

6411

Sponsor(s): Senators Brandland, Rasmussen, Sheahan, Hargrove, Swecker, Brown, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Regala, Eide, Kline, Kohl-Welles and Winsley

Brief Description: Reducing hunger.

**SB 6411.E - DIGEST**

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Recognizes that improved access to federal nutrition and assistance programs, such as the federal food stamp program, can be a critical factor in enabling recipients to gain the ability to support themselves and their families. This is an important step towards self-sufficiency and decreased long-term reliance on governmental assistance and will serve to strengthen families in this state.

Requires school districts to implement a school lunch program in each public school in the district in which educational services are provided to children in any of the grades kindergarten through four and in which twenty-five percent or more of the enrolled students qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch. In developing and implementing its school lunch program, each school district may consult with an advisory committee including school staff, community members, and others appointed by the board of directors of the district.

Requires each school district to implement a summer food service program in each public school in the district in which a summer program of academic, enrichment, or remedial services is provided and in which fifty percent or more of the children enrolled in the school qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. However, the superintendent of public instruction shall develop rules establishing criteria to permit an exemption for a school that can demonstrate availability of an adequate alternative summer feeding program. Sites providing meals should be open to all children in the area, unless a compelling case can be made to limit access to the program.

Provides that, to the maximum extent allowable by federal law, the department shall implement simplified reporting for the food stamp program by October 31, 2004.

Declares that, for the purposes of this act, "simplified reporting" means the only change in circumstance that a recipient of a benefit program must report between eligibility reviews is an increase of income that would result in ineligibility for the benefit program. Every six months the assistance unit must either complete a semiannual report or participate in an eligibility review.

Provides that, beginning on October 31, 2005, the department shall provide transitional food stamp assistance for a period of five months to a household that ceases to receive temporary assistance for needy families assistance and is not in sanction status. If necessary, the department shall extend the household's food stamp certification until the end of the transition period.

Provides that, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. 862a(d)(1), the department shall exempt individuals from the eligibility restrictions of 21 U.S.C. 862a(a)(2) to ensure eligibility for federal food assistance.

Provides that the act shall be null and void if appropriations are not approved.