

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

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HOUSE BILL 776

Short Title: Free Lunch for Some Students/Stop Lunch Shame. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Brockman.

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 19, 2023

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO PROVIDE FREE LUNCH TO STUDENTS
ELIGIBLE FOR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH AND TO ENACT AN
ANTISTIGMATIZATION AND ANTIDISCRIMINATION POLICY IN SCHOOL
NUTRITION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2023-2024 fiscal year to provide that any student eligible for reduced-price lunch in a public school unit receive lunch at no cost. These funds shall be allocated to each public school unit based on the submission of a monthly claim for reimbursement that includes the number of reduced-price meals served to students.

SECTION 1.(b) If the funds appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) of this section are insufficient to achieve the purpose described in that subsection, the State Board of Education may authorize funds appropriated to State Aid for Public Schools for that purpose.

SECTION 1.(c) The Department of Public Instruction shall include information regarding the cost of implementing the requirements of this section in any request submitted to the General Assembly for budget adjustments related to enrollment growth.

SECTION 2. Part 2 of Article 17 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115C-264.5. Antistigmatization and antidiscrimination practices.

(a) In the operation of their school nutrition programs, schools shall not engage in public identification or stigmatization of a student who cannot pay for a meal or who owes a meal debt by, for example, requiring that the student wear a wristband or hand stamp.

(b) A school shall direct communications about a student's meal debt to a parent or guardian and not the student. Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit a school from sending a student home with a letter addressed to a parent or guardian."

SECTION 3. This act becomes effective July 1, 2023, and applies beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.



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