Meal Debts

- 76% of school districts across the country have school meals debt
- How school districts choose to deal with the unpaid school meals debt has a big impact on students
 - ✓ Student health
 - ✓ School culture
- As of July 2017, all school districts operating the National School Lunch Program were required to establish and clearly communicate its policy for collecting unpaid meal fees
- The policies also guide schools on how to handle situations where students—who are not certified to receive free school meals— arrive in the cafeteria without lunch money or money in lunch account

Unpaid Meal Debt: Best Practices



- Operate the Community Eligibility Provision
- Eliminate reduced-price copay
 - ✓ Impacts families 130-185% of the federal poverty line
- Establish policies that
 - ✓ Provide the same meal as other students being served;
 - ✓ Same policy for all students, regardless of age;
 - ✓ Prohibit students from being singled out or embarrassed if they are unable to pay for their school meal;
 - ✓ Require schools to directly communicate with the parent or guardian, not the students, about unpaid school meals debt; no debt collectors
 - ✓ Take steps to qualify students for free or reduced-priced school meals when they are eligible, if they have unpaid schools meals debt; and
 - ✓ Support a positive school environment

Breakfast After the Bell: How it works

- **Breakfast in the Classroom:** Meals are delivered directly to the classroom to be eaten in the classroom at the start of the day.
- **“Grab and Go”:** Children (particularly older students) can easily grab the components of their breakfast quickly from carts or kiosks in a designated location.
- **Second Chance Breakfast:** Students are offered a second chance to eat breakfast after homeroom or first period.



Resource:
[Making Breakfast Part of the Day](#)

Breakfast After the Bell: Benefits

School Breakfast is associated with:

- better performance on standardized tests
- increased math and reading scores
- improved speed and memory in cognitive tests
- improved behavior and reduce tardiness and absenteeism



Resource:

[Breakfast for Learning research brief](#)

[Breakfast for Healthy research brief](#)

Breakfast After the Bell: Best Practice: Maryland Meals for Achievement

Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) is a successful, state-funded universal breakfast in the classroom program for schools with at least 40% of their students are eligible for free or reduce-priced meals.

State funds are used to cover the cost of providing school breakfast for free to all students.

This program removes breakfast barriers to participation and is a smart investment—for every dollar in state funding, Maryland leverages \$5.46 in federal reimbursement.

Since Maryland Meals for Achievement began 18 years ago, hundreds of Maryland schools have created healthier children and better students by increasing access to the School Breakfast Program.

Resource:
[Creating Healthier Students & Better Learners With the School Breakfast Program](#)

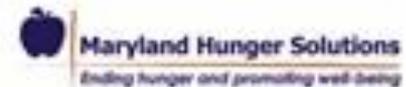
The Power of Two: Using MMFA and Community Eligibility



Resource:
[Creating Healthier Students & Better Learners With the School Breakfast Program](#)

Maryland Hunger Solutions

- Breakfast report
 - ✓ a national model
- Community Eligibility Advocacy
 - ✓ State legislation now allows Community Eligibility schools to use free and reduced-priced percentage before implementing Community Eligibility for state education funding purposes



Spring 2017



FRAC.org

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**2:15 - 2:35 Networking Break &
Refreshments in Room 170/180**

2:40 – 3:40 Workshops:

**The 2018 FARM Bill in Room 145
or Taking a Bite out of Food
Deserts in Room 130**