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GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

S **D**

SENATE BILL DRS35414-NHa-213

Short Title:	School Meals for Every Child.	(Public)
Sponsors:	Senators Mohammed, Murdock, and Applewhite (Primary Sponsors).	
Referred to:		

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROVIDE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AT NO COST TO STUDENTS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) G.S. 115C-263 reads as rewritten:

"**§ 115C-263. School nutrition services.**

(a) As a part of the function of the public school system, ~~local boards of education~~ public school units shall have a school food authority to provide ~~to the extent practicable~~ school nutrition services in the schools under their jurisdiction. The school food authority shall offer students two meals per day, breakfast and lunch, at no cost to the student. All school nutrition services made available under this authority shall be provided in accordance with federal guidelines established by the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.

(b) ~~The~~ To the extent that funds are made available for the purpose, the State Board of Education shall allocate funds to school food authorities at public school units for the purpose of providing healthy nutrition services at no cost to students. In issuing the allocation, the Board shall do the following:

(1) Determine the amount to allocate to each school food authority based on an evaluation of the authority's nutrition services. The Board shall develop the method and criteria for the evaluation, which, at a minimum, shall account for the following:
  a. The size of the schools served by the school food authority as determined by average daily membership.
  b. The number of students that are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and the estimated receipts from the National School Lunch Program.
  c. The funds actually expended in the prior year, which may be waived if the school food authority was not in operation in the year prior.
  d. The extent to which the nutrition services promote health and wellness by providing food that is of high quality and nutrient content.
  e. The extent to which the school food authority uses locally sourced food and products.
  f. Any other information the Board deems relevant to the cost and operation of the nutrition services.

(2) Ensure the funds are distributed on a fair and equitable basis.

(3) Issue the allocation at the beginning of each fiscal year, except that the Board may reserve for future allocation a reasonable amount, not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the total funds available for providing nutrition services.

(c) The State Board of Education may adopt rules regulating the provision of school nutrition that impose additional restrictions that are not inconsistent with the federal guidelines.

(d) Funds allocated pursuant to this section shall supplement and not supplant funds from any other source provided for the same purpose."

SECTION 1.(b) G.S. 115C-264(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Local boards of education operating school nutrition programs shall participate in the federal National School Lunch Program ~~established by the federal government.~~ and, if eligible, the Community Eligibility Provision Program. School nutrition programs shall be under the jurisdiction of the Division of School Nutrition of the Department of Public Instruction."

SECTION 1.(c) G.S. 115C-150.14 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(a1) A school governed by this Article shall provide school nutrition services in accordance with G.S. 115C-263 and G.S. 115C-264."

SECTION 1.(d) G.S. 115C-218.75 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(p) A charter school shall provide school nutrition services in accordance with G.S. 115C-263 and G.S. 115C-264."

SECTION 1.(e) G.S. 115C-238.72(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) ~~Food~~ Nutrition Service. – The local school administrative unit identified by resolution shall ~~provide, to the extent practicable, school food~~ provide school nutrition services to the regional ~~school.~~ school in accordance with G.S. 115C-263 and G.S. 115C-264. For purposes of federal funding through the National School Lunch Program or other federally supported ~~food~~ nutrition service programs, the local school administrative unit identified by resolution shall be permitted to include eligible students enrolled in the regional school. Other participating units shall not include students enrolled in the regional school for purposes of federally supported ~~food~~ nutrition service programs."

SECTION 1.(f) G.S. 116-239.8(b)(4)c. reads as rewritten:

"c. ~~Food~~ Nutrition services. – Laboratory schools shall provide school nutrition services in accordance with G.S. 115C-263 and G.S. 115C-264. The laboratory school shall strive to ensure that one hundred percent (100%) muscadine grape juice is made available to students as a part of the school's nutrition program or through the operation of the school's vending facilities. Upon request, the local school administrative unit in which the laboratory school is located shall administer the National School Lunch Program for the laboratory ~~school in accordance with G.S. 115C-264.~~school."

SECTION 2. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of one hundred sixteen million dollars ($116,000,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to provide nutrition services to students in public school units at no cost to the students in accordance with this act. Should this appropriation not be sufficient to fulfill the provisions of this section for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the State Board of Education may use funds appropriated to State Aid for Public Schools for this purpose.

SECTION 3. This act becomes effective July 1, 2026, and applies beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.