

**2013 -- H 6244**

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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013**

**H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N**

**RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION TO REVIEW STATE REGULATIONS  
RELATED TO THE NUTRITIONAL CONTENT OF SCHOOL BREAKFAST AND LUNCH  
PROGRAMS**

Introduced By: Representatives Handy, and Cimini

Date Introduced: June 18, 2013

Referred To: House read and passed

1           WHEREAS, Children’s learning cannot occur in the absence of a well-balanced diet. For  
2 too many children in Rhode Island, however, a well-balanced diet is not a part of their every day  
3 lives. According to Rhode Island Kids Count, between 2007 and 2012, the number of Rhode  
4 Islanders receiving emergency food assistance from food pantries and soup kitchens each month  
5 doubled, with children representing one-third of those who receive emergency food assistance.  
6 Also troubling is the continued uptick in the rate of childhood obesity in Rhode Island, a  
7 condition that points to a lack of balance in the consumption of whole grains, fruits, vegetables,  
8 and sugars, and that undermines many children’s chance for a healthy path to adulthood; and

9           WHEREAS, Education leaders at the state level and in every community in Rhode Island  
10 have stepped in to ensure that the children who enter their buildings have access to nutritious  
11 meals. These low cost or free breakfasts and lunches provide young learners with the energy they  
12 need to engage in their school activities, inside the classroom as well as on the playground; and

13           WHEREAS, Rhode Island’s School Breakfast and Lunch Programs involve the active  
14 participation of multiple entities at the federal, state, and local levels. The U.S. Department of  
15 Agriculture (USDA) oversees and funds Child Nutrition Programs, the Rhode Island Department  
16 of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) develops regulations along with the Department  
17 of Health and administers the programs at the state level, and school districts develop local meal  
18 programs that comply with USDA Requirements for Federal School Meals Programs; and

1           WHEREAS, The building blocks of Rhode Island’s School Meal Programs include a  
2 balance of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and sugars. These essential nutrition requirements  
3 have been highlighted by the USDA under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Pub.L.  
4 111–296), and changes to school meals that result from this Act are now being phased in by local  
5 districts throughout the state; and

6           WHEREAS, The changes in nutrition requirements at the federal level present an  
7 opportunity for Rhode Island to consider how whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and sugars are  
8 discussed in state regulations and how they appear in school meals at the local level; and

9           WHEREAS, The current nutrition criteria for Rhode Island School Food Service  
10 Programs, last updated by RIDE in 2009, allow for whole grain products, which are defined as a  
11 food in which one hundred percent (100%) of the flour or grain ingredient is whole grain, to have  
12 no more than 7 grams of total sugar per ounce. The same criteria allow whole grain products with  
13 added dried fruits, such as Raisin Bran, to have more than 7 grams of sugar per serving, without  
14 stipulating a maximum allowed. The lack of a limit on the sugar content contained in school  
15 meals is at odds with the rising rate of childhood obesity and appears to run counter to children’s  
16 nutritional requirements; now, therefore be it

17           RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and  
18 Providence Plantations hereby respectfully requests that the Rhode Island Department of  
19 Elementary and Secondary Education, working with any other relevant partner agency or  
20 organization, review its regulations regarding the nutritional content of whole grains, fruits,  
21 vegetables, and sugars in School Meal Programs to ensure that the state’s programs and local  
22 district policies and practices reflect the best understanding of children’s nutritional needs; and be  
23 it further

24           RESOLVED, That the department shall report its findings and conclusions to the Speaker  
25 of the Rhode Island House of Representatives and the Chairman of the Health, Education, and  
26 Welfare Committee on or before February 11, 2014.

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