



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 500 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator Dayna Polehanki
Committee: Education

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Revised School Code to require the Department of Education (MDE) to create and operate a program in which public schools could provide free school lunch and breakfast to eligible students.

Proposed MCL 380.1271

BRIEF RATIONALE

According to testimony before the Senate Committee on Education, food insecurity can negatively affect a student's ability to learn. Hunger and associated stress and anxiety can reduce a student's concentration, harm academic performance, cause behavioral issues, and increase a student's likelihood of getting sick. While some food-insecure students may have access to free or reduced lunch programs, the stigma attached to those programs may dissuade students from taking advantage of them. Accordingly, it has been suggested that the Free School Breakfast and Lunch program included in Public Act (PA) 103 of 2023 permanently be offered to all K-12 students and certain pupils enrolled in special education programs.

Legislative Analyst: Abby Schneider

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the State or local government. Public Act 103 of 2023 included funding for universal school breakfast and lunch programs in the School Aid Act. The MDE estimates that the expansion for free breakfast and lunch to all students will cost approximately \$160.0 million per year, which was the amount appropriated in PA 103 for the 2023-2024 school year. The bill clarifies that, in addition to pupils in grades pre-K to 12, the program also would cover pupils aged 26 or less who were enrolled in special education programs, including pupils who attend the Michigan School for the Deaf. While these additional pupils were not included in PA 103, the original estimate of \$160.0 million per year included them, so the estimated cost of the program would not change.

There likely would not be operational change for MDE, as the program in the bill is identical to the program created by PA 103.

Date Completed: 9-26-23

Fiscal Analyst: Ryan Bergan