



ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed To Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

ALPHA RESOLUTION 6-2008

State Funding for the School Breakfast Program

Sponsor: Food Bank of Alaska
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WHEREAS the Alaska Public Health Association is dedicated to promoting the advancement of public health to improve health and quality of life for all Alaskans; and

WHEREAS ALPHA recognizes the necessity of improving nutrition as a primary component of health; and

WHEREAS 15% of Alaska's children are food insecure, meaning they don't have access at all times for enough food for a healthy active life¹; and

WHEREAS insufficient nutrition puts children at risk for illness and weakens their immune system. In comparison to food secure children, children from food insecure families are 90% more likely to be in fair or poor health and have 30% higher rates of hospitalization;² and

WHEREAS the lack of adequate nutrition affects the cognitive and behavioral development of children. Food insecurity is associated with grade repetition, absenteeism, tardiness, anxiety, aggression, poor mathematics scores, psychosocial dysfunction and difficulty with social interaction among 6 to 12 year old children;³ and

WHEREAS food insecurity puts children in jeopardy of developmental risk, characterized by challenges with speaking, behavior, and movement, which increases the likelihood of later problems with attention, learning, and social interaction.. Young children living in low income

¹ 2006 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, conducted by the Alaska Division of Public Health in cooperation with the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For a summary of the data and statistics on childhood hunger and food insecurity in Alaska, see Szadziewski, Henryk (2006), "Results from the 2006 Alaska BRFSS Survey Concerning the Hunger Issue," available at http://www.alaskafood.org/materials/2006BRFSS_Survey.pdf.

² Cook, JT., Frank, DA., Berkowitz, C., et al. Food Insecurity is Associated With Adverse Health Outcomes Among Human Infants and Toddlers. *Journal of Nutrition*. 2004; 134: 1432-1438.

³ Alaimo, K., Olson, C.M. and Frongillo, E.A. Food Insufficiency and American School-Aged Children's Cognitive, Academic and Psychosocial Development. *Pediatrics* 2001: 108; 44-53.

and food insecure households are more likely to be developmentally at risk than children from food secure households;⁴ and

WHEREAS federal programs exist to assist in providing nutrition to children through the schools, most notably the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program; and

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WHEREAS the School Breakfast Program decreases food insecurity in children by providing five healthy meals a week. Moreover, the School Breakfast Program has been found to be a valuable tool in fighting childhood obesity⁵ as children who have breakfast at school eat more fruits, drink more milk, and consume less saturated fat than those who skip breakfast or eat breakfast at home; and

WHEREAS only 34 percent of low-income students in Alaska received a school breakfast during the 2006-07 school year. Alaska ranks 48th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for participation in the School Breakfast Program⁶; and

WHEREAS 125 out of 406 schools in Alaska did not offer the federal School Breakfast Program in the 2006-2007 school year⁷; and

WHEREAS 8,589 children at those schools without School Breakfast belong to low income households and would have qualified for free or reduced-price breakfast through the School Breakfast Program⁸. In total, 35,375 students attend schools without breakfast programs; and

WHEREAS Alaskan schools primarily do not offer breakfast programs because it is not economically feasible. The federal reimbursement for breakfast does not cover the high costs of food and transportation in Alaska⁹;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association supports an adequate financial appropriation from the state to strengthen and expand the School Breakfast Program in Alaska, so that breakfast may be available to all children at all schools throughout the state, including low income children and children with food insecurity, and that the public health of all Alaskans will be positively impacted.

⁴ Rose-Jacobs, R., Black, M., Casey, P., Chilton, M., Cook, J., et al. Household Food Insecurity and Risk for Children's Developmental Problems. Pediatric Academic Society Meetings, San Francisco. May 2006.

⁵ "School Nutrition Programs and the Incidence of Childhood Obesity, Tchernis et al,

<http://www.iub.edu/~caepr/RePEc/PDF/2007/CAEPR2007-014.pdf>

⁶ See Food Research and Action Center (2007), "School Breakfast Scorecard 2007," available at http://www.frac.org/pdf/SBP_2007.pdf; and Food Research and Action Center (2005), *An Advocate's Guide to the School Nutrition Programs* (not available online).

⁷ Data from State of Alaska, Child Nutrition Services, Department of Education.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See pgs 6 to 8, "Breakfast for Learning in Alaska: A Report on the School Breakfast Program", available at http://www.foodbankofalaska.org/uploads/page/15/afc_breakfast_for_learning.pdf.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association will promote and advocate for state funding support for the School Breakfast Program and engage in low and no-cost advocacy efforts for this purpose such as:

- Circulation of advocacy action requests to membership
- Circulation of advocacy action requests to partners and other individuals
- Posting of ALPHA resolutions on the Alaska Public Health Association's website and/or making this resolution available
- Participation in email advocacy campaigns
- Contact with policy makers via phone, letter, email and/or in-person meetings
- Public testimony in legislative hearings, town hall meetings, and other public forums
- Contribution of op-ed articles and/or letters to the editor
- Contributions to radio programs via calling-in or scheduled interviews
- Distribution of this resolution statement to policy makers and key officials

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be the position of the Alaska Public Health Association until it is withdrawn or modified by a subsequent resolution.

Fiscal & Public Health Impact Statement

Fiscal Impact on ALPHA: This action will result in minor costs associated with sending this resolution and accompanying cover letter to the Governor and key political leaders.

Public Health Impact: Expansion of the School Breakfast Program will increase food insecurity in Alaska.