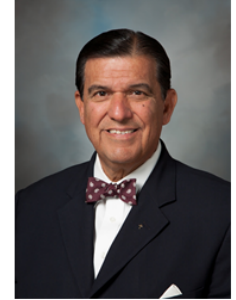




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**Implementation of Lucio school breakfast bill  
to be studied by Senate committee**

**AUSTIN** - Implementation of a bill by Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville), which is intended to increase participation in the federal School Breakfast Program, will be studied by a Senate committee, Lt. Governor David Dewhurst announced today (Thursday). [Senate Bill 376](#) by Lucio provides that all schools participating in the federal School Breakfast Program make available a free breakfast to each of their students if 80 percent or more of those students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

"Thank you to Lt. Governor Dewhurst for recognizing the importance of eliminating childhood hunger in Texas. I filed Senate Bill 376 because I and a broad coalition of stakeholders recognized that few things are as important to a child's performance in school as access to healthy food choices, especially breakfast," Senator Lucio said. "As I did during the Legislative Session, I look forward to working with school districts and other interested parties to ensure the bill is implemented in a way that best serves the needs of our children."

Lt. Governor Dewhurst instructed that the Senate Committee on Education monitor implementation of Senate Bill 376, [along with several other bills passed in the 83rd Legislative Session](#), as an interim charge. Typically, after in-depth study, [interim charges result in a report to the full Senate](#).

Senator Lucio is Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Education.

"It is my hope that a study of Texas' school breakfast programs will also provide the Committee an opportunity to study other best practices relating to food insecurity, nutrition, and diet-related disease. I hope we can develop further recommendations to maximize federal funds and leverage private resources to better assist school food services and programs," Senator Lucio said.

Senator Lucio said prior to Thursday's release of interim charges the he communicated to Lt. Governor Dewhurst his desire for the Education Committee to develop recommendations to:

- increase Texans' access to nutritious foods;
- maximize federal funds received under child nutrition programs;
- strengthen education initiatives to increase awareness of food and nutrition programs;
- facilitate obesity prevention and diabetes awareness initiatives; and
- increase participation by the private sector to better assist service providers with additional resources.

- More -

Additionally, Senator Lucio said he hopes the Education Committee will study the benefits of "universal feeding programs" — programs by which schools provide meals to all students regardless of income — offered in Texas and other states.

In a press release Thursday, Lt. Governor Dewhurst said he will release additional interim charges in the coming weeks.

### **More on Senate Bill 376**

Senate Bill 376 was signed into law by Governor Rick Perry in May 2013 and became effective September 1, 2013.

The bill provides that all school districts and open-enrollment charter schools participating in the federal School Breakfast Program [make available a free breakfast to each of their students](#), if 80 percent or more of those students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

The School Breakfast Program is a federally-funded program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Program and implemented by participating school districts. All meals must meet federal nutrition standards.

Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of federal poverty level are eligible for free breakfast under the Program. School districts are reimbursed by the USDA for meals provided under the Program. Federal law already provides that schools in "severe need" — that is, school districts in which 40 percent or more of their meals are served for free or at a reduced price — receive additional reimbursements from USDA.

Senate Bill 376 costs neither the state nor school districts additional funds. In fact, because schools are receiving additional funding per meal and are serving more meals, the program becomes more cost effective for schools. Ultimately, the bill makes it easier for schools to administer the School Breakfast Program.

Senate Bill 376 was [endorsed early in the Session](#) by expert nutrition advocates at a Hunger Roundtable Summit organized by Senator Lucio's office. The bill was also [endorsed in a report published by the Center for Public Policy Priorities](#).

For his efforts passing Senate Bill 376, Senator Lucio was recognized to [Texas PTA's Legislative Honor Roll](#), with [CHILDREN AT RISK's Voice for Children Award](#), and has been appointed to the [National Conference on State Legislatures](#) Foundation Hunger Partnership. Additionally, Senator Lucio has been invited to speak about his work on children's nutrition issues, including at a [Hunger Summit hosted by Baylor University](#) and at the [Southern Obesity Summit](#) in Nashville, Tennessee.

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