

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI

## Sponsor Statement

### Senate Bill 213 – Funding for School Meals

"An Act providing for funding for school lunch and breakfast."

Senate Bill 213 will provide a state match for schools participating in the federal Free and Reduced Price School Breakfast and Lunch Program. This legislation will encourage more schools to provide nutritious meals for underprivileged children and allow schools that already do so to improve their programs. Currently in Alaska, thirty-two percent of schools offering school lunch do not offer school breakfast, leaving 10,000 Alaskan children with no access to affordable breakfast. For many children, these are the only nutritious meals they will get on a regular basis. Alaska is one of the only states that does not help supplement the program.

This legislation will provide school districts with a base amount of 35 cents for each breakfast served and 15 cents per lunch. To compensate for higher costs, rural schools will receive additional assistance through a funding formula based on the applicable School District Cost Factor for each district.

In addition to fighting childhood hunger, investing in school meals has been shown to improve school attendance and performance, reduce violence, and combat childhood obesity.

This legislation was requested by the Food Bank of Alaska, The Alaska Food Coalition, and the Alaska School Nutrition Association; and currently has been endorsed by the Yakutat Board of Education, the Petersburg Indian Association, the Petersburg School District, the Lower Kuskokwim School District, the Bering Strait School Board, the Cordova School District, the Yupiit School District, the Kenai Peninsula School District, the Chugach School District, and the AARP.