



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

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March 30, 2011

Dear Superintendents:

A bill has been introduced in the Senate which would move the Child Nutrition Program from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDACS).

The DPI and the State Board of Education are **opposed** to this proposed legislation because the Child Nutrition Programs have been and continue to be an integral part of the education infrastructure at the state and local levels. If the school nutrition program is to remain an important part of the academic environment and instructional day, it is imperative that the program remain in the state's education agency.

While the School Nutrition Association's (SNA) Executive Board originally supported SB 389, the Board requested a vote of the full membership after SNA President Lois Hood heard from over half of the state's child nutrition directors opposing this move. The membership has now also spoken clearly in opposing the move. Seventy-three percent of the voting membership sought to rescind the association's support of SB 389.

This proposed legislation would authorize the State Board of Agriculture (SBA) to have control over the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) instead of the State Board of Education (SBE). The SBA consists of persons who can assist the NCDACS in carrying out their mission to "provide services that promote and improve agriculture and agribusiness, protect consumers and businesses and preserve farmland and natural resources." SBA members include persons who represent the following areas: general farming, livestock, dairy, poultry, cotton, marketing (green industry), equine, peanuts and tobacco. This Board would have policy-making authority over a program that is operated inside the school environment. Decisions made by the SBA could have an adverse effect on schools, and ultimately students, since those on the SBA are more focused on agricultural priorities than education priorities.

We are also concerned that funds which are currently used to support training, technical assistance and other resources for the operation of local child nutrition directors and their staffs could be diverted for other purposes based on the priorities of the agriculture community. Further, there is concern there would be a significant disruption of services that have been provided by the Child Nutrition Services section to LEA Child Nutrition Programs should such a

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move be legislated. The Direct Certification System (which directly certifies students for free meal benefits without a paper application) would be disrupted because the state agriculture agency is prohibited from accessing student information data contained in NC WISE. Thus, there would be additional taxpayer costs to develop a technology infrastructure for administering the child nutrition programs as federal dollars may not be used for this purpose.

We hope you will contact your legislators to oppose this legislation. The bill's primary sponsors are Don East, David Rouzer and Tom Apodaca. The co-sponsors are Harry Brown, Peter S. Brunstetter, Warren Daniel, Jim Davis, Fletcher L. Hartsell, Jr., Louis Pate, Bill Rabon, Dan Soucek, Jerry W. Tillman.

Deliberation on Senate Bill 389 will begin in the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources. Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources are Don East, David Rouzer, Brent Jackson, Bob Atwater, Stan Bingham, Andrew C. Brock, Harry Brown, Warren Daniel, Fletcher L. Hartsell, Clark Jenkins, Eleanor Kinnard, Jean Preston, Jerry Tillman, Tommy Tucker, Michael Walters, Stan White, Austin Allran, Daniel Clodfelter, and Bill Rabon.

I am sharing an example of one of the many communications I have received opposing this legislation. If we work together, we can keep the Child Nutrition Program where it belongs -- at the Department of Public Instruction.

Thank you for all you do for the children of this state.

Sincerely,



June St. Clair Atkinson

JSA:AM:mw

Attachment (1)

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT

SENT VIA E-MAIL

From: Zickefoose, Steve
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2011 4:36 PM
To: jatkinson@dpi.state.nc.us
Cc: wharrison@dpi.state.nc.us; amccoll@dpi.state.nc.us; Sackett, Byron; Jenkins, Elaine
Subject: SNA Vote; Senate Bill 389

Dear Dr. Atkinson,

On behalf of Lincoln County Schools, I must say that we were totally surprised to learn of the SNA Executive Board's support to move the Child Nutrition Services Section from DPI to the Department of Agriculture. This is definitely not the position of our school system. 100% of Lincoln County School's child nutrition staff are members of SNA. None of our 125 child nutrition staff were given the opportunity to offer input regarding this. In addition, neither the child nutrition director nor superintendent were aware of this move.

We feel that the NSLP program is functioning at a high level of success as part of the Department of Public Instruction. This assures that the school nutrition program is a part of the academic setting and instructional day. If the program is moved to a non-education agency, the effectiveness and day to day operational functions may be seriously lessened.

Therefore, Lincoln County Schools offers our full support in not issuing a waiver request to move Child Nutrition Services Section to another agency.

Sincerely,

Steven B. Zickefoose
Asst. Supt. for Business
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