

March 23, 2011

Dear Senator Apodaca:

I am writing to you with great concern for SB 389 – moving the Child Nutrition Services program from the Department of Public Instruction to the NC Department of Agriculture. For 30+ years I worked with the child nutrition program in Wake County, retiring as the Director of the Child Nutrition Department. Since my retirement I have continued to work with child nutrition programs across the state as a consultant and trainer.

At the local level Child Nutrition Directors, cafeteria managers, and cafeteria assistants struggle to be recognized as an integral part of the education of children. Removing this program from the Department of Public Instruction could compromise the positive strides that have been reached. Boards of Education, Superintendents, and Principals recognize the Department of Public Instruction as an authoritative agency but would not recognize a non-educational agency.

Child Nutrition Services under the administration of the Department of Public Instruction has always been professional, efficient and supportive. Under the leadership of Dr. Lynn Harvey, the support has never been greater in the division to the local school districts. Trained staff is available to assist local agencies with implementing federal guidelines, the free and reduced breakfast and lunch program, and new dietary guidelines just to name a few.

There are NO advantages to making this move. With the poor economy today, to incur additional unnecessary cost to make this change would certainly demonstrate poor stewardship from our leaders. The negatives that the move would create for all the children in North Carolina are not necessary and should not be allowed.

I would appreciate a response to what is the purpose of this move. The negatives would be so great to Child Nutrition and the service that is provided to all the school children in NC.

Please consider these comments.

Sincerely,
Elaine C. Hunt, MBA