

Dear Senator East:

I recently received a memo from the executive board of the School Nutrition Association stating that it had voted to endorse a bill to move Child Nutrition Services from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services. As a longtime member of this association, I have expressed my concern to the SNA board that this vote and endorsement was made without informing the membership and without opportunities for feedback from those the board was elected to serve. I am disappointed in our leadership's lack of due diligence prior to the introduction of Bill 389 to transfer the Child Nutrition program to DACS and for giving you the impression that the members of this association would support such a move without first asking us.

Thirty-four years ago, I had the good fortune of being hired into a school district and profession that has become a passion. As executive director of Child Nutrition Services for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, I have the privilege of leading one of the largest school-feeding programs in the country. Our program is recognized on the state and national levels. The mission of our program is to contribute to the education of the student by providing healthy meals and educational opportunities that encourage healthy eating. This mission aligns the program more closely with the Department of Public Instruction than the Department of Agriculture, whose mission is to protect the agriculture industry in our state.

Our program works in partnership with school administrators and staff who are administered by NCDPI and adhere to the policies of the State Board of Education. Over the next few years, our program is expected to undergo more radical changes than we have experienced in my entire career. It is going to be more important than ever that we have the support of our school administrators and the State Board of Education to implement program changes. This is not the time for our program to be separated from education. NCDPI has provided excellent leadership and program oversight. The education opportunities and technology services that are provided to district personnel exceed expectations. I respectfully urge you to reconsider this action and to take the time to study the impact of such a move on local Child Nutrition programs that depend heavily on the support of their local administrators and school boards for their success.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,
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