

Lt. Gov. Evelyn Sanguinetti asks legislators to join fight against childhood hunger

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SPRINGFIELD - Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti co-hosted a breakfast event at the Illinois State Capitol today to ask legislators to join her in the fight against

childhood hunger. The event was held in partnership with the No Kid Hungry program, the Illinois Commission to End Hunger and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

The Lieutenant Governor spearheaded the event to raise awareness about childhood hunger in Illinois and to discuss how legislators can partner with her on two initiatives: School Breakfast After the Bell implementation and the Summer Meals programs. Both programs are federally funded and administered by ISBE.

Last year, Governor Bruce Rauner signed into law *Breakfast After the Bell* legislation that required schools where 70 percent or more of students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program to serve breakfast after the first bell starts the school day. This initiative aims to serve more than 125,000 additional Illinois children breakfast every day.

“We are asking legislators to join us in the fight against childhood hunger. In our state, one in five children is food insecure, and that has to end,” said Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti. “I grew up in a family where my parents had to choose between paying the rent and putting food on the table. It can be devastating for children having to go through that. If a federally funded program on child hunger can’t bring us together, nothing will.”

Statewide, only 14% of eligible children participated in the Summer Meals program last year due to a lack of sites. Last summer 30 counties in Illinois failed to offer a Summer Meals site to hungry children in their community. On a national level, Illinois only ranks 31st in program participation.

“For children to achieve their full potential, they must have consistent access to nutritious food. Yet, hundreds of thousands of children in our state wake up hungry,” said Kate Maehr, Illinois Commission to End Hunger co-chair. “But, expanding Breakfast After the Bell and Summer Meals programs will help ensure more Illinois children have the food they need to grow up healthy and succeed.”

The lieutenant governor asked legislators to organize roundtable discussions with school administrators in their districts to discuss the implementation of School Breakfast After the Bell. These discussions would be facilitated in partnership with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, ISBE, and the Rise & Shine Illinois.

Secondly, the lieutenant governor also asked legislators to help promote the Summer Meals Program this summer and to help identify at least one new site to participate in the Summer Meals program.

For more on the School Breakfast After the Bell and the Summer Meals programs, visit www.riseandshineillinois.org.

Video of the event can be found [here](#).