

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 1031

Short Title: Universal Free Breakfast and Lunch. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Quick, Buansi, Johnson-Hostler, and Roberson (Primary Sponsors).

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

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 22, 2026

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO PROVIDE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AT NO COST
3 TO STUDENTS.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

6 "**§ 115C-263. School nutrition services.**

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

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

17 (1) Determine the amount to allocate to each school food authority based on an
18 evaluation of the authority's nutrition services. The Board shall develop the
19 method and criteria for the evaluation, which, at a minimum, shall account for
20 the following:

- 21 a. The size of the schools served by the school food authority as
22 determined by Average Daily Membership.
23 b. The number of students that are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch
24 and the estimated receipts from the National School Lunch Program.
25 c. The funds actually expended in the prior year, which may be waived
26 if the school food authority was not in operation in the year prior.
27 d. The extent to which the nutrition services promote health and wellness
28 by providing food that is of high quality and nutrient content.
29 e. The extent to which the school food authority uses locally sourced
30 food and products.
31 f. Any other information the Board deems relevant to the cost and
32 operation of the nutrition services.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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