



Hunger Free Schools Act - Amends the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to make performance awards to states that demonstrate outstanding performance or show substantial improvement in directly certifying as eligible for free meals under the school lunch and breakfast programs any children whose families are eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008. (Direct certification eliminates the need for such families to submit applications for participation in the school lunch and breakfast programs.)

Requires each state that directly certifies less than 95% of their children who are eligible for direct certification to implement: (1) a corrective action plan for the current school year; and (2) a direct certification improvement plan, approved by the Secretary, for the following school year.

Requires direct certification of children who are members of a household that includes a child: (1) who is eligible for and receiving assistance under title XIX (Medicaid) or title XXI (Children's Health Insurance Program [CHIP, formerly known as SCHIP]) of the Social Security Act; and (2) whose income does not exceed 133% of the federal poverty level. Directs the Secretary to award grants to states to assist them in implementing such certification program.

Allows local educational agencies (LEAs) to directly certify children whose household is eligible for a supplemental subsistence allowance for low-income members of the Armed Forces with dependents.

Permits schools and LEAs to receive special assistance payments for free or reduced price meals under the school lunch or breakfast programs that are based not on applications for such meals, but on: (1) estimates, made from recent socioeconomic data, of the number of children eligible for such meals; or (2) if the school or LEA is from a high poverty area, the direct certification of a specified minimum percentage of their students as eligible for free meals due to their eligibility for certain other public assistance. Requires such schools and LEAs to provide free meals to all their students under the school lunch and breakfast programs and cover, from nonfederal sources, the costs of serving such meals that exceed the assistance received under such programs.

## **Actions Timeline**

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- **Jun 24, 2009:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jun 24, 2009:** Sponsor introductory remarks on measure. (CR S7008-7009)
- **Jun 24, 2009:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.