

FOOD INSECURITY AMONG MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MARYLAND

What is Food Insecurity?

Food insecurity exists when one **does not have reliable access** to the food they need to live a healthy and active life.

What are the Health Impacts?

Food insecure students are more likely to experience poor health outcomes, including a higher risk of developing conditions like **diabetes** and of being **hospitalized**. Data from Maryland (YRBS/YTS 2018) also show that food insecure students are more likely to have chronic illnesses like **asthma** (32% vs. 26%) and are at higher risk of **feeling sad or hopeless** for at least two weeks or more (38% vs. 22%).

How Many Youth are Affected?

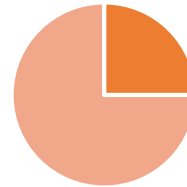
Despite having the highest median income in the U.S., Census data indicates that **more than 200,000 children** in Maryland live in households where there is uncertainty about having enough food for all household members because of insufficient money or resources.

The YRBS/YTS survey found that an average of **25%** of middle and **28%** of high school students in Maryland experience food insecurity. However, there are significant differences in food insecurity rates by race, ethnicity, and geography. Nearly half of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students and **1 in 3 Black and Hispanic/ Latino students** experience food insecurity. This increased risk for food insecurity results in an increased risk for poor health outcomes and is a contributing cause of **health disparities**.

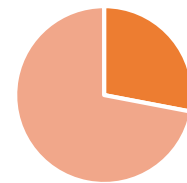
How is it Measured?

Food insecurity is measured at the household level by the Census and is a troubling reality for **15% of all children** in Maryland (2016-18).

While the Census generally measures food insecurity by surveying parents, the Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey/ Youth Tobacco Survey (YRBS/YTS) measured food insecurity among youth and teens for the first time in 2018. Middle and high school students (n = 68,390) were asked if their family is **worried that their food money would run out** before they could buy more, and/or if **the food their family bought did not last** and they did not have money to get more.



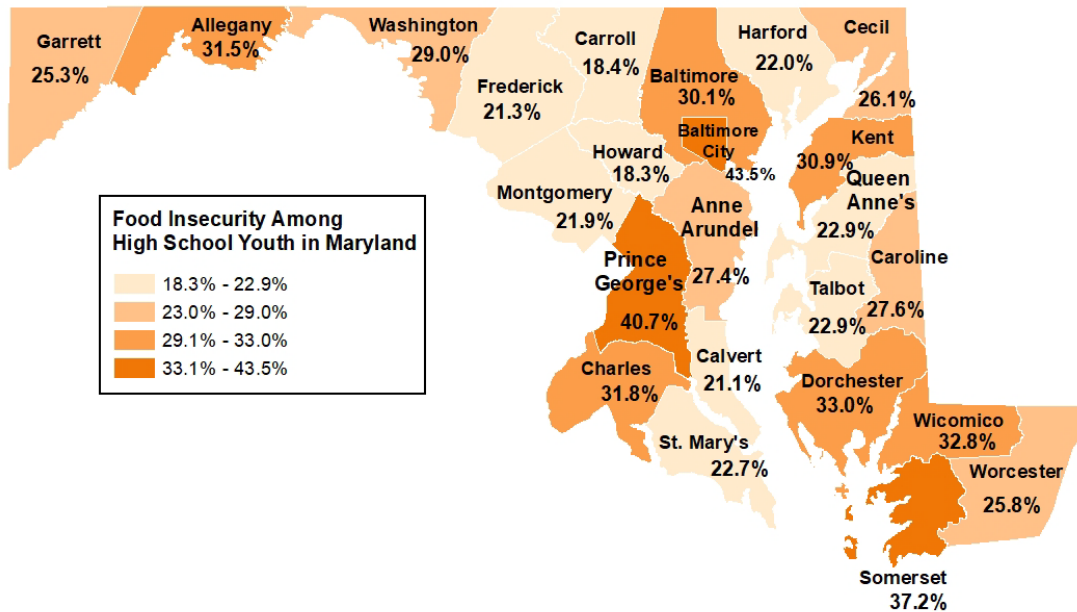
25% of all middle school students in Maryland are food insecure



28% of all high school students in Maryland are food insecure

This report was written by Tam Lynne Kelley with No Kid Hungry. All Maryland YRBS/YTS data was analyzed, interpreted, and provided by Nikardi Jallah with the Maryland Department of Health. Nonso Umunna with Advocates for Children and Youth, Tonja Carrera with Maryland PTA, and Margaret Read with Share Our Strength also contributed to this project.

How are Food Insecurity Rates Different Across the State?



What are the Causes of Food Insecurity?

Food insecurity occurs when there is limited or unreliable physical and/or economic access to food.

- A key reason why some Marylanders have **limited physical access** to food are **food deserts** - areas that lack healthy food stores. Neighborhoods are more likely to be in a food desert as a result of policies that **concentrate poverty** and **segregate** communities by race.
- Marylanders experience **limited economic access** to food because the \$11 per hour minimum wage is not enough to meet one's most basic needs, even when working full-time (<http://livingwage.mit.edu/>). With **high housing costs** (\$1,223 month for a one-bedroom in Maryland), a full-time job that pays more than \$23 per hour is needed to afford to live here (<https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/Maryland>).

How are Food Insecurity Rates Different by Race/Ethnicity?

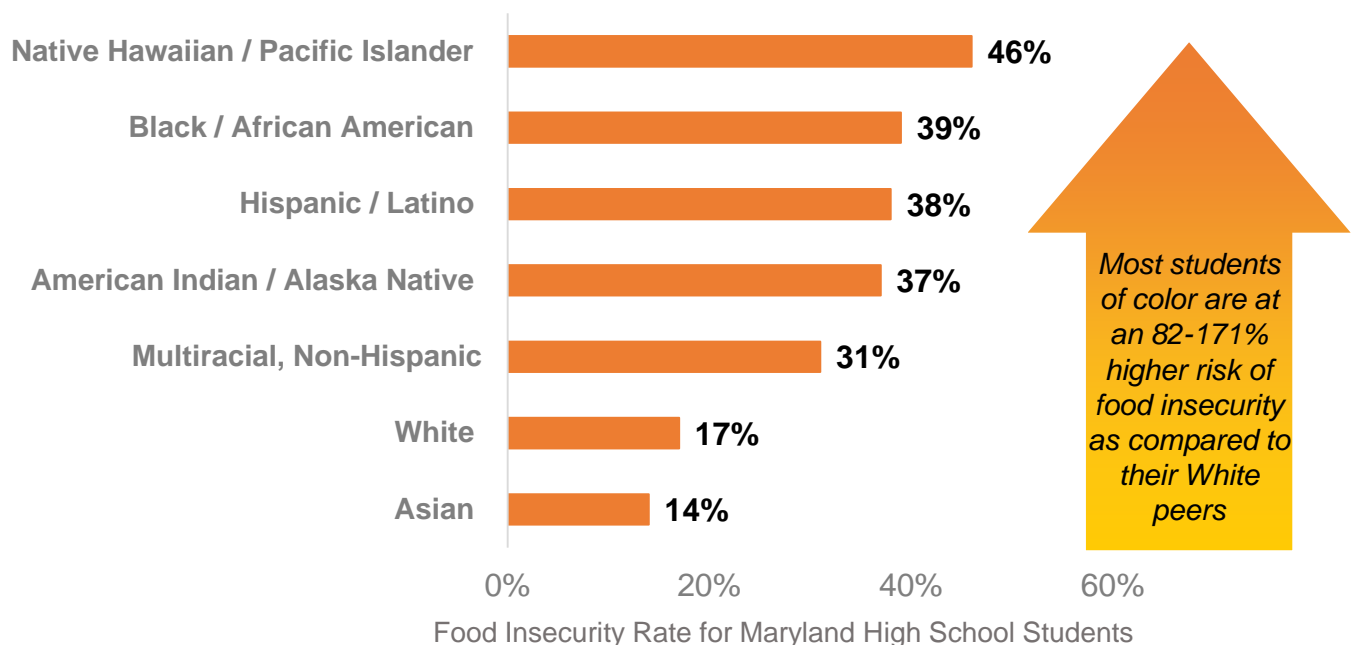


Table 1a: Food Insecurity Rates for Middle School Students in Maryland, by Race/Ethnicity (n = 27,299)

	% of all Middle School Students (MSS) that are Food Insecure (FI)	% of Black MSS FI	% of Hispanic/Latino MSS FI	% of White MSS FI	% of Asian MSS FI	% of Multiracial (Not Hispanic/Latino) MSS FI	% Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, or Alaska Native MSS FI	Difference between FI for Hispanic/Latino MSS vs White MSS	Difference between FI for Black MSS vs White MSS
Maryland	25.2	35.4	33.9	15.7	11.3	24.8	29.0	116% higher	125% higher
Allegany	30.2	*	*	28.0	*	*	*	*	*
Anne Arundel	21.5	34.6	30.9	16.1	*	*	*	92%	115%
Baltimore City	38.7	40.9	42.8	*	*	*	*	*	*
Baltimore Co	28.5	40.4	36.2	16.7	*	*	*	117%	142%
Calvert	20.5	28.6	29.0	17.0	*	*	*	70%	68%
Caroline	27.4	*	28.9	23.5	*	*	*	23%	*
Carroll	19.6	*	*	18.0	*	*	*	*	*
Cecil	24.6	*	34.1	22.5	*	*	*	52%	*
Charles	28.1	31.6	30.8	19.0	*	*	*	62%	66%
Dorchester	26.7	34.6	*	19.8	*	*	*	*	74%
Frederick	19.5	31.8	30.4	14.9	*	*	*	105%	114%
Garrett	21.8	*	*	19.4	*	*	*	*	*
Harford	21.7	28.6	29.9	20.2	*	19.9	*	49%	42%
Howard	17.1	28.1	30.4	10.6	11.0	20.9	*	188%	167%
Kent	25.9	*	*	20.9	*	*	*	*	*
Montgomery	18.4	29.8	32.4	5.3	8.5	*	*	508%	461%
Prince George's	34.4	33.3	37.3	*	*	*	*	*	*
Queen Anne's	19.8	*	*	17.0	*	*	*	*	*
Somerset	31.4	29.2	*	34.1	*	*	*	*	14% lower
St. Mary's	22.1	32.4	35.2	16.2	*	*	*	117%	100%
Talbot	22.9	*	25.8	17.0	*	*	*	52%	*
Washington	25.9	33.5	33.4	22.8	*	32.7	*	46%	47%
Wicomico	36.6	46.5	39.5	27.2	*	*	*	45%	71%
Worcester	23.5	34.5	*	19.6	*	*	*	*	76%

Table 1 Key:

* Data suppressed due to less than 100 respondents in the sample
 Shaded cells indicate food insecurity in the school district is significantly lower (green) or higher (red) than the State

Table 1b: Food Insecurity Rates for High School Students in Maryland, by Race/Ethnicity (n = 41,091)

	% of all High School Students (HSS) that are Food Insecure (FI)	% of Black HSS FI	% of Hispanic/Latino HSS FI	% of White HSS FI	% of Asian HSS FI	% of Multiracial (Not Hispanic/Latino) HSS FI	% Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, or Alaska Native HSS FI	Difference between FI for Hispanic/Latino HSS vs White HSS	Difference between FI for Black HSS vs White HSS
Maryland	28.0	38.6	37.9	17.1	14.0	30.6	41.0	122% higher	126% higher
Allegany	31.5	*	*	29.0	*	*	*	*	*
Anne Arundel	27.4	40.1	42.9	17.8	*	*	*	140%	125%
Baltimore City	43.5	45.1	46.5	*	*	*	*	*	*
Baltimore Co	30.1	37.7	35.7	19.8	*	*	*	80%	91%
Calvert	21.1	32.9	33.6	17.6	*	27.3	*	91%	88%
Caroline	27.6	35.6	26.2	24.3	*	*	*	8%	46%
Carroll	18.4	*	28.0	17.0	*	30.7	*	65%	*
Cecil	26.1	39.1	36.2	22.3	*	32.4	*	62%	75%
Charles	31.8	32.7	38.6	23.7	23.4	34.0	*	63%	38%
Dorchester	33.0	46.8	40.7	21.7	*	*	*	88%	116%
Frederick	21.3	35.2	30.7	16.0	15.2	25.7	*	91%	119%
Garrett	25.3	*	*	23.3	*	*	*	*	*
Harford	22.0	36.6	26.6	16.9	15.1	25.9	*	57%	116%
Howard	18.3	36.2	30.7	9.1	10.0	21.2	*	236%	297%
Kent	30.9	*	*	28.3	*	*	*	*	*
Montgomery	21.9	30.2	35.8	8.9	9.9	*	*	301%	238%
Prince George's	40.7	40.1	43.4	*	*	*	*	*	*
Queen Anne's	22.9	*	38.4	19.5	*	*	*	97%	*
Somerset	37.2	45.5	*	30.2	*	*	*	*	51%
St. Mary's	22.7	35.2	31.9	17.4	*	29.2	*	84%	102%
Talbot	22.9	34.6	31.2	17.5	*	*	*	78%	98%
Washington	29.0	44.4	38.6	24.3	*	33.2	*	58%	82%
Wicomico	32.8	42.9	39.3	23.0	*	33.6	*	71%	87%
Worcester	25.8	39.1	38.8	21.0	*	*	*	85%	86%

Table 1 Key:

* Data suppressed due to less than 100 respondents in the sample
 Shaded cells indicate food insecurity in the school district is significantly lower (green) or higher (red) than the State

THREE ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS TO REDUCE FOOD INSECURITY

#1 Elect the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

CEP is a federal school meal funding option that creates “**Hunger-Free Schools**” by providing all students with access to free breakfast and lunch. During 2019-2020, more than 102,000 students in Maryland attended one of 238 CEP schools. CEP is associated with improved test scores, better attendance, and a decrease in disciplinary referrals. Contact the district’s Food and Nutrition Department to determine if your school is CEP-eligible.

CEP is associated with a 2-fold reduction in food insecurity



#2 Offer Free Breakfast with Maryland Meals for Achievement

Students that participate in school breakfast are less likely to be food insecure and the best way to ensure access to breakfast is with **Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA)**. Schools with MMFA provide breakfast after the first school bell and therefore eliminate the barriers to participation in school breakfast, including stigma, fees, transportation, and timing. In the hundreds of MMFA schools, tardiness and absenteeism rates are lower and student behavior improves. Eligible schools (with a F/R rate over 40%) can apply for this state funding by contacting the district’s Food and Nutrition Department.

#3 Connect Families to SNAP Food Assistance

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps low-income people buy food. Income limits for free school meals are similar to those for SNAP; therefore, *most* free meal eligible students are also eligible for SNAP. (A critical difference, however, is that immigration status is not considered for free school meal eligibility, but is for SNAP eligibility.) Unfortunately, only about half of all students in Maryland that are eligible for free school meals are enrolled in SNAP.

SNAP reduces food insecurity by 30% and child poverty by 28%



As a result, more than 160,000 students may be eligible but not yet enrolled in SNAP. Schools can help connect families by providing assistance in completing the SNAP application. Free training on how to provide this application assistance is available (for more information or to sign-up for training, contact JDRobinson@mdhungersolutions.org). Schools can also share SNAP outreach information with families on robo-calls, in newsletters, and by posting flyers. (See examples at <http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/snap-outreach-toolkit-covid-19>.)

Table 2a: Actions Schools Can Take to Reduce Food Insecurity

#1 Elect the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

CEP-Eligible and Near-Eligible Secondary Schools, 19-20 SY		
Allegany	Braddock Middle Cash Valley Center for Career & Tech Eckhart Alt Program Flintstone School	Ft. Hill High Mt. Savage Middle Parkside School Washington Middle Westmar Middle
Anne Arundel	Phoenix Academy	
Baltimore City	All schools are enrolled in CEP!	
Baltimore County	Catonsville Ctr for Alt Chesapeake High Crossroads Center Deep Creek Middle Genl J. Stricker Middle Golden Ring Middle Holabird Middle Kenwood High Lansdowne Middle	Meadowood Edu Center Middle River Middle Northwest Academy Patapsco High Rosedale Center Stemmers Run Middle White Oak School Windsor Mill Middle Woodlawn Middle
Caroline	Col Richardson Middle	
Carroll	Crossroads Middle	
Cecil	Elkton Middle	
Charles	General Smallwood Middle	R.D. Stethem Ed Center
Dorchester	All schools are enrolled in CEP!	
Harford	Center for Ed Opportunity Alt	
Kent	Kent County Middle	
Montgomery	(MCPS uses a non-pricing model, similar to CEP, in 14 schools)	
Prince George's	Annapolis Rd Academy Alt. B. Stoddert Middle Drew Freeman Middle G.J. Ghoulson Middle	Green Valley Inst Tall Oaks High T. Marshall Middle
Queen Anne's	Anchor Point Academy	
Somerset	All schools are enrolled in CEP!	
St. Mary's	Fairlead Academy I & II Green Holly School	Spring Ridge Middle
Washington	E. Russell Hicks Middle Northern Middle	South Hagerstown High Western Heights Middle
Wicomico	Bennett Middle Salisbury Middle	Wicomico High Wicomico Middle
Worcester	Cedar Chapel Special Pocomoke High	Pocomoke Middle Snow Hill Middle

Data source:

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/SchoolandCommunityNutrition/Pages/CEPData.aspx>

CEP is a federal school meal funding option that creates “**Hunger-Free Schools**” by providing all students with access to free breakfast and lunch. Contact the school district’s Food and Nutrition Department to determine if a school is CEP-eligible and to elect CEP.

Table 2b: Actions Schools Can Take to Reduce Food Insecurity

#2 Elect Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA)

MMFA Eligible Secondary Schools, 19-20 SY			
Allegany	Braddock Middle Eckhart Alternative Program	Ft Hill High Mt Savage Middle	Transition Program at C.
Anne Arundel	Meade Senior High		
Baltimore City (all schools are CEP)	Acce Academy Achievement A., Harbor City HS Afyu Public Charter School Angela Y. Davis Leadership Academy Arlington E/M Armistead Gardens E/M Augusta Fells Savage Institute HS Baltimore City College High Baltimore Collegiate School For Boys Baltimore Design School Baltimore International Academy Baltimore Leadership School for Y.W. Baltimore Montessori Public Charter Baltimore Polytechnic Institute Baltimore School For The Arts Banneker Blake Academy Barclay E/M Bard High School Early College Bay-Brook E/M Beechfield E/M B. Franklin High at Masonville Cove B.D. Jemison Stem Academy W. Booker T Washington Middle Calverton E/M Career Academy Carver Vocational-Technical High Cherry Hill E/M City Neighbors Charter E/M City Neighbors Hamilton City Neighbors High City Springs E/M Claremont School Collington Square E/M Commodore J. Rogers E/M Connexions: Community Based Arts Coppin Academy Cross Country Elementary Curtis Bay E/M Dickey Hill E/M	Digital Harbor High Dr Martin Luther King Jr E/M Dr Nathan A Pitts-Ashburton E/M Edmondson-Westside High Elmer A. Henderson: JH P. Empowerment Academy Excel A. Fallstaff E/M Forest Park High Fort Worthington E/M Francis Scott Key E/M Franklin Square E/M Frederick Douglass High Garrett Heights E/M George W. F. McMechen High Glenmount E/M Graceland Park/O'Donnell H. E/M Green Street Academy Guilford E/M Hamilton E/MHampden E/M Hampstead Hill Academy Harlem Park E/M Hazelwood E/M Highlandtown E/M #215 Highlandtown E/M #237 Holabird E/M Independence School Local I James McHenry E/M John Ruhrah E/M Kipp Academy Lakeland E/M Leith Walk E/M Lillie May Carroll Jackson Lois T Murray E/M Maree G. Farring E/M Margaret Brent E/M Mergenthaler Voc Tech High Midtown Academy Monarch Academy Public Charter Montebello E/M	Morrell Park E/M Mount Royal E/M New Era Academy New Hope Academy New Song Academy North Bend E/M Patterson High Patterson Park Public Charter Paul Laurence Dunbar High Pimlico E/M Reginald F Lewis High School Renaissance Academy Roland Park E/M Rosemont E/M Southwest Baltimore Charter Stadium School Success Academy Tench Tilghman E/M The Crossroads School The Mount Washington School The Reach! Partnership School Thomas Jefferson E/M Thomas Johnson E/M Tunbridge Public Charter Elementary Vanguard Collegiate Middle Violetville E/M Vivien T Thomas Medical Arts A. Walter P Carter E/M Waverly E/M Western High Westport Academy Wildwood Elementary Middle William Pinderhughes E/M William S Baer School Windsor Hills E/M Woodhome E/M Youth Opportunity
Baltimore County	Arbutus Middle Catonsville Ctr for Alt Stud Chesapeake High Dundalk High (CEP) Franklin Middle Kenwood High Lansdowne High Cherry Hill Middle	Meadowood Education Ctr Milford Mill Academy NW Academy of H.S. Overlea High Owings Mills High Parkville High Parkville Middle High Rd School of Cecil County	Patapsco High Pikesville Middle Randallstown High Sparrows Point Middle Woodlawn High
Cecil	Cherry Hill Middle	High Rd School of Cecil County	
Charles	Robert D Stethem Ed Ctr		
Dorchester	North Dorchester High (CEP)		
Frederick	Frederick High		
Harford	Ctr for Ed Opportunity	Edgewood High	Joppatowne High
Howard	Mayfield Woods Middle Oakland Mills High	Thomas Viaduct Middle Wilde Lake High	
Kent	Kent County High		
Montgomery	Foundation School Gaithersburg High	Northwood High Springbrook High	Wheaton High

**Prince
George's**

A.Jackson Acad. (CEP)
Annapolis Rd Acad.
Alt High at Tall Oaks
Benjamin Stoddert Middle
Bladensburg High
Buck Lodge Middle
Central High
C. Herbert Flowers High
Crossland High
Drew Freeman Middle
Duval High
D.D. Eisenhower Middle
Eleanor Roosevelt High
E.E. Just Middle
Fairmont Heights High
Crisfield High (CEP)

Friendly High
G.J. Ghoulson Middle
Green Valley Instructional
Greenbelt Middle School
Gwynn Park Middle
High Point High
Hyattsville Middle International
High L.P.
International High Largo
Isaac J Gourdine Middle
James Madison Middle
Kenmoor Middle
Kettering Middle
Largo High
Laurel High
Washington High (CEP)

M.L.K. Jr Middle
Northwestern High
Oxon Hill High
Oxon Hill Middle
Parkdale High
Potomac High
Stephen Decatur Middle
Suitland High
Surrattsville High
Thomas Johnson Middle
Thomas Pullen
T. Marshall Middle
Walker Mill Middle

Somerset

Washington

Wicomico

Public Service Academy
Bennett Middle
James M Bennett High
Parkside High

Pittsville E/M
Salisbury Middle

Wicomico High
Wicomico Middle

Data source:

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/SchoolandCommunityNutrition/Pages/FreeReducedPriceMealStatistic.aspx>

Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) provides all students with access to universal free school breakfast. Schools are eligible if the free and reduced-price meal rate is over 40%. Apply for this state funding by contacting the school district's Food and Nutrition Department.

Table 2c: Actions Schools Can Take to Reduce Food Insecurity

#3 Connect Students to the SNAP Food Assistance

Students Eligible for Free School Meals, but Not Enrolled in SNAP, 19-20 SY		
	#	%
Allegany	1,026	25%
Anne Arundel	12,328	55%
Baltimore City*	41,273	52%
Baltimore County	18,527	43%
Calvert	843	32%
Caroline	1,220	44%
Carroll	1,617	41%
Cecil	2,120	38%
Charles	3,754	46%
Dorchester*	2,770	59%
Frederick	4,699	52%
Garrett	736	50%
Harford	4,574	49%
Howard	5,500	52%
Kent	362	35%
Montgomery	26,441	60%
Prince George's	43,251	63%
Queen Anne's	700	43%
Somerset*	1,554	53%
St. Mary's	1,714	35%
Talbot	874	47%
Washington	3,618	37%
Wicomico	2,793	35%
Worcester	972	41%

Data source:

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/SchoolandCommunityNutrition/Pages/FreeReducedPriceMealStatistic.aspx>

* In the school districts that participate in CEP district-wide, the number of students enrolled in SNAP was subtracted from the *total number* of enrolled students. In all other school districts, the number of students enrolled in SNAP was subtracted from the number of students enrolled in free school meals.