



Renee McGuirk Spence, Executive Director

9 Trotters Ridge Court, Catonsville, MD 21228

410-925-2183

pssamed@gmail.com

www.pssam.org

BILL: House Bill 1235
TITLE: Education – Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program – Eligibility and Annual Appropriation
DATE: March 13, 2018
POSITION: Support
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Renee McGuirk Spence, Executive Director, PSSAM
Email: pssamed@gmail.com; Cell: 410-925-2183

House Bill 1235 authorizes certain schools to remain eligible to participate in the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program under certain circumstances; requiring the Governor to include an appropriation of \$11,900,000 for the Program in the annual budget bill; etc.

PSSAM thanks the sponsors and fully **supports** House Bill 1235.

Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) is program that responds to low rates of school breakfast participation by making breakfast a part of the school day. MMFA removes obstacles that prevent students from participating in the traditional school breakfast, served in the cafeteria before the school day starts. MMFA began as a privately funded pilot program in fall 1998 in six Maryland elementary schools. Since that time MMFA has grown into a state-funded national model of a program that currently serves approximately 366 high-need Maryland schools. House Bill 1235 would provide the critical funds enabling us to continue to feed our most vulnerable secondary school students.

Research has found that the classroom breakfast program has had a positive impact on student achievement, including academics and behavior. Moving breakfast to the classroom has not only been shown to increase participation in the program, but is also linked to fewer absences, higher proficiency on standardized math tests, increasing students' attention spans, decreasing tardiness and behavior problems, and improved school environment.

However, there are numerous reasons that students can miss cafeteria breakfast. Transportation issues, getting to school late or fear of being stigmatized are a few examples. The MMFR program allows participating secondary schools to serve breakfast throughout the school. The MMFR program also permits schools to serve breakfast after students arrive in any part of the school, including from "Grab and Go" carts, resulting in a positive student impact on learning and the school environment.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **supports** House Bill 1235 and requests a favorable committee report.