



436 14th Street
Suite 1220
Oakland
CA 94612

T: 510.433.1122
F: 510.433.1132
www.cfpa.net

The Honorable Rob Bonta
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0018

The Honorable Tony Thurmond
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0015

Re: Sponsor Support for AB 1240

Dear Assemblymember Bonta and Assemblymember Thurmond,

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) writes in strong support of AB 1240, *Breakfast After the Bell*. This legislation would bolster academic achievement and support student wellbeing by increasing access to much-needed school breakfast programs on thousands of campuses across California.

CFPA is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of low-income Californians by increasing access to nutritious, affordable food through evidence-based policy advocacy. With our more than 20 years of experience, we recognize that resources such as the federal School Breakfast Program are vital to the success of millions of children throughout our state.

Decades of research show that breakfast plays a critical role in students' academic performance, memory, and cognitive function. Eating breakfast also improves students' physical, mental, and emotional health. By providing children with the nourishment they need, school breakfast decreases tardiness, absenteeism, and disruptive behavior, helping to create a classroom environment that's ideal for academic success.

Three out of every four students in California miss out on the health and academic benefits of a nutritious school breakfast. That means on an average school day, the School Breakfast Program fails to reach 4.3 million of California's students, 2.2 million of whom are low-income and therefore at higher risk for food insecurity. Nearly 20 percent of California schools do not serve breakfast at all. Among those schools that do offer breakfast, the majority only serve it early in the morning before the start of the school day, when many children have yet to arrive.

Hectic morning routines keep many families from serving a nutritious breakfast at home. Parents' work schedules, bus schedules, and other pressing factors can keep children from arriving at school early enough to have breakfast before the bell. These systemic challenges mean the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) reaches only half of the students served by the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). As a result, many of California's most vulnerable children don't get what they need each day to learn, grow, and achieve.

AB 1240 would increase students' access to school breakfast by requiring practical changes that integrate breakfast into the school day. These changes, detailed below, align with levels of school and student need in order to make the most efficient use of existing state and federal funds.

- Schools where 40 to 60 percent of enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced-price (FRP) meals would be required to offer breakfast.
- Schools where 60 to 80 percent of students are eligible for FRP meals would be required to offer breakfast after the start of the school day.
- Schools where at least 80 percent of students are eligible for FRP meals, would be required to offer breakfast after the start of the school day and free of charge to all students.

In order to protect local decision-making, AB 1240 does not prescribe the specific practices schools and school districts should use to offer breakfast after the start of the school day. Schools can, for example, choose to serve breakfast in the classroom, implement grab n' go meal stations, or offer a second chance breakfast during a mid-morning break.

AB 1240 would be implemented across three school years starting in 2016-17. Once fully implemented, the bill would ensure that students on nearly 5,400 of California's public school campuses are better prepared to do and be their very best. More specifically, AB 1240 would

- Make breakfast available to students at more than 650 schools where it is currently not served;
- Give students access to breakfast after the bell at more than 5,000 schools; and
- Offer breakfast free of charge to all students at more than 3,000 of California's highest-need schools.

For particularly high-need schools, offering breakfast at no cost to all students is made fiscally feasible by available federal reimbursements. In fact, federal reimbursements make school breakfast a fiscally viable option for school districts and the State alike. With a small investment of 22 cents per breakfast, or \$40 per student per year, California can draw up to \$344 million in federal meal reimbursements to its public school districts. Those federal dollars would generate new taxable economic activity for local communities and the State at large, offsetting General Fund costs by an estimated 60 percent.

Children in every corner of California should have ready access to resources that support learning and health. Increasing access to school breakfast through AB 1240 is a win for students, schools, and the economy. We offer our resounding support for this important legislation and thank you for introducing *Breakfast After the Bell*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tia Shimada". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot above the 'i' in "Shimada".

Tia Shimada
Managing Nutrition Policy Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates