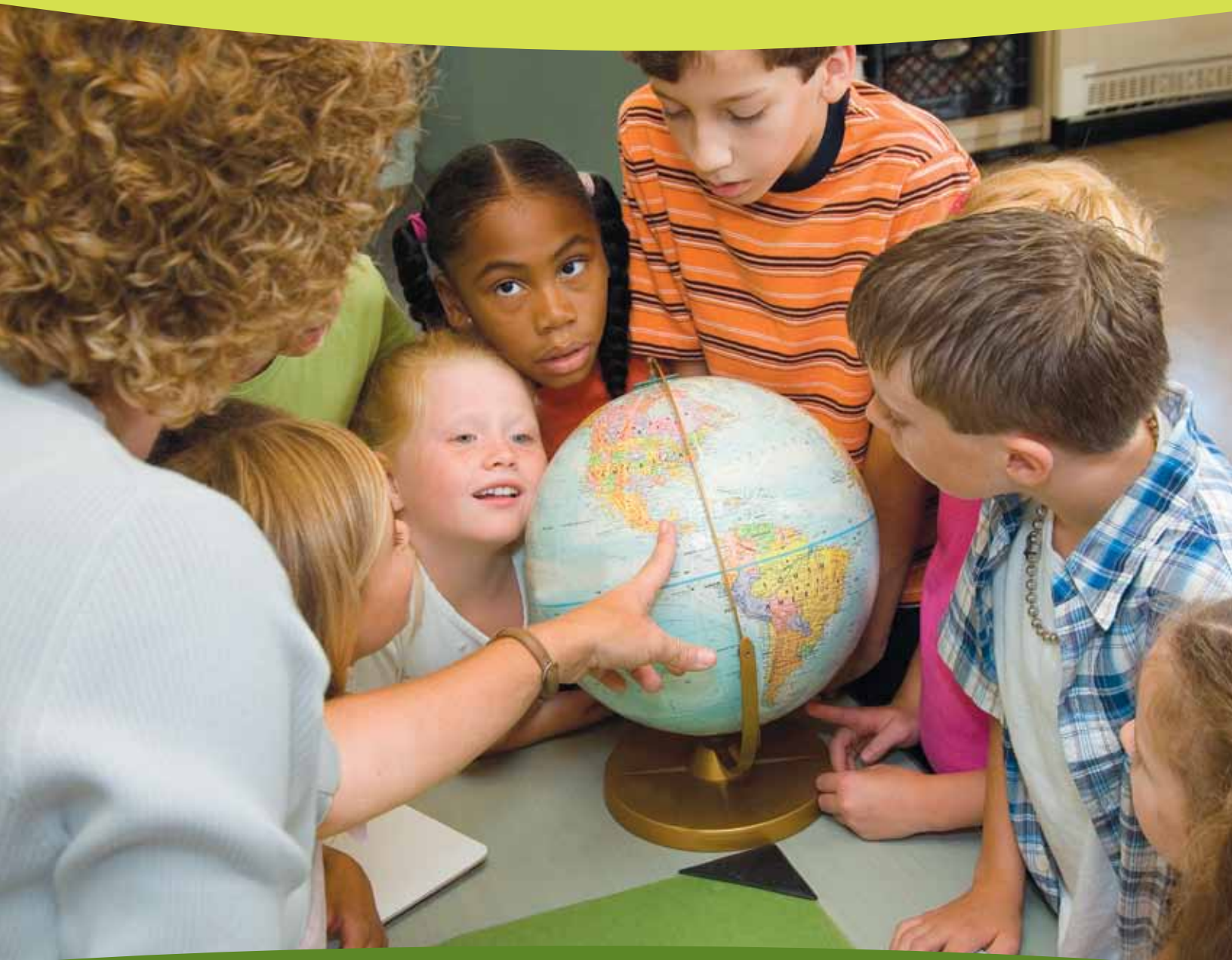




Feeding Ohio's Hungry Future: *Goals for a Brighter Tomorrow*





Jon A. Husted
Speaker, 37th House District

September 11, 2008

Mr. William J. Dolan, CEO
Children's Hunger Alliance
370 S. Fifth Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Mr. Dolan:

It is with great pleasure that I write to express my continued support of the Children's Hunger Alliance and its outstanding advocacy on behalf of Ohio's children.

The mission of Children's Hunger Alliance has consistently impacted the lives of so many children across our state in a positive way, and your sustained efforts are to be commended. For more than 35 years, the members and partners of this tremendous organization have worked tirelessly to reach out to all children, and your presence in each of Ohio's counties shows how much you have accomplished.

Furthermore, I appreciate your work to collaborate with other entities, including the Ohio Legislature, to coordinate community-wide efforts to combat childhood hunger. In conducting community meetings, legislative briefings and regular updates to the Ohio General Assembly, you have provided my colleagues and me the valuable tools and information necessary to promote public awareness and accessibility to school breakfast and lunch programs, as well many other worthwhile goals.

I sincerely believe that your continued work will lead to increased accessibility to food, nutritional education and quality child care for those Ohio children most in need. Additionally, thanks to the education and advocacy efforts of Children's Hunger Alliance, millions of federal dollars will be put to excellent use in feeding children here in our state.

Although your commitment and hard work have made important strides in raising awareness on the issue of childhood hunger, including the Legislature's expansion of the school breakfast program in Ohio's public schools, I recognize there remains much more to be done. I look forward to calling on the expertise of Children's Hunger Alliance as we work together toward accomplishing our shared goal to end childhood hunger in Ohio.

Again, thank you for all you do on behalf of our state's children—you have made Ohio proud.

Sincerely,

Jon A. Husted
Speaker
Ohio House of Representatives

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October 1, 2008

Mr. William J. Dolan, CEO
Children's Hunger Alliance
370 S. Fifth Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Mr. Dolan:

→ 3.11.11

The purpose of this correspondence is to extend my continued support to Children's Hunger Alliance as you move your legislative agenda forward in an effort to impact the lives of children in the state of Ohio.

Upon the release of your annual policy report, it is appropriate to celebrate your achievements to date and evaluate future goals. Since 1970 you have been feeding hungry minds and bodies in an effort to reach all Ohio children in need. In alleviating the burden of hunger for so many children in our state, your work has been both innovative and comprehensive. Perhaps what is most impressive is your strategic advocacy efforts with the Ohio General Assembly.

The state loses so many dollars and young lives to hunger, malnutrition and obesity. This atrocity will not be overlooked by the Ohio Legislature and Children's Hunger Alliance as we endure increased economic challenges. I support Children Hunger's Alliance initiatives to increase participation in school breakfast, school lunch and summer food services. The state needs to increase awareness of available programs to working families and reach out to all those who care for children as we develop strategies to decrease the growing prevalence of childhood obesity.

The legislature will continue to rely on your creative leadership to help advance our shared goals of eliminating poverty and hunger in our great state. Hungry children are not healthy children and we need healthy children to improve the strength of our education system and the security of our economy. Investing in the physical needs of our children is not only fundamental to the condition of our state and nation but also is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your commitment to the children and families of our state. As a past Board Member, I appreciate your dedication and hard work and look forward to working with you in the upcoming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Miller".

Senator Ray Miller
Minority Leader

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Ohio Fatherhood Commission
Ohio Commission on African American Males

Foreword

It goes without saying: children who eat better, do better in school. Children who don't have access to healthy meals are forced to suffer or become at-risk for a number of undesirable academic, developmental and social outcomes, which no family, school or community would ever encourage. And in Ohio, we've got a long way to go in order to make sure Ohio's schoolchildren don't experience those outcomes.

In July 2001, a study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics detailed the chokehold hunger places on a child's academic achievement. Hungry children, the researchers said, had "significantly lower arithmetic scores and were more likely to have repeated a grade, seen a psychologist and had difficulty getting along with other children."

During the 2007-2008 school year, just one-sixth of Ohio's schoolchildren benefited from school breakfast programs. Even more children missed the opportunity to benefit from summer food programs. Children's Hunger Alliance can change that, and as you'll see in this report, we've been changing it. We are making tremendous strides in expanding participation in Child Nutrition Programs made available by the United States Department of Agriculture- but we cannot rest until every child in Ohio is reached.

This report illustrates the challenges ahead, the beneficial programs available and the following goals we must strive for in order to eradicate childhood hunger in Ohio:

By the end of 2011, Ohio policymakers should work to ensure that...

- an additional 40,000 students are participating in the School Breakfast Program each day.
- an additional 20,000 students are participating in the National School Lunch Program each day.
- an additional 20,000 students are participating in the Summer Food Service Program.
- an additional 10,000 children are participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- a comprehensive action plan to slow the growth of childhood obesity has been adopted, paying special attention to improving access to healthier choices and physical activity for children.
- state and local government agencies partner with nonprofit, faith-based and community organizations to maximize federal resources for improved outreach efforts.

We hope you join us in collaboratively fighting the battle to ensure all of Ohio's kids are healthy, well-nourished and thrive.



Difficult Times

Families across the country and Ohio are dealing with heightened costs of living. The rate at which these costs are rising mirrors the growing number of people who are struggling to cope:

- The number of Ohioans on food stamps has doubled since 2001 to 1.1 million people.¹
- The unemployment rate has ballooned to 7.4% in August 2008, up nearly two percentage points in 12 months.²
- The cost of gasoline has skyrocketed.³ Subsequently, the cost of groceries has risen dramatically, soaring 6.1% in just a year's time.⁴
- The increasing demand for and cost of meals has been hard on foodbanks, as well. In December 2007, foodbanks across the state were so overwhelmed by demand that thousands of families had to be turned away: so many more families found themselves struggling to put food on the table that there just wasn't enough food to go around.⁵

“Americans are hurting in so many ways that if we don't start now it will become even more difficult to help in the future,” United States Senator George V. Voinovich said when initially calling for a government study on the rising costs of food. “We need to stop debating whether there is a problem and start taking action to help people deal with the problems that are so obvious in their daily lives...”⁶

Item	% price increase
Beef	1.5
Poultry	4.5
Eggs	18.2
Milk	10.2
Cheese	14.0
Apples	7.4
Bananas	21.7
Lettuce	1.0
Tomatoes	4.0
Potatoes	3.5
Cereal	10.5
Coffee	8.5

*Leibtag, Dr. Ephraim. Testimony Before the Committee on Education and Labor. July 9, 2008.
<http://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/le-2008-07-09.shtml>

When one considers the rising price of food and fuel in the midst of a difficult economy the challenge of feeding hungry children is as daunting as ever. Today, one in six Ohio children suffers from the devastating effects of hunger.

Children's Hunger Alliance has long been a committed and successful partner with state and local governments, foodbanks, community and faith-based organizations, schools and afterschool facilities in complementing and driving the efforts to make sure that every child has access to three nutritious meals a day.

Preventable Problems

Hunger is a condition of poverty. Living with such limited resources compels families to choose between shelter, health care, education and food and to prioritize accordingly. Typically, impoverished families are forced to limit the number of meals they consume and to reduce the quality of their diets in the process, all in the name of saving money.

Hunger- the nagging, attention-diverting pain caused by a lack of food on a regular basis- is not a matter of choice for 495,000 children in Ohio; it can be a daily, day-long reality.

In addition, those children also run the risk of suffering from so much more: impaired cognitive development and school performance; increased school absence and tardiness; decreased scores on standardized tests and lower graduation rates; increased hospitalization rates; dramatic rises in stomach aches, ear aches, colds and fatigue.

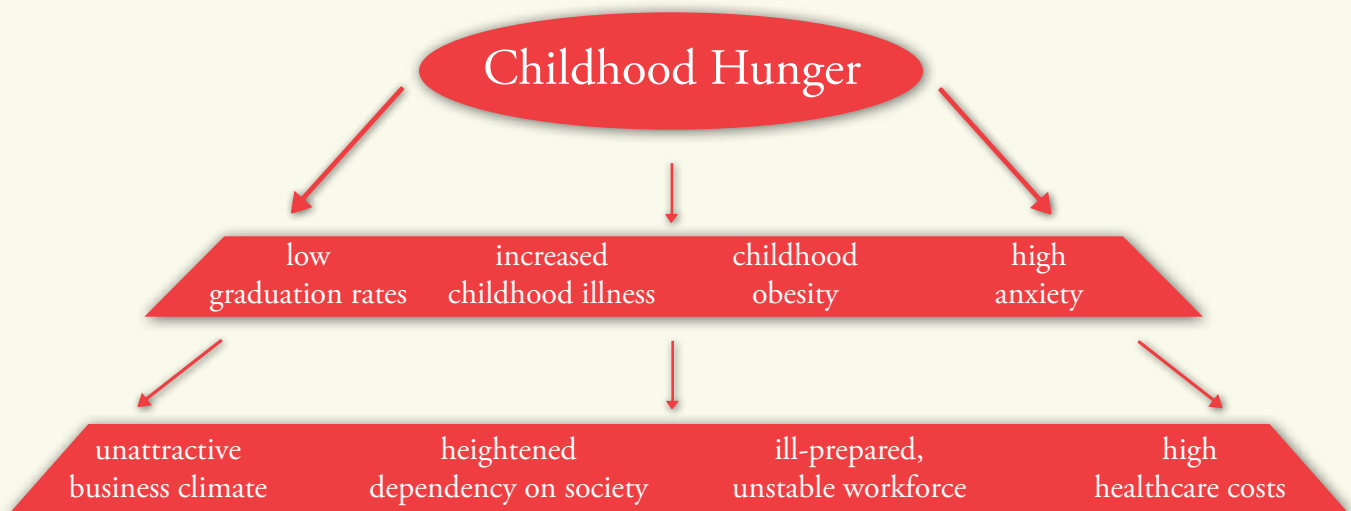
Hunger takes a toll on a child's social development, too, impacting a child's ability to perform in school. Hungry children have more difficulty interacting with other children; have an increased need for mental health services and have more feelings of anxiety and hostility toward the world around them.

But perhaps the most puzzling effect of hunger is its

relationship to obesity rates. Hungry children are at a higher risk of becoming obese: those without access to regular nutritious meals will then eat whatever food is most accessible. These children are disproportionately from poorer neighborhoods, which suffer from a lack of grocery stores, but have a surplus of businesses that serve little more than low-quality, high-calorie foods. To make matters worse, these families and their children also tend to live in neighborhoods with higher crime and fewer safe spaces where children can play.

The confluence of all these issues leads toward heightened obesity rates for hungry children. And heightened obesity rates have a direct impact on the cost of health care- not only to families immediately affected by the ramifications of obesity, but to businesses and taxpayers, too.^{7,8} Per capita, obesity costs Ohioans \$289 in health-care costs on annual basis, the 11th highest-rate in the country.⁹ The expenses are so much of an impediment that many companies are refusing to relocate to certain states because of the obesity rates in those regions.¹⁰

These are all preventable problems. With better access to nutritious foods and greater opportunity to be physically active, we can reduce the number of children who are hungry while slowing the spread of childhood obesity. Child Nutrition Programs provide a crucial service to those who might not otherwise be able to provide nutritious meals for their children.

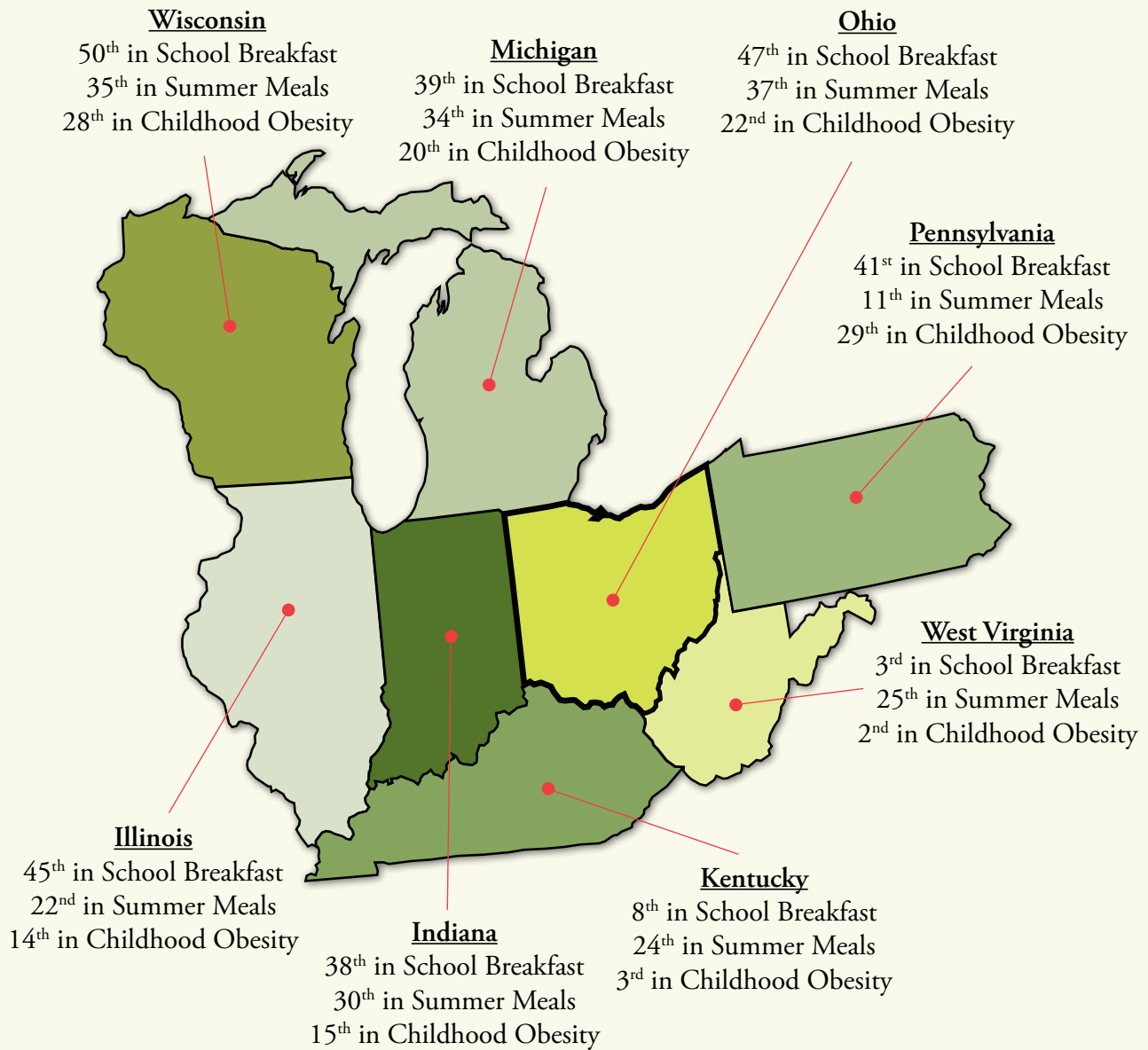


Competing With Our Neighbors

Competition is a popular topic of conversation these days. How can our state better shape its tax policy to be more attractive to new business? How can we reform our education system to help make our economy become more globally competitive? As has been evidenced earlier, making sure Ohio's children are healthy and properly nourished will have a positive impact on drawing new industry to our state. Ensuring our schoolchildren receive proper nourishment will have a positive impact

on their academic success, in turn producing a more desirable workforce.

When compared to our neighbors, Ohio has some work to do when it comes down to meeting children's basic nutritional needs and battling the incidence of obesity among our youth. The map below illustrates where we rank when compared to our neighbors...and highlights in what areas Ohio could stand some improvement.^{11,12,13}



LEGEND

- **School Breakfast** rankings based on number of school buildings offering School Breakfast vs. School Lunch.
- **Summer Meals** rankings based on number of children eating summer meals per 100 in School Lunch.
- **Childhood Obesity** rankings based on obesity rates by percentage for children ages 10-17.

Successful Partnerships Bring Dramatic Results

Child Nutrition Programs, the Food Stamp Program, and emergency food resources provided by foodbanks all serve a complementary purpose: to provide our country's children and families with a support system strong enough to help them meet their nutritional needs in times of difficulty. A family's participation in Child Nutrition Programs encourages a decreased reliance on the Food Stamp Program and emergency food sources in order to meet children's daily nutritional needs, allowing them to stretch their food and Food Stamp benefits a little further. If families are able to stretch those resources further and become less reliant on foodbanks for the majority of their food stock, foodbanks will be able to stretch their resources further and reach more of the growing number of families in need of their services.

Children's Hunger Alliance works with schools, child care providers, youth-serving and faith-based organizations, elected officials and other policymakers, businesses and individuals to improve each child's opportunity to be well nourished, healthy and thrive by working to expand the reach of USDA Child Nutrition Programs, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education.

While providing children with access to food, a healthful diet and nutrition education, these federal programs help nearly one in every five Americans meet their nutritional needs. Here in Ohio, Children's Hunger Alliance strives to reach thousands of additional children each year in its efforts to cast a broader safety net of the following Child Nutrition Programs:

National School Lunch Program:

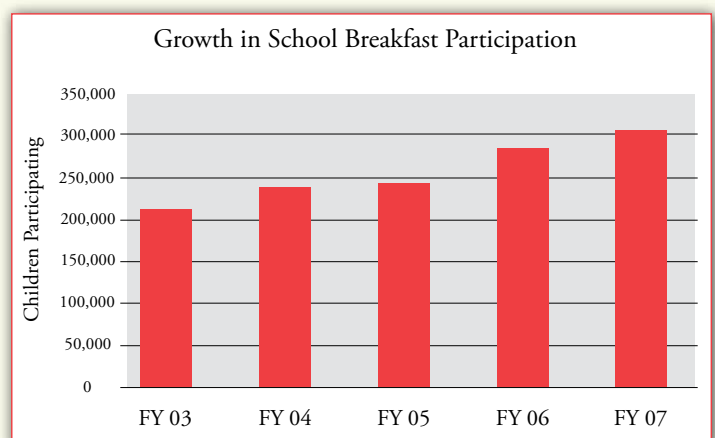
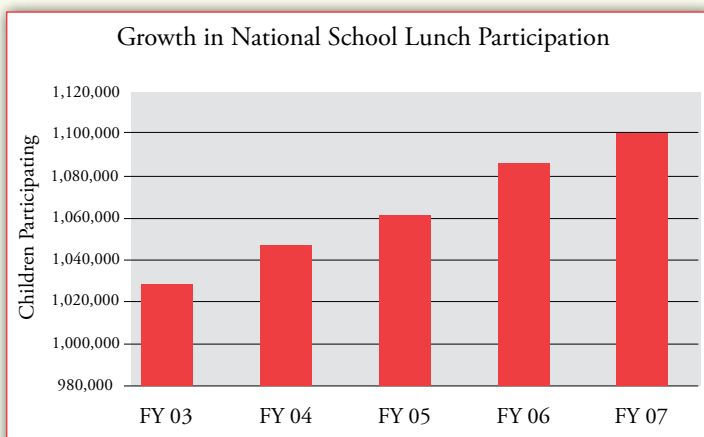
This program provides lunches and afterschool snacks to children attending public and private schools and residential child care agencies that choose to participate.

The National School Lunch Program is the most successful of the USDA meal programs, as over 80% of Ohio's schoolchildren eat a meal provided by the program. Ohio can reach even more students with this program, however, and gain funds through federal reimbursement.

School Breakfast Program:

This program offers breakfasts to children attending public and private schools and residential child care agencies that participate in the program.

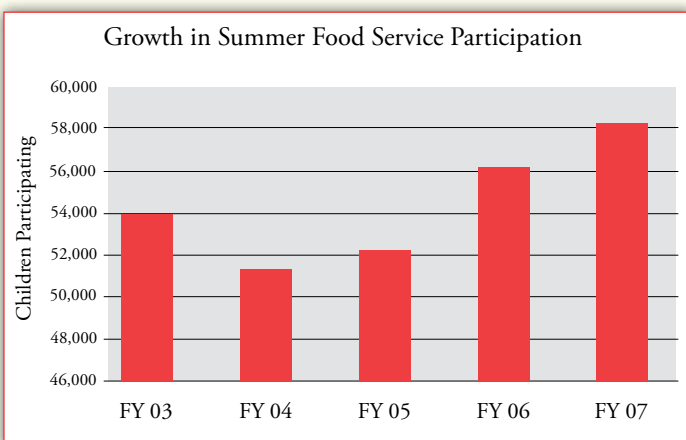
Ohio has been ranked by USDA as one of the top four states in growth in school breakfast participation for the past four years in a row. Growth has been particularly dramatic since 2003 in the Urban 21 school districts where participation has increased by nearly 11% and in Appalachian counties where participation has increased by 77%, despite enrollment decreases in both areas. Ohio served school breakfasts to approximately 211,000 children in 2003 and now reaches approximately 345,000.



Summer Food Service Program:

This program allows schools, faith-based groups, community centers, public or private nonprofit agencies, residential camps, government agencies, and some public or private nonprofit colleges or universities to provide summer meals and snacks to children who participate in local activities or visit feeding sites in their community.

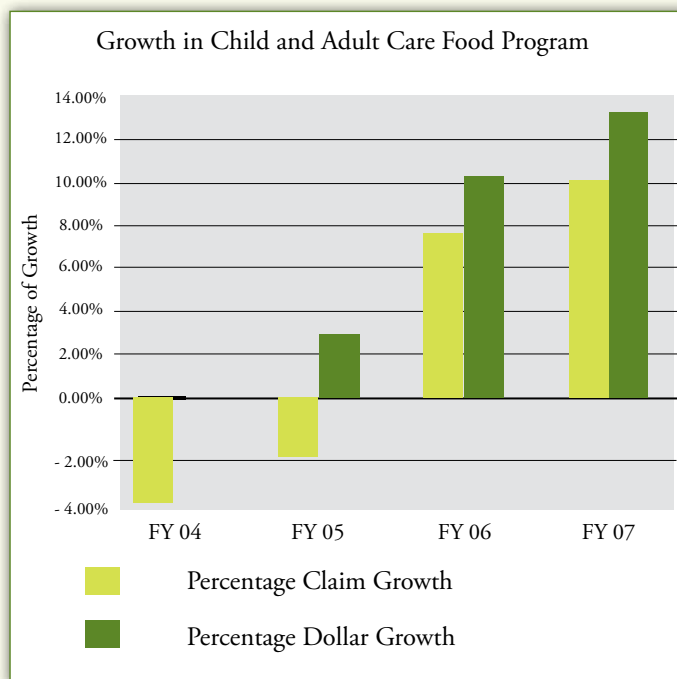
The Summer Food Service Program continues to be one of the most underutilized USDA programs, but Children’s Hunger Alliance (in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education and many other community groups) is making progress. Since the summer of 2004, 83 nonprofit and community organizations have begun to feed children at 680 new locations throughout the state.



Child and Adult Care Food Program:

This program allows non-residential child or adult care establishments such as group or family child care homes, child or adult care centers, libraries, homeless shelters, Head Start programs, recreation centers, settlement houses, afterschool programs, and select for-profit child care centers (with 25% of children being low-income) to provide children with meals and snacks outside the school setting. Certain age restrictions apply.

Children’s Hunger Alliance has seen a significant gain in the number of providers participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program since 2003 and has also seen improvements in the retention of providers. Since 2005, the overall number of providers, number of claims and federal dollars brought into the state has increased substantially.



Over the past several years, Children’s Hunger Alliance has helped to make sure these programs touch more of Ohio’s kids. The results have been dramatic. We still have more to do.

Looking Forward: How Can You Help?

In a recent discussion on the future of Ohio's primary and secondary schools, Governor Ted Strickland mentioned Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a psychological theory which discusses the important role that meeting basic and physiological needs (sleep, water, food, shelter, etc.) plays in an individual's personal growth. Simply put, Maslow theorized that until those basic needs are met, individuals can focus on nothing else. If those basic needs are met on a regular basis, individuals are able to attain high levels of personal development; making them more open to creativity, problem-solving and innovation.

For these reasons, fighting childhood hunger must be an integral part of any conversation about improving educational outcomes- particularly in a state so focused on producing more college graduates in order to make its economy more competitive. Regardless of efforts made in classrooms or board rooms, no student can thrive on an empty stomach, and no education system can flourish when half a million of its students aren't focused on their homework, but on their hunger pangs instead.

"... We need to look at the entire child and that child's complete needs...if a child doesn't feel safe; if a child doesn't feel nurtured or fed and have the basic needs that all of us demand met, it's more difficult for those children to learn or focus on higher needs."

*~Governor Ted Strickland,
August 20, 2008*



This is how, in working together, we will fix the problem:

1. INCREASE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION

School breakfasts offer significant benefits to students and teachers alike. Famished students are distracted students, ones more prone to misbehavior; an inability to concentrate and an unwillingness to cooperate in the classroom, all of which leads to poor grades and lower standardized test scores. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and yet a mere fraction of eligible Ohio children are beginning each day of their most formative years with a balanced school breakfast. 345,000 students benefited from school breakfasts in the 2007-2008 school year. Should that number increase, Ohio's children will not be the only beneficiaries: its schools will be, too. As such, local and state leaders must follow the legislative lead of other states and take a strong stance to make sure every single student has access to nutritious morning meals at school.

GOAL: *By the end of 2011, the State of Ohio should ensure that an additional 40,000 students are participating in the School Breakfast Program each day.*

2. INCREASE SCHOOL LUNCH PARTICIPATION

School lunches are not the cure-all for struggling schools, but no school- no matter how determined- can succeed when its students don't eat between 8 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon. The remedy- the National School Lunch Program- is the best-known food program, but is still not taken advantage of by many of Ohio's schools. The success of school lunch programs can be measured in improved classroom performance, improved attendance rates and improved life outcomes. Local and state officials should encourage more schools to participate in the National School Lunch Program so that their students receive more healthful meals during the school day and their budgets benefit from USDA reimbursement dollars.

GOAL: By the end of 2011, the State of Ohio should ensure that an additional 20,000 students are participating in the National School Lunch Program each day.

3. INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

Although Ohio has increased the number of community organizations and feeding sites participating in the Summer Food Service Program in recent years, the numbers are still startling: 85% of the children who depend on school-based meals for nutrition do not have access to similar programs throughout summer vacation. Cognitive and recall skills suffer under the barrage of hunger pangs that go unsilenced by a lack of proper nutrition, stunting the intellectual growth in the classroom come August. By reaching more children and continuing to provide summer meals at recreation centers, faith-based organizations and schools, Ohio can be certain that its schoolchildren are being well-fed 12 months out of the year. Ohio's policymakers should take action to ensure access to nutritious summer meals for students who benefit from school lunch and/or breakfast programs during the school year.



GOAL: By the end of 2011, the State of Ohio should ensure that an additional 20,000 students are participating in the Summer Food Service Program.

4. INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN THE CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)

Providing breakfasts, lunches, snacks and dinners to pre-Kindergarten children in various care settings is one goal of CACFP and, coupled with the importance of early childhood education, renders this program perhaps the most crucial in serving the needs of hungry kids, physically and mentally. For decades, research has underscored the long-term benefits of nutrition and education prior to the start of formal schooling- and the long-term effects of inferior nutrition and education in those developmental years. The domino effect is seen everyday in Ohio's successful and struggling school districts: Those with adequate early childhood education programs thrive; those without do not. Successful early childhood education and proper nutrition go hand in hand. Ohio policymakers should work to make sure Ohio's early childhood education system makes proper nutrition a priority.

GOAL: By the end of 2011, the State of Ohio should ensure that an additional 10,000 children are participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

5. DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO DECREASE AND PREVENT THE GROWING PREVALENCE OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Across America, the waistlines of America's youth have expanded at alarming rates in the past 20 years, and Ohio's children are no exception. The costs of this trend are equally alarming: for our health care system, for our economy and for our education system. State legislatures in multiple states have enacted laws to combat childhood obesity. The Ohio General Assembly has debated different forms of obesity prevention legislation for years and has yet to pass any of these measures; state level wellness initiatives have been introduced by previous administrations to discuss and identify steps toward prevention, but no long term policies have been established. If we continue down this road, the cost of not taking action is one that will be borne by this state's taxpayers for decades to come. Ohio's elected officials and state agencies should work together to create and implement a comprehensive, strategic plan to address the growing prevalence of childhood obesity in Ohio.

GOAL: By the end of 2011, the State of Ohio should adopt a comprehensive action plan to slow the growth of childhood obesity, paying special attention to improving access to healthier choices and physical activity for children.



6. BETTER INFORM WORKING FAMILIES OF AVAILABLE PROGRAMS THAT HELP MEET NUTRITIONAL NEEDS AND IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY TO THESE BENEFITS

From WIC to cash assistance, state and local governments offer a number of public support programs to help working families who need a boost in difficult times. With the economy's struggles and inflation taking its toll in grocery stores and at gas pumps, the diversity and breadth of public assistance is needed more now than in a generation. And yet, much of the populous remains unaware of how to access such programs, or incapable of sifting through the often complicated passageways to understanding such access. The State should make every effort to partner with local governments, community agencies, nonprofit agencies, the business sector, and other area interests to inform families of assistance for which they are eligible.

GOAL: By the end of 2011, Ohio policymakers should work to ensure that state and local government agencies partner with nonprofit, faith-based and community organizations to maximize federal resources for improved outreach efforts.

In Conclusion...

Research shows that children participating in USDA Child Nutrition Programs have much-improved access to the food they need, drastically increasing the likelihood that they will be better-educated and lead healthier lives. That positive impact not only affects individual citizens, it affects the entire state of Ohio by cultivating a more productive and healthier populace. And more directly, the expansion of USDA programs returns federal funding to Ohio. What those collective efforts afford is the chance for immeasurable growth in this state's children- mentally, physically and otherwise- that simply could not be accomplished on an empty stomach.

We must continue our work to make sure Ohio's children are healthy, well-nourished and thrive.

Please work with us. Our future is waiting.



ENDNOTES

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2 - Ibid.

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William J. Dolan
Chief Executive Officer

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