

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 242 and House Bill 327, Breakfast After the Bell Programs**  
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The #1 reason why I write to the Joint Committee on Education today in support of this After the Bell (ATB) legislation for grades PreK-12 in schools with 60%+ free and reduced eligible populations is because we must ensure that students have the nutrition they need to learn. The traditional breakfast in the cafeteria model does not meet the need and while other after the bell models helps increase breakfast participation, only breakfast in the classroom is proven to consistently reach participation rates of 80% or better.

This program has made a major impact on the hidden not talked about hunger issue that exist in the City of Springfield. Because of the hunger issue that we are experiencing with in our school community, Springfield has committed to expanding breakfast after the bell in the classroom and making it available at all of our schools across the district, 60 schools, 26,000 students, all grades PreK-12<sup>th</sup>.

Since implementing BIC ATB we have seen gains in academic performance, attendance, tardiness, disciplinary referrals, and the opportunity for increased social-emotional check-in time with students.

With the increase in participation there has been a significant increase in revenue. With this additional revenue, we have been able to improve meal quality and choices. BIC has also created over 60 fulltime positions with benefits. In a community like Springfield, these jobs make a meaningful difference on many fronts.

We need this legislation in order to ensure that our students get the healthy food they need and a path to stamp out hunger. I invite anyone on the Committee to come to Springfield and observe breakfast after the bell and in the classroom or to call me with any questions you may have regarding our program.

I encourage the Joint Committee on Education to support this legislation, so that more students can start the school day ready to learn.

Sincerely,  
  
Timothy Gray