

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5971**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, APRIL 13, 1993**

**Brief Description:** Expanding school breakfast and lunch programs.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Pelz, Talmadge and Bauer; by request of Governor Lowry

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5971 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Gaspard, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Jesernig, McDonald, Owen, Pelz, Quigley, Roach, Snyder, Sutherland, Talmadge, West, Williams, and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Bill Freund (786-7441)

**Hearing Dates:** April 8, 1993; April 13, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

Most school districts of the state participate in school lunch and school breakfast programs. These programs are subsidized by the federal government through the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. Since 1979, state funding for this program has been limited to that required for federal matching purposes. For the 1991-93 biennium, state matching funds for this program were \$6 million and federal funds amounted to \$148 million.

Under the federal school lunch and breakfast programs, meals are offered to students at full price, reduced price, or free, according to uniform national eligibility criteria based on family income and size. Currently, family income at or below 130 percent of the poverty level qualifies students for free meals, and below 185 percent of poverty level qualifies students for reduced price meals. For a family of four, 130 percent of poverty is an income of \$18,143 per year, and 185 percent is \$26,016 per year.

In 1989, the Legislature enacted legislation which required each school district to implement a school breakfast program by the 1992-93 school year if 40 percent or more of school lunches in the district were served to students eligible for free or reduce priced meals. State survey data indicates that in the 1991-92 school year 97.1 percent of school children in Washington had access to the lunch program and 62.8 percent had access to the breakfast program.

**SUMMARY:**

Beginning in school year 1993-94, all school districts with a lunch program must institute a breakfast program. Beginning in 1994-95, all school districts not having a breakfast or lunch program must institute one or the other and must offer both in the 1995-96 school year.

School districts involved in major construction projects or having other extraordinary hardships may be granted a maximum of two annual waivers.

Schools are eligible for state funds if application has been made for all applicable federal funds.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction administers the program. The Superintendent of Public Instruction provides grants to support existing programs and to help school districts start school breakfast or lunch programs. Priority shall be given to schools establishing programs. State funds can only be used for foods, supplies and labor costs.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction provides grants for summer food programs.

An annual report is required.

The bill is null and void if funding is not provided in the budget.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:**

Technical amendments are made to integrate the bill with existing law.

The waiver for extraordinary hardships is eliminated.

The requirement that priority for grants be given to schools to establish school meal programs is eliminated.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Hungry children cannot learn and school meal programs need to be expanded. Participation in school meal programs needs to be increased, and meal quality improved.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:**

Paying for meal programs will reduce funds available for education.

**TESTIFIED:** Margaret Tafoya, Governor's office (pro); Betty Marcelynas, Superintendent of Public Instruction (pro); Galen MacDonald, Washington School Food Service Association (pro); Ed James, Seattle School District (pro); Linda Stone, Anti-Hunger Nutrition Coalition (pro); Paul Locke (con); David Westberg, Stationary Engineers (pro)