



CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

Kimberley Driscoll

Mayor

July 17, 2017

Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, Chair
Representative Alice Peisch, Chair
Joint Committee on Education
Massachusetts State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Chang-Diaz, Representative Peisch, and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my support for the After the Bell legislation for grades PreK through 12 in schools with 60% or greater free and reduced eligible populations. Nine of our schools in Salem fall in this category and nearly four out of five Salem public school students qualify for free or reduced. Despite this, only 56% of our students participated in school breakfast after the bell last year; this coming school year we hope to greatly expand that, to close the gap between free/reduced lunch and breakfast participation.

Hunger in our classrooms has a real and tangible impact on our kids, both in terms of educational attainment and social well-being. We know and have seen the positive impacts that our after the bell breakfast has had on academic achievement, attendance, and more. It also provides, for our most food insecure students, a nutritious meal, and it aligns with our efforts through the By All Means initiative with Harvard's Graduate School of Education to strengthen and improve social and emotional supports for students both inside and outside of the classroom.

There are few areas where Massachusetts lags in the nation when it comes to support for excellent public schools, our teachers, and our students. Sadly, breakfast participation is one of those areas, where our Commonwealth ranks 39th across the country. As the Mayor of Salem, as the Chair of the Salem School Committee, as a public school parent, I strongly support the After the Bell legislation before the committee today and encourage you to do so, as well.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kim Driscoll".

Kimberley Driscoll
Mayor
City of Salem

CC: State Representative Paul Tucker
State Senator Joan Lovely