

HB 69: Eliminate Reduced-Price Co-Pays for School Meals

Expanding School Meals Access for Montana's Children Sponsored by Rep. Wendy McKamey



1 in 6 kids in Montana struggles with hunger

Free School Breakfast and Lunch can help children get the nutrition they need to succeed in the classroom. ~\$800k \$615k

> **Federal** Reimbursements

About the Free & Reduced-Price Meal Program

- Free breakfast and lunch is available to students with family income below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- Students with family income between 130% to 185% of FPL are eligible to receive reduced-price breakfast and lunch - with a co-pay of \$.30 and \$.40, respectively.

8.600

Approximate number of kids facing economic insecurity in Montana who are eligible for reduced-price meals

1.4 million Amount of reduced-price breakfasts and lunches being served annually to Montana kids

State Funds

How HB 69 Works

- Children from families with incomes between 130% 185% of the federal poverty level would receive no-cost school meals reducing the financial burden for families facing economic hardship.
 - Example: a family of four with incomes between \$33,475 -\$47,637.
- The proposed \$615,000 in state funding will go to local school nutrition programs to cover the difference between the federal reimbursement and the cost of the meal for all eligible Montana
- Many students who pay for reduced-price meals will eat breakfast & lunch for free, removing a significant barrier to participation.
- Eliminates administrative and financial burden of collecting unpaid meal debt from reduced-price-eligible students.

Montana Can Do Better

Number of current reduced-price school meal participants who will now receive free meals

Projected number of new reducedprice eligible students who will participate and receive no cost school meals

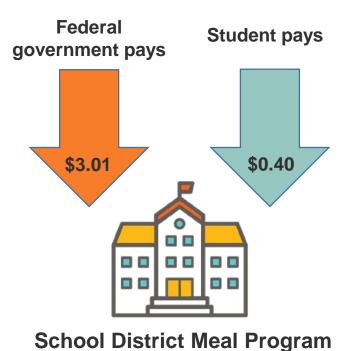
Projected **increase** in federal \$803,000 → reimbursements due to increased participation benefitting school nutrition programs

Impact

- Research shows that when students eat school meals test scores increase, chronic absences drop¹, and behavior improves².
- Without the busy-work of student meal debt collection taking up valuable time, school administrators are able to focus more attention on academic priorities.

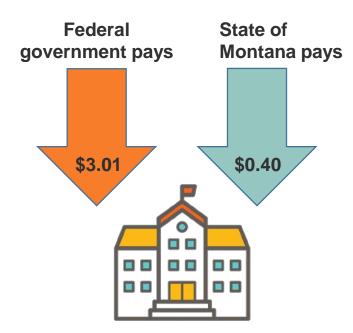
How School Meal Funding Works Now

Reduced-price lunch served



How School Meal Funding Will Work Under HB 69

Reduced-price lunch served



School District Meal Program

Transferring the copay responsibility from the student to the state is projected to add 970 kids eating school meals meaning an additional \$803,000 in federal reimbursements going to school district meal programs







For More Information:

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About No Kid Hungry:

Melissa Shannon, melissas@strategies360.com or 406- No child should go hungry in America, but in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, 1 in 4 kids could face hunger this year. No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger through effective programs that provide kids with the food they need. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of Share Our Strength, an organization working to end hunger and poverty. Join us at NoKidHungry.org