

Dare County Schools

3020 S. Wrightsville Ave.
PO Box 1508
Nags Head, NC 27959
Phone (252) 480-8888
FAX (252) 480-8885
<http://www.dare.k12.nc.us>

SUE F. BURGESS, Ed.D.
Superintendent

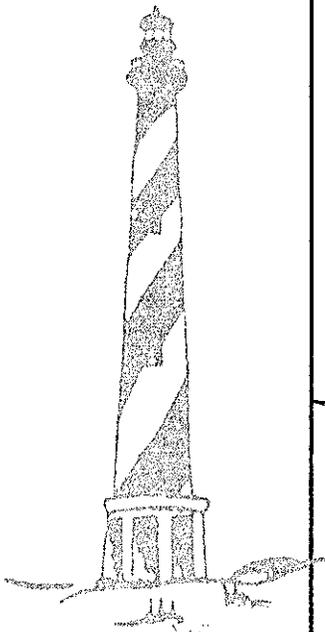
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March 25, 2011

The Honorable North Carolina State Senator Don East

Re: Opposition to SB 389, please vote NO!

Dear Senator East:

This letter is written to voice genuine concern and wholehearted opposition to SB 389. This bill proposes relocating the Child Nutrition Programs from the NC Department of Public Instruction to the NC Department of Agriculture. This bill may be well intentioned but is inadequately informed and detrimental to the children of North Carolina.

A divorce from the Department of Education has many negative consequences and financial costs. School cafeterias are part of the school and need to remain connected to education. School nutrition is an integral part of the child's total education. Hungry children cannot learn.

Frankly, I am mystified about the reason for the bill. Is it a power grab by agricultural concerns? Is it a superficial effort at streamlining government? In fact, it will cost the state money which is unjustified in this budget climate. Nationwide, forty-eight of fifty states operate the school nutrition programs within departments of education. To operate apart from education requires a waiver from the federal government which may or may be granted. By law, certain essential student data cannot be shared with non-education entities. How can Department of Agriculture deal with this limitation?

Child Nutrition Programs are complex and challenging to operate. In North Carolina we are blessed to have true partners, at the state level. The current model with ties to both education and agriculture is effective. Dr. Lynn Harvey and staff at NCDPI are known throughout the nation as visionary, hardworking and have advanced Child Nutrition Programs to better meet the needs of students in this state. Gary Gay and staff at the NCDA are national leaders in administering the USDA commodity food program. With such effective services in place, why is this detrimental, costly and disruptive bill in process? The current scenario and partners are effective. There is absolutely no reason to pass SB 389. Certainly there are more pressing issues in our state than dismantling an effective model for school nutrition.

As the Child Nutrition Director for Dare County Schools I am asking you to stand against SB 389. Please act now to derail this bill so that all concerned may return to our focus and mission of serving nutritious meals to the students of North Carolina. Thank you for listening to this serious concern.

Sincerely,


Carol Sykes, MS, SNS
Child Nutrition Director

"Educate Every Child"