An Act to Require a Lunch Period of at Least 30 Minutes for Students and Reduce Food Waste

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §6681, sub-§6 is enacted to read:

6. Lunch period of at least 30 minutes; unconsumed food. A school administrative unit shall provide a lunch period of at least 30 minutes to every student under the jurisdiction of the school administrative unit unless the governing body of the school administrative unit determines by vote after notice and public hearing that a lunch period of at least 30 minutes would be impracticable. A lunch period under this subsection may not include recess, which must be allocated adequate time separate from the lunch period and, to the extent possible, be scheduled immediately before the lunch period. To the extent possible, the school administrative unit shall provide a table, container or other area where a student may return unconsumed whole food or beverage items that may be provided to another student pursuant to guidelines issued by the United States Department of Agriculture.

SUMMARY

This bill requires school administrative units to provide students with a lunch period of at least 30 minutes unless determined impracticable by the school administrative unit's governing body after notice and public hearing. The lunch period must be separate from recess, which the school administrative unit is encouraged to provide directly before the lunch break. This bill also requires to the extent possible for the school administrative unit to provide a table, container or other area where a student may return unconsumed whole food or beverage items that may be provided to other students.