



REPRESENTATIVE CATHY MUÑOZ

HB132: Funding for School Meals

House Bill 132 will provide a state match of 35 cents for each breakfast served and 15 cents per lunch for schools participating in the federal Free and Reduced Price School Breakfast and Lunch Program. Currently, Alaska is one of twelve states that does not provide a state match and is amongst the bottom ten states for participation in the school meals program.

With an increased school participation rate to 60% Alaska has the opportunity to receive an additional \$1.9 million in federal funds which would greatly offset the state share.

One out of eight Alaskan families struggle to feed their families. While the school lunch program feeds over 36,000 students at a free or reduced rate for lunch, and over 18,000 for breakfast, only 20% of participating schools offer breakfast, impacting 22,253 Alaskan children, 6,850 of these children are from low income families who qualify for free or reduced price meals. HB132 provides an opportunity to offer more nutritious meals to a greater number of children.

Multiple studies have shown students who eat breakfast consistently improve in math, language, reading and vocabulary. Test scores increase, higher rates of attendance and a decrease in tardiness also occurs, with fewer behavioral problems and lower obesity rates.

This legislation is supported by the Food Bank of Alaska, The Alaska Food Coalition, Alaska School Nutrition Association, and has been endorsed by numerous school districts. These organizations have seen and heard about the struggle many families in Alaska face to put nutritious food on the table, and have first-hand knowledge of the increased benefits to the children. I urge your support for HB132.