

Prepare 2008

public policy strategies for economic justice



"You Must Be the Change You Want to See in the World" - MAHATMA GANDHI



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Universal Access to a Free School Breakfast

Florida has the fourth-highest number of children (713,162) living at or below poverty among the states. Over 65% of its school children qualify for free or reduced-price (FRP) school meals. In the late 80s, children did not have access to a school breakfast in 19 Florida counties, so Florida Impact secured a statewide school breakfast mandate from the Florida Legislature that required all elementary schools to offer the National School Breakfast Program. In its first year of implementation, more than 50,000 children sat down for the first time to a school breakfast—the overwhelming majority of them from low-income families. Now, nearly 20 years later, approximately half a million Florida school children participate in the breakfast program every school day, and Florida ranks second in the nation (a half point behind South Carolina) for its high percentage of *all* schools offering school breakfasts.

Still, school breakfast could do more. It is currently reaching only 30 percent of children eligible to receive a free and reduced-price breakfast in Florida schools, leaving nearly \$193 million in Washington that could be used to feed children from low-income families. A substantial improvement in school breakfast participation rates would create a critical opportunity to affect the rates of hunger and poor nutrition among Florida's children. School breakfasts provide at least one-quarter of the daily recommended levels for key nutrients that children need and are required to provide no more than one-third of calories from fat and less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. Research shows that children who have school breakfast eat more fruits, drink more milk, and consume a wider variety of foods than those who don't eat

breakfast or have breakfast at home.

So what's getting in the way of more children partaking in a nutritious school breakfast? More often than not, breakfast takes place in the school cafeteria before the official school day begins. Many students who are eligible for free or reduced price school breakfast do not participate because they do not wish to identify themselves as low-income by eating school breakfast. Providing breakfast at no charge to all students helps remove the stigma for low-income children. Studies show that Universal School Breakfast programs dramatically increase student participation in school breakfast. Another strategy of Universal School Breakfast programs is to provide breakfast in the classroom when school starts in the morning, rather than in the cafeteria before school starts, which makes it easier for children to participate.

Impact is working on state legislation that would require universal free breakfasts in Florida schools with at least an 80% FRP-eligible enrollment. Some school districts that serve a large percentage of students from low-income families are finding they can provide free breakfasts to all students, even without adopting Provision 2 (a regulation designed to reduce paperwork for schools offering universally free breakfasts). The increased participation brings in a sufficient amount of federal reimbursement revenue to cover the loss of funds from the smaller number of paid students. The national School Breakfast Program provides per meal cash reimbursements to public and non-profit private schools that provide free and reduced price breakfasts to eligible children. Four states (Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, and North Carolina) have provided additional state funding for costs beyond the federal reimbursement for Universal School Breakfast.

The Florida bill also requires a percentage of the schools offering universal free breakfasts to provide them in alternative settings, like breakfast-in-the-classroom or grab-and-go at the bus loops. Senator Steve Wise (R-Jacksonville) and Rep. Will Kendrick (R-Hamilton, Madison, Taylor, and five other north Florida counties) are sponsoring S1458 and H623, respectively. Though the Senate has not yet assigned the committees through which S1458 must pass, the House has assigned H623 to the Schools and Learning Council, chaired by Joe Pickens of the Palatka area, and the Policy and Budget Council, chaired by Ray Sansom of Ft. Walton Beach.

Statistical data is originally derived from the Florida Department of Education.

Universal School Breakfast improves student achievement and behavior

- Studies conclude that students who eat school breakfast at the start of the school day show a general increase in math and reading scores as well as improvements in their speed and memory in cognitive tests.
- Children who eat breakfast at school - closer to class and test-taking time -perform better on standardized tests than those who skip breakfast or eat breakfast at home.
- Schools that provide breakfast in the classroom at no cost to all students report decreases in discipline and psychological problems, visits to school nurses and tardiness; increases in student attentiveness and attendance; and generally improved learning environments.

To communicate directly with your legislators during the 2008 Florida legislative session, go to the *Let Your Voice Be Heard* page of the Florida Impact website:
<http://flimpact.org/yourvoice.html>

2006 - 2007 School Year National School Breakfast Stats

Florida County	# of Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunches	Average Daily Participation for Free and Reduced-price Breakfast	Average Daily Participation for Paid Breakfast	Average Daily Participation for All Served Breakfasts	Est. % of Free/Reduced Eligible Children Participating in Breakfast	Free/Reduced Federal Dollars Potentially Lost	Potential # of Unserved FRP Children
Alachua	13,521	4,750	560	5,310	35.13%	\$1,985,852	8,771
Baker	2,130	691	228	919	32.44%	\$322,792	1,439
Bay	11,751	3,401	784	4,185	28.94%	\$1,840,086	8,350
Bradford	1,954	589	118	707	30.14%	\$306,639	1,365
Brevard	22,797	9,759	6,238	15,997	42.81%	\$2,887,466	13,038
Broward	110,485	26,920	9,428	36,348	24.37%	\$18,620,253	83,565
Calhoun	1,150	501	149	650	43.57%	\$143,638	649
Charlotte	7,786	2,360	674	3,034	30.31%	\$1,180,469	5,426
Citrus	6,918	1,938	746	2,684	28.01%	\$1,112,076	4,980
Clay	9,349	2,162	1,290	3,452	23.13%	\$1,579,027	7,187
Collier	18,932	5,941	2,142	8,083	31.38%	\$2,876,708	12,991
Columbia	5,570	1,690	321	2,011	30.34%	\$865,656	3,880
Dade	216,404	60,797	10,303	71,100	28.09%	\$34,868,227	155,607
Desoto	3,115	871	114	985	27.96%	\$507,805	2,244
Dixie	1,497	642	97	739	42.89%	\$191,943	855
Duval	53,042	20,111	8,214	28,325	37.92%	\$7,393,394	32,931
Escambia	23,947	8,747	963	9,710	36.53%	\$3,378,474	15,200
Flagler	4,179	1,668	1,004	2,672	39.91%	\$547,760	2,511
Franklin	827	252	40	292	30.47%	\$129,051	575
Gadsden	5,255	1,957	119	2,076	37.24%	\$749,318	3,298
Gilchrist	1,437	565	169	734	39.32%	\$194,332	872
Glades	804	304	64	368	37.81%	\$113,148	500
Gulf	1,001	135	4	139	13.49%	\$190,595	866
Hamilton	819	651	54	705	79.49%	\$33,944	168
Hardee	3,531	1,291	267	1,558	36.56%	\$511,074	2,240
Hendry	5,066	2,117	399	2,516	41.79%	\$668,320	2,949
Hernando	9,841	2,651	762	3,413	26.94%	\$1,582,164	7,190
Highlands	7,378	3,700	1,151	4,851	50.15%	\$825,044	3,678
Hillsborough	95,729	34,603	18,258	52,861	36.15%	\$13,711,565	61,126
Holmes	1,848	651	207	858	35.23%	\$261,625	1,197
Indian River	7,572	2,782	880	3,662	36.74%	\$1,062,576	4,790
Jackson	3,999	1,948	767	2,715	48.71%	\$461,270	2,051

Table Continued...2006-2007 School Year National School Breakfast Stats

Florida County	# of Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunches	Average Daily Participation for Free and Reduced-price Breakfast	Average Daily Participation for Paid Breakfast	Average Daily Participation for All Served Breakfasts	Est. % of Free/Reduced Eligible Children Participating in Breakfast	Free/Reduced Federal Dollars Potentially Lost	Potential # of Unserved FRP Children
Jefferson	962	562	89	651	58.42%	\$91,458	400
Lafayette	561	121	19	140	21.57%	\$99,432	440
Lake	16,576	3,751	979	4,730	22.63%	\$2,832,327	12,825
Lee	34,871	9,081	2,442	11,523	26.04%	\$5,703,444	25,790
Leon	11,825	3,147	867	4,014	26.61%	\$1,958,792	8,678
Levy	3,744	1,261	159	1,420	33.68%	\$555,683	2,483
Liberty	751	280	76	356	37.28%	\$104,582	471
Madison	2,077	676	46	722	32.55%	\$319,448	1,401
Manatee	18,517	6,757	1,873	8,630	36.49%	\$2,632,446	11,760
Marion	23,272	8,770	2,632	11,402	37.68%	\$3,236,080	14,502
Martin	4,375	1,887	447	2,334	43.13%	\$547,196	2,488
Monroe	2,855	816	279	1,095	28.58%	\$451,690	2,039
Nassau	3,774	1,182	570	1,752	31.32%	\$571,720	2,592
Okaloosa	8,952	2,651	1,388	4,039	29.61%	\$1,379,612	6,301
Okeechobee	4,008	1,372	410	1,782	34.23%	\$598,403	2,636
Orange	87,749	19,226	3,091	22,317	21.91%	\$15,315,647	68,523
Osceola	29,834	7,944	1,625	9,569	26.63%	\$4,836,258	21,890
Palm Beach	74,658	17,102	2,502	19,604	22.91%	\$12,970,793	57,556
Pasco	28,089	11,517	3,807	15,324	41.00%	\$3,661,222	16,572
Pinellas	45,344	10,824	1,896	12,720	23.87%	\$7,694,208	34,520
Polk	55,600	13,397	1,629	15,026	24.10%	\$9,470,705	42,203
Putnam	8,065	4,240	862	5,102	52.57%	\$856,575	3,825
Santa Rosa	8,164	3,153	2,204	5,357	38.62%	\$1,098,812	5,011
Sarasota	14,739	2,945	859	3,804	19.98%	\$2,571,991	11,794
Seminole	20,753	12,100	3,861	15,961	58.30%	\$1,830,479	8,653
St Johns	4,742	1,586	559	2,145	33.45%	\$694,505	3,156
St Lucie	20,710	6,897	1,711	8,608	33.30%	\$3,064,163	13,813
Sumter	3,975	1,693	483	2,176	42.59%	\$504,994	2,282
Suwannee	3,197	984	176	1,160	30.78%	\$497,417	2,213
Taylor	2,002	847	111	958	42.31%	\$261,009	1,155
Union	1,102	390	89	479	35.39%	\$158,764	712
Volusia	28,053	9,291	5,424	14,715	33.12%	\$4,172,494	18,762
Wakulla	1,811	520	264	784	28.71%	\$287,192	1,291
Walton	3,040	1,198	333	1,531	39.41%	\$409,180	1,842
Washington	1,981	776	135	911	39.17%	\$266,157	1,205
Florida Totals	1,240,362	376,089	110,411	486,500	30.32%	\$192,807,167	864,273

Affordable Housing in Florida

In 1992, the Florida Legislature established a dedicated revenue source for affordable housing, known as the William E. Sadowski Affordable Housing Act. Creative and highly accountable programs for the use of those monies were also created in an umbrella format comprising two trust funds, the State Housing Trust Fund and the Local Government Housing Trust Fund. Revenues for these two trust funds were intentionally tied to a documentary tax on real estate transactions, so that as property values and population increases drove up doc stamp receipts, the monies available for housing would increase proportionately. These revenues are divided between the two trust funds: 31 percent for the State Housing Trust Fund; and 69 percent for the Local Government Housing Trust Fund.

The 2008 Florida Legislature will confront two important issues facing Florida's affordable housing needs. First, the Florida Constitution requires that all trust funds be reauthorized every four years. The state and local housing trust funds were last reauthorized by a unanimous vote of the 2004 Legislature. Therefore they must be reauthorized during the 2008 session. Second, the Legislature will be asked again to remove the cap on housing trust fund distributions, which was implemented on July 1st of last year. This arbitrary annual cap of \$243 million is \$150-\$300 million per year less than the dedicated revenue would have generated for housing in accordance with its design.

Repeal of the cap will produce significant economic benefits for Florida and does not tie the hands of the Legislature—if the funds are needed to balance the budget they can be utilized for that purpose. In fact, the Legislature *has already done this* in the past—most recently in the budget crisis that followed post 9-11 revenue shortfalls.

And that point leads to the immediate threat to affordable housing funds brewing in the 2008 Florida legislative session. The Governor's pro-

For every \$1 million of state funding:

over \$6.05 million of housing is built and/or sold;

\$10.36 million of economic activity is generated;

\$4.05 million of earnings/income are paid;

106 jobs are created; and

almost \$100,000 of sales tax is paid back to the State
(attributable to the purchase of construction
materials).

posed budget is dependent on a sizeable sweep of trust funds (housing *and otherwise*)—a transfer of housing funds alone amounting to \$363 million over two years. The degree to which affordable housing monies are being taken for other purposes in this proposed budget is substantial. Legislators will say they need every penny for a profoundly bleak budget year, but putting dedicated monies into the state and local housing trust funds to work on preserving, producing, and assisting people to get into housing is the wisest thing the Legislature can do.

Unlike many crises, Florida prepared for this one by creating an effective, affordable-housing funding system. The housing trust funds were set up to generate more money as more funds were needed. Coupled with our innovative housing programs, the state has enough resource to address the housing crisis—but only if the trust funds are reauthorized, and the cap is repealed. The Florida Legislature has closely scrutinized both the state and local housing trust funds and produced reviews showing that Sadowski Act monies have been an unequivocal success in promoting home ownership, building quality rental housing, leveraging public dollars with private investments, and providing an economic boost to Florida far in excess of the amount of funds appropriated for housing.

Since the Sadowski Act's implementation, state and local housing trust funds have produced or preserved over 200,000 homes for Floridians. This trend needs to continue. Cap Repeal bills have been filed in both the House (HB 5) and Senate (SB 74 and 80).

SOURCE: Sadowski/Workforce Housing Coalition. "FLORIDA'S SADOWSKI/WORKFORCE HOUSING COALITION CALLS FOR REPEAL OF THE CAP ON THE HOUSING TRUST FUNDS," 2008.



Celebrate Florida Impact In it's 29th Year!

Since 1979, Florida Impact has been dedicated to reducing hunger and poverty in Florida. Impact educates and enlists the people of Florida to secure justice for and with those whose economic rights have not been realized. We also work to increase access to food programs by conducting aggressive outreach strategies and public policy advocacy. Through your generous support we can continue to inspire the people of Florida to do justice.

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