

Date of Hearing: April 24, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
AB 1663 (Luz Rivas) – As Amended April 9, 2019

SUBJECT: California State Library: Lunch at the Library Program

SUMMARY: This bill appropriates \$1 million from the General Fund to the California State Library to support the Lunch at the Library Program.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to award grants of up to fifteen thousand dollars per schoolsite on a competitive basis to school districts, county superintendents of schools, or entities approved by the CDE for nonrecurring expenses incurred in initiating or expanding a school breakfast program or summer food service program, subject to annual appropriation in the budget act. (Education Code 49550.3)
- 2) Requires each school district or county superintendent of schools maintaining any kindergarten through grade 12 to provide for each needy pupil one nutritionally adequate free or reduced-price meal during each schoolday, except for family day care homes that are reimbursed for 75% of the meals served. (Education Code Section 49550)
- 3) Defines "needy children" as those children who meet federal eligibility criteria for free and reduced-price meals, except for family day care homes which are reimbursed for 75% of the meals. (Education Code Section 49552)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Need for the bill.* According to the author, "According to the California Association of Food Banks, 85% of children who benefit from federally funded free or reduced lunch during the school year experience food insecurity during the summer when school is out. In the Los Angeles School District where almost 70% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, summer food insecurity among children is a huge problem. To help ameliorate this problem, the federal government established the Summer Food Service Program to reimburse summer meal providers. In order to tap into this federal law, however, libraries need funds to help apply for these programs, train and hire staff, keep track of meals served, and file for reimbursements. AB 1663 seeks to provide additional funding needed to help sites in California tap into this program. Failing to help libraries use this funding would be a missed opportunity to bridge the gap for the millions of low-income California children who face food insecurity during the summer months."

Summer food insecurity among children. The USDA reports in the Food Security Status of U.S. Households in 2017 that just under 12% of households were food insecure: at times during the year, these households were uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources for food. For children, food insecurity is often more severe in the summer months. The California Association of Food Banks reports that 1.7 million children in California experience summer hunger, and 85% of children who benefit from the federally funded free or reduced-price lunches during the school year miss the similar lunch programs available in the summer. Every summer, 17 of 20 low-income students fall into the summer nutrition gap.

The Summer Food Service Program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Summer Food Service Program is a federally-funded, state administered program. The SFSP reimburses providers, or “sponsors” who serve free healthy meals to children and teens in low-income areas during the summer months when schools are not in session. In California, the program is administered by the California Department of Education. According to the USDA, “Good nutrition is essential for learning in school. The SFSP provides an opportunity to continue a child's physical and social development while providing nutritious meals during vacation periods from school. Participation in the SFSP helps children return to school ready to learn.”

Who can be an SFSP Sponsor? Eligible SFSP sponsors include public or private nonprofit school food authorities (SFA); public or private nonprofit colleges or universities; public or private nonprofit residential summer camps; units of local, county, municipal, state, or federal governments; or any other type of tax-exempt private nonprofit organizations.

Table 1. 2016-17 California Summer Food Service Program Participation

	July 2017	Annual 2016-17
SFSP Sponsors	193	199
SFSP Meals Served (including breakfast, lunch, supper and snack)	3,631,277	7,218,451
SFSP Federal Reimbursement	\$10,469,098.37	\$20,801,677.31

Source: California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division.

School Breakfast Program/Summer Food Service Program Start-up and Expansion Grants:

In recent years, the Legislature has appropriated funding for grants of up to \$15,000 per school site for nonrecurring expenses. In 2016, Governor Brown signed SB 828 (Committee on Budget) into law, which provided an additional \$2 million in grant funds for two years for sites that want to start-up or expand Breakfast After the Bell service models. The funds, which were available in 2017–18 and 2018–19 school years, prioritized grants for Breakfast After the Bell Programs in schools that have at least 60% of enrolled students approved for free or reduced-price meals.

Table 2 shows the number of grant applications submitted and awarded, and the number of dollars requested and awarded over the last five years.

Table 2. School Breakfast Program and Summer Food Service Program Start-up and Expansion Grant History

	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Amount Requested	\$1,811,542	\$1,628,544	\$1,882,195	\$956,658	\$2,403,862
Amount Awarded	\$1,017,000	\$1,017,000	\$1,017,000	\$956,658	\$2,253,862
Applications Received	46	44	34	24	46
Applications Awarded	31	20	17	24	45

Lunch at the Library Program. According to the California Lunch at the Library website, “Lunch at the Library provides library staff with the tools and support they need to develop successful public library summer meal programs that provide children and teens in low-income communities with free and nutritious lunches through the USDA Summer Food Service Program. In addition to summer meals, Lunch at the Library sites provide participants with a safe and welcoming space, learning and enrichment opportunities, and an introduction to the library’s diverse services and resources.

The Lunch at the Library program is a project of the California Library Association, designed to support public libraries’ efforts to operate the USDA’s SFSP. It is supported with Library Services and Technology Act funding which is administered by the California State Librarian.” The Budget Act of 2018 appropriated \$1,000,000, on a one-time basis, to the California State Library and California Library Services Board, to support the Lunch at the Library Program. According to the Lunch at the Library Program, the 2018-2019 funds are being used to support Lunch at the Library Programs taking place in summer 2019. Lunch at the Library Program 2018-19 funds are displayed in Table 2. Libraries can use the funds, as follows:

- To support the establishment of new public library summer meal sites.
- To increase learning and enrichment programs and activities for children, teens, and families at ongoing summer meal sites.
- To take pop-up libraries to meal sites out in the community.
- To provide youth development opportunities for teens at summer meal sites.
- To provide early childhood nutrition and learning opportunities at summer meal sites.
- Funds can be used for supplies for learning and enrichment programs, book giveaways, staffing, and operational supplies.

No funds are used to provide meals or to supplement meal reimbursements. Project staff and consultants recruit new libraries to participate in Lunch at the Library, implement and manage the grant program to libraries, and provide information, training, technical assistance, and evaluation support.

Table 2. Lunch at the Library Program 2018-19 Funds

Project staff and consultants	\$168,000
Travel (e.g. to trainings, site visits)	\$14,000
Funds to libraries	\$772,543
Indirect/overhead (California Library Association)	\$45,457
Total	\$1,000,000

According to an article “Libraries are Bridging the Summer Gap for Hungry Kids,” by Civil Eats, an online periodical about the American food system, “...libraries-as-lunch-sites...make a lot of sense: They’re often centrally located, offer books, activities, coveted air conditioning, and safety, and the USDA doesn’t require them or similar participating sites—including Boys & Girls Clubs, local parks, recreation centers, and churches—to ask for proof of need; Anyone under the age of 18 who shows up eats for free, no questions asked.”

Committee Amendment: *Staff recommends* the bill be amended to: specify that the appropriation be one-time.

Prior legislation. SB 840 (Mitchell) Chapter 29, Statutes of 2018. The Budget Act of 2018 appropriated \$1 million, on a one-time basis, to the California State Library and California Library Services Board, to support the Lunch at the Library Program.

SB 828 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 29, Statutes of 2016, appropriated funds for the breakfast after the start of the school day program.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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