

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3944

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 17, 2021

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3944, with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill requires the Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of Education, to develop and administer a “breakfast after the bell” State supplement to provide an additional reimbursement to certain school districts that participate in the federal school breakfast program.

Under the bill, the State will provide a 10-cent per breakfast supplement to the existing federal reimbursement to a school district with schools that participate in the federal school breakfast program by providing “breakfast after the bell.”

The bill directs the Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of Education, to provide guidance and support to school districts, and to prepare and issue an annual report detailing the annual cost of the State supplement and the number and percentage of additional students participating in the “breakfast after the bell” program for each school district.

The bill specifies that the Legislature is to annually appropriate funds necessary to implement the bill and that the effective date of bill is the first day of the 2022-2023 school year.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amendments change the effective date of the bill from immediately to the first year of the 2022-2023 school year.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) determines that this bill would result in an annual expenditure increase by the Department of Agriculture from the General Fund of approximately \$4.5 million. According to a press release from the Department of Agriculture, more than 250,000 students received breakfast under a “breakfast after the bell” program during the 2018-19 school year. Assuming these students attend school 180 days per year, this translates to 45 million breakfasts served per year. Multiplying that number of meals by \$0.10 per meal, as required under the bill, yields a \$4.5 million annual expenditure increase.

The OLS notes that the additional sums expended by the State would be transferred to school districts that participate in the federal school breakfast program, thus the bill would also result in an annual local revenue increase of approximately \$4.5 million.

The OLS also notes that the bill may result in marginal annual expenditure increases by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Education to provide guidance and support to school districts, and to prepare an annual report required by the bill, but these additional duties can likely be subsumed by existing staff.