**[House Committee on Education and Labor Set to Mark Up Build Back Better Act](https://frac.org/blog/house-committee-on-education-and-labor-passes-build-back-better-act)**

BY CRYSTAL FITZSIMONS, DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS, AND ALLYSON PEREZ, CHILD NUTRITION POLICY ANALYST

**House Committee on Education and Labor Passes Build Back Better Act**

On Thursday, September 9, 2021, the House Committee on Education and Labor will mark up its portion of the Build Back Better Act, which includes nearly $35 billion in funding for the Child Nutrition Programs. These critical investments will allow the nation to build back better, ensuring children have access to the nutrition they need year-round and helping overcome the educational, health, and economic impacts of the pandemic.

The child nutrition provisions in the Build Back Better Act would achieve the following:

* + **Expand the number of schools that would be able to offer free meals to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision.** The bill would make more schools eligible by lowering the Identified Student Percentage eligibility threshold from 40 to 25 percent,\* and make it more financially viable by increasing the multiplier that determines the amount of federal reimbursement a school receives from 1.6 to 2.5.\*\* This provision would continue through June 30, 2030.
  + **Give states the option to implement the Community Eligibility Provision statewid**e, allowing all students in the state to receive school breakfast and lunch at no charge. This provision would continue through June 30, 2030.
  + **Allow all states to conduct Medicaid direct certification.** Children who participate in Medicaid would be certified for free or reduced-price school meals based on their household income. Children who participate in Medicaid and receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, guardianship, or adoption assistance payments, or are in kinship care would be certified for free school meals. This provision would end on the last day of the school year 2030-2031.
  + **Extend Summer EBT nationwide for students who receive free or reduced-price school meals** (including those who attend Community Eligibility Provision, Provision 2, or Provision 3 schools). The Act would allow states as well as Indian Tribal Organizations that participate in WIC to provide Summer EBT. This provision would continue through September 30, 2029.
* **Provide $500 million for school kitchen equipment grants.**
* **Provide $634 million for a Healthy School Meal Incentives demonstration project.**

These important provisions will prove crucial in the ongoing fight against childhood hunger and food insecurity, and are a significant step towards the goal of Healthy School Meals for All. We urge all Members of the House Committee on Education and Labor to support the bill and call on Congress to quickly pass the Build Back Better Act.

\* The Identified Student Percentage refers to the percentage of students within a school who are directly certified for free meals because their families participate in means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or Medicaid, or are migrant, homeless, enrolled in Head Start, or in foster care.

\*\* The Community Eligibility multiplier is applied to the ISP calculate the percentage of school breakfasts and lunches served that will be reimbursed at the free rate. Meals not reimbursed at the free rate are reimbursed at the paid rate