

Report to JEC on Food Service Supplemental Assistance

Pursuant to 2008 Laws, SEA 45, Section 601 (f)

History/Authority: Mary Kay

Introduction:

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, my name is Amy Manley and I am a consultant with the School Foundation Program at the Department. In addition to the background Mary Kay has just provided, I will be reporting to you on the implementation of the food service supplemental assistance legislation and expenditures, as well as recommendations for program continuation.

Implementation:

- A task force was formed by the Department to develop Rules and Regulations governing food service supplemental assistance, comprised of WDE staff and members of the SFDAC. The rules (Chapter 4) are currently out for public comment until Nov. 14, 2008.
- Per the legislation, the Department designed a Food Service Operations Annual Report to collect district program operations, policies and procedures data, as well as district intent to apply for financial assistance.
 - a. The Annual Report was submitted to the Department by school districts on August 15, 2008.
 - b. The data collected from the Annual Report will be compiled and used to provide technical assistance and training to school districts, along with subsequent reports and for model recalibration purposes.
 - c. Included in your packet is a district training schedule – dates have been pushed back approximately one month due to staff changes. The training is intended to assist districts with strategic plans and best practices.
- The task force also led an effort to standardize the accounting structure, in order for districts to report fiscal data consistently.
 - a. The Department will maintain the data collection effort and analysis of school district food service operations for use in model recalibration and subsequent reports.
- Your packet contains a spreadsheet depicting school district deficits used to determine district eligibility and to calculate the per meal reimbursement amount.
- Payments were calculated by the Department and distributed to districts with the October 15, 2008, Foundation Payments.
 - a. Also included in your packet is a payment summary. Calculated per the legislation, the 2008-09 per meal reimbursement amount was approximately \$0.58.
 - b. The non-rounded amount was used to calculate district payments. A pro-rata reduction was applied in order to stay within the allocated \$4.5 million.

Recommendations:

First, the Department recommends continuing funding food service supplemental assistance to school districts at the 2008-09 allotment of \$4.5 million.

Additionally, the Department recommends that additional language be added to the existing legislation that requires the assistance amount to be the lesser of the per meal reimbursement or the deficit amount, in order to encourage efficient school district food service operations. This recommendation was also supported by members of the School Finance Data Advisory Committee.

That concludes my report. Questions? Thank you!