

# Breakfast After The Bell Legislation

Cosponsored by Sen. Sal DiDomenico (SD.1878) and Reps. Vargas and Vega (HD.3145)



## Kids Start the School Day Hungry



### Benefits of Breakfast

- Improved dietary intake and better health outcomes
- Improved test scores—one study reports increase by 17.5 percent in math scores
- Lower rates of behavioral issues
- Higher attendance and lower tardiness
- Fewer visits to school nurse
- Destigmatizes school breakfast as a program for low-income students

### Benefits of Breakfast After the Bell for Schools and Local Economy

- Helps close the achievement gap.
- Federal reimbursements to high-poverty schools up to **\$2.09** for each breakfast meal served. Participation rates of **80** percent or higher could result in approximately **\$25 million** in reimbursements to schools statewide.
- Creates more full-time school nutrition jobs in school districts.

- 1 in 8 kids in Massachusetts lives in a food-insecure household.
- Nearly 300,000 kids in low-income schools are eligible for free and reduced-price breakfast, but only half participate.
- Hungry kids can't concentrate, have lower academic achievement, suffer cognitive and developmental impairments, exhibit more behavioral problems, are absent more, visit the nurse more often, and are at higher risk of obesity.

## Breakfast After the Bell Legislation will:

- ✓ Alleviate childhood hunger by requiring schools with 60 percent or more students eligible for free or reduced-price meals to serve breakfast after the bell.
- ✓ Increase breakfast access to nearly 150,000 kids in more than 600 high-poverty schools across the Commonwealth.
- ✓ Allow schools to implement a Breakfast After the Bell model of their choice, e.g., Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab-and-Go, Second Chance
- ✓ Draw bipartisan support on the national, state, and local level, and in the Commonwealth is being championed by the Food Bank Coalition of Massachusetts and health, education, agricultural and business organizations statewide.

Learn more about the Breakfast After the Bell legislation and its many benefits at [riseandshinema.org](http://riseandshinema.org) or email **Catherine Drennan** at The Greater Boston Food Bank at [cdrennan@gbfb.org](mailto:cdrennan@gbfb.org)

# Breakfast After The Bell

## Why legislate? Why now?

Cosponsored by Sen. Sal DiDomenico (SD.1878) and Reps. Vargas and Vega (HD.3145)



### Bottom Line:

Serving breakfast after the instructional bell rings is a proven method of successfully increasing participation in free and reduced-price school breakfast – legislating this best practice will ensure eligible Massachusetts students begin the day with full stomachs and ready to learn.

### Reasons for Legislation:

- **150,000 eligible children are currently not receiving free or reduced-price breakfast.**
- **Voluntary adoption has been slow** on a school-by-school basis, with a low sense of urgency on the part of many high-poverty schools. In some cases, there are no plans for implementation.
- **Without a requirement, schools can stop serving breakfast after the bell at any time**, without notice, subject to changes in school administration.
- **High-poverty Massachusetts schools stand to gain nearly \$30 million in federal reimbursements at 80 percent breakfast participation.**
- **Ensures consistent access to healthy food to food-insecure children**, boosting nutrition, improving academic performance, and reducing behavioral problems.

*“If we don’t nudge good educators, then thousands of children who need the program will remain in a cycle of struggle unnecessarily.”*

Superintendent Margarita Ruiz  
Salem Public Schools

Learn more about the Breakfast After the Bell legislation and its many benefits at [riseandshinema.org](http://riseandshinema.org) or email **Catherine Drennan** at The Greater Boston Food Bank at [cdrennan@gbfb.org](mailto:cdrennan@gbfb.org)