

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

H.B. 776
Apr 18, 2023
HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

H

D

HOUSE BILL DRH10286-NHa-77

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

Sponsors: Representative Brockman.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO PROVIDE FREE LUNCH TO STUDENTS
3 ELIGIBLE FOR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH AND TO ENACT AN
4 ANTISTIGMATIZATION AND ANTIDISCRIMINATION POLICY IN SCHOOL
5 NUTRITION.

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

7 **SECTION 1.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
8 Public Instruction the sum of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in recurring funds for the
9 2023-2024 fiscal year to provide that any student eligible for reduced-price lunch in a public
10 school unit receive lunch at no cost. These funds shall be allocated to each public school unit
11 based on the submission of a monthly claim for reimbursement that includes the number of
12 reduced-price meals served to students.

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

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

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

21 "**§ 115C-264.5. Antistigmatization and antidiscrimination practices.**

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

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

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

