



PERQUIMANS COUNTY SCHOOLS

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March 25, 2011

Dear Honorable Legislators,

I am writing to you out of great concern about the future of the Child Nutrition Programs in North Carolina. A bill has been introduced in the Senate, SB389 – Transfer Child Nutrition Program to DACS (Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services).

This bill would move the Child Nutrition Section from DPI - where we have been housed for the past 50 years - to DACS. That, in my professional opinion as the Child Nutrition Director for Perquimans County, would be like trying to move a 50 year old oak tree to a different location in your yard. Moving that oak tree would be a monumental, costly task that would probably kill or stunt the growth of the tree and thus not achieve the goals that were envisioned. I see moving the Child Nutrition Section the same way. In these stressed economic times, such a move would be extremely costly to the state and a waste of valuable resources in time and money. Also the local child nutrition programs are very dependent on the services as they are currently being provided. We operate on extremely limited budgets and rely on the quick turn-around of our monthly claims for reimbursement we need to operate and pay employees.

The North Carolina Child Nutrition Program is one of the leading child nutrition programs in the nation, under the very capable leadership of Dr. Lynn Harvey. Since Dr. Harvey was hired to be the Section Chief of Child Nutrition Services at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the child nutrition program has gone from a “maintenance mode” to charging full speed ahead to keep up with the ever changing demands of USDA and state mandates. The trust that I have in her leadership is immense.

Since the beginning of the discussions concerning this move, no one has given a real reason that this move is necessary or should have even been considered. The department receives excellent reviews from USDA and this is not a request from DPI to make this change. So why?

I would like to ask you to vote to keep the Child Nutrition Program in the Department of Public Instruction and not move it to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Thank you for your support.

Donna B. Harris
Child Nutrition Director