ASSEMBLY, No. 679

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

216th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2014 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman JOSEPH CRYAN
District 20 (Union)
Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON
District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS
Encourages school districts and nonpublic schools to increase student participation in school breakfast programs.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/21/2014)
AN ACT concerning school breakfast programs and supplementing Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. a. Each school district or nonpublic school participating in the federal School Breakfast Program is encouraged to increase the number of students participating in the program, especially through incorporation of school breakfast in the first-period classroom.
   b. The Department of Agriculture, in conjunction with the Department of Education, shall make every effort to assist school districts and nonpublic schools in increasing the participation rate of students in the school breakfast program, especially through incorporation of school breakfast in the first-period classroom.
   c. The Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of Education, shall provide guidance and support to school districts and nonpublic schools in the planning, implementation or modification of a school breakfast program which would increase the participation rate of all students, especially income-eligible students, in the school district or nonpublic school.
   d. The Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of Education, shall prepare and issue an annual report to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature on the number and percentage of students participating in a school breakfast program and the format used for providing breakfast, for each school district and nonpublic school.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill encourages school districts and nonpublic schools to increase the number of students participating in the federal School Breakfast Program. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture, in conjunction with the Department of Education, to make every effort to assist school districts and nonpublic schools in increasing the participation rate of students in the school breakfast program, especially through incorporation of school breakfast in the first-period classroom. The Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of Education, is also required to prepare and issue an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature on the number and percentage of students participating
in a school breakfast program, and the format used for providing
breakfast, for each school district and nonpublic school.
Currently, the vast majority of New Jersey school districts serve
breakfast to a fraction of eligible children. According to the Food
Research and Action Center, New Jersey ranks 46th nationwide for
its participation rate in the school breakfast program, and the center
estimates that New Jersey districts would collect roughly $21.7
million more annually from the federal government if schools
increase student participation so that 60 percent of students who
receive school lunch also get breakfast at school. If New Jersey
reached this benchmark, about 90,000 additional schoolchildren
would receive a healthy breakfast at the start of their school day.
According to experts, the percentage of students that participate in
school breakfast increases when breakfast is served in the classroom
after the start of school (i.e., “after the bell”). Research shows that
school breakfast increases attendance and decreases tardiness,
improves academic performance both in class and on standardized
tests, improves attentiveness, and reduces emotional and behavioral
problems among students from all backgrounds.