



2023 STATE LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY: YEAR END REVIEW

This report is a summary of key school nutrition state legislation introduced between January 1 and December 31, 2023.

TREND WATCH

Across the nation, there's a notable push towards ensuring every child receives a healthy school meal while at school. 34 out of the 50 states have either implemented or introduced legislation. SNA's [2024 Position Paper](#) urges Congress to offer healthy school meals for all students at no charge to support academic achievement, combat food insecurity and ease burdens on school nutrition staff so they can focus on serving students.

Healthy School Meals for All

a) Permanent: Eight states have permanently legislated healthy school meals for all students. They are:

California	Michigan
Colorado	Minnesota
Maine	New Mexico
Massachusetts	Vermont

b) Temporary: Nevada is offering healthy school meals to all students for the 2023-24 school year. Illinois passed healthy school meals for all for State Fiscal Year 2024, but it remains unfunded.

c) Pending: 27 states and the District of Columbia have introduced legislation to provide school meals for all. These states include:

Arizona	North Carolina
Connecticut	North Dakota
Delaware	Ohio
Hawaii	Oklahoma
Illinois	Oregon
Iowa	Pennsylvania
Louisiana	Rhode Island
Maryland	South Carolina
Missouri	South Dakota
Montana	Tennessee
Nebraska	Virginia
New Jersey	Wisconsin
New York	Washington
Nevada	Washington D.C.


Other Legislative Efforts

In addition to healthy school meals for all, several states are focusing on other areas of the program, such as increasing state reimbursement rates, addressing increasing requests for alternative meals due to dietary or religious needs, policies for unpaid meal debt balances and adjustments to school wellness plans.

SNA state advocacy resources are a collaborative effort intended to support grassroots efforts at the local level. We welcome your updates at advocacy@schoolnutrition.org.

STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Arkansas

- [SB308](#): Proposes free meals at school for students who qualify for reduced-price meals.
-  [SB477](#): Establishes a system for students who qualify for reduced-price meals to receive free meals at school. **(Passed)**


Arizona

- [HB 2238](#): Appropriates \$106,000,000 from the state general fund in FY 2023-2024 to provide free breakfast and lunch to students in kindergarten programs and grades 1-12 in each charter school and school district.
- [HB2353](#): Addresses unpaid school meal fees by prohibiting schools from taking any action that would publicly identify a student with meal debt, including serving an alternate meal.
- [HB2352](#): Establishes the "No Lunch Debt Grant Program" to relieve public school students of lunch debt. The program allows school districts or charter schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to apply for grants to cover student lunch debts. The bill appropriates \$2,000,000 from the state general fund for the 2023-2024 fiscal year to support this initiative.
- [SB1233](#): Addresses unpaid school meal fees and seeks to protect students from any form of public identification or stigmatization due to meal debt, including the serving of alternate meals.
- [HB2565](#): Renames "School Lunch Program Fund" to "School Meal Programs" and establishes the "Statewide School Meal Program Fund" to support free student meals. The Department of Education will oversee the fund, and schools can apply to cover student meal debts. The bill appropriates \$106,000,000 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year to the fund.


California

-  [SB 348](#): Mandates healthy school breakfast and lunch at no cost and directs state agencies and other entities to develop guidelines for added sugar limits. **(Passed)**
-  [AB95](#): Allows schools to sell an entrée from an additional nutritiously adequate meal that qualifies for federal reimbursement to a student after they have been provided a free school meal. **(Passed)**
- [AB1178](#): Proposes a process for state reimbursement for summer meal program operators serving meals to guardians of eligible pupils during summer. The bill also emphasizes the importance of providing nourishing meals to caregivers at summer meal sites.

Colorado

-  [SB221](#): Creates the healthy school meals for all program general fund exempt account, allows expenditures in excess of appropriations for the program, and clarifies accounting for the program in the annual general appropriations bill. **(Passed)**

Connecticut

- [SB 929](#): Provides free school meals to all students.
- [HB 6330](#): Continues meals at no cost program.
- [HB 5114](#): Requires the State Board of Education to expend funds to provide school lunches to all students.
-  [HB 6880](#): Requires boards of education to post online curriculum materials and the nutrition value₃

of school meals. It would also allow public schools to serve whole milk and increase lunchtime for students from 20 to 30 minutes. **(Passed)**

- [HB 6842](#): Establishes a Local Food for Schools Incentive Grant Program and increases funding to the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program.
- [SB 1216](#): Requires a study of funding needed to provide school meals for students.
- [HB 5078](#): Discontinues the use of polystyrene for school lunch trays.
- [HB 6326](#): Requires local and regional boards of education to include goals for reducing disordered eating in school wellness policies.
- [SB288](#): Requires public schools and charter schools to provide free breakfasts and lunches to all students regardless of family income.
- [HB6171](#): Reduces child hunger and food insecurity by restoring the free school meals available during the COVID-19 pandemic for students who may need them but aren't eligible under current law.
- [HB6182](#): Mandates public schools and charter schools to offer free breakfasts and lunches to every student.

Delaware

- [HB 125](#): Requires all schools to offer all students free breakfast and lunch every school day. The state would reimburse schools for expenses not reimbursed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

District of Columbia

- [B 25-0035](#): Provides universal free school meals and after school snacks to public school, public charter school and participating private school students in the District of Columbia.

Florida

- [S1376](#): Requires school districts to provide alternative meals and snacks upon request from a student or their parent/guardian. The bill also outlined cost requirements for these meals and snacks.
- [H0243](#): Requires school districts to provide alternative meals and snacks upon request from a student or their parent/guardian and details the cost requirements for these meals and snacks.


Georgia

- [HB510](#): Provides healthy breakfast and lunch at no cost for all public-school students.

Hawaii

- [HB 620](#): Requires public schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students. If this measure passes, it will go into effect beginning the 2023-24 school year.
- [HB 540](#): Requires the department of education and public charter schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students. Appropriates funds.
- [HB 1462](#): Requires the Department of Education to develop and implement a School Meal Subsidy Program to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for free lunch under the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program. Appropriates funds.
- [HB 250](#): Mandates the department of education to set rules for procuring school food and services emphasizing a geographic preference for unprocessed locally grown and raised food products.

Illinois

- [SB 1931](#): Requires the State Board of Education to reimburse school boards the actual cost of each free lunch or breakfast supplied by them (instead of reimbursing school boards \$0.15 or the actual cost, whichever is less, for each free lunch or breakfast), taking into consideration (rather than being in addition to) any federal contributions.
-  [SB 2471](#): Provides school meals at no cost to all students. **(Passed)**
- [HB 2768](#): Provides that the State Board of Education shall reimburse not less than the actual cost to school boards for each free lunch or breakfast supplied by them (instead of reimbursing school boards \$0.15 or the actual cost, whichever is less, for each free lunch or breakfast), taking into consideration (rather than being in addition to) any federal contributions.
- [HB3052](#): For all schools operating a school breakfast program, the State Board of Education shall collect information about whether the school is operating a breakfast after the bell program and awards grants for nonrecurring expenses incurred in initiating a school breakfast after the bell program.
- [HB 3643](#): Provides religious dietary food options as part of the school lunch program.
- [SB 2209](#): Awards grants for nonrecurring expenses incurred in initiating a school breakfast after the bell program.


Indiana

- [SB 231](#): Requires all eligible schools to participate in the Community Eligibility Program.

Iowa

- [SF 303](#): Requires school districts to provide breakfast and lunch to all students at no cost.
- [HF 558](#): Creates a local farm produce fund and a local farm produce program. The fund will operate using money appropriated by the state legislature, as well as funding from public or private sources. The fund will support the local farm produce program.
- [HF 575](#): Prohibits schools from collecting payment for school breakfast or lunch from students eligible for reduced-priced meals.
- [HF 377](#): Prohibits the serving of foods containing insect proteins, lab-grown proteins imitating animal products and genetically engineered products used to simulate animal meats at schools.
- [HF 363](#): Establishes a standing appropriation for free school meals for all children attending a public or accredited nonpublic primary or secondary school.


Louisiana

-  [HB 282](#): Requires schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to public school students who do not receive free school meals under present law or any other program. **(Passed)**



Maine

- [HP 638](#): Requires school administrative units to provide students with a lunch period of at least 30 minutes, unless determined impracticable by the school administrative unit's governing body after notice and public hearing. In order to reduce food waste, this bill also requires, to the extent possible, for school administrative units to provide a table, container or other area where a student may return unconsumed whole food or beverage items that may be provided to other students.

Maryland

- [HB0628](#) or [SB0557](#): Requires schools that participate in the School Breakfast Program or the National School Lunch Program to offer each student a meal at no cost. The bill provides for the reimbursement rate at which the State shall pay county boards and participating nonpublic schools for the meals offered to students. It prohibits county boards or nonpublic schools from charging a student any portion of the cost of a breakfast or lunch.
-  [HB0514](#): Increases the appropriation required by the Governor for the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program from \$7,550,000 to \$12,050,000 in the annual budget bill. **(Passed)**



Massachusetts

-  [H58](#): Appropriates \$65 million for the School Breakfast Program for Fiscal Year 2023. **(Passed)**
- [H603](#): Requires all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program and school breakfast program to make breakfast and lunch available at no cost to students. Schools are also required to adopt the federal Community Eligibility Provision. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education would cover the difference in cost not reimbursed through federal funding.
- [S261](#): Requires all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program and school breakfast program to make breakfast and lunch available at no cost to students. Schools are also required to adopt the federal Community Eligibility Provision. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education would cover the difference in cost not reimbursed through federal funding.
- [H451](#): Directs the governor to annually proclaim March 21 as Massachusetts Child Nutrition Day and recommends that the day be observed in an appropriate manner.
-  [H3545](#): Requests an appropriation of \$171 million to extend state-funded universal free school meals through SY 2023-2024. Directs the Executive Office of Education to report by early next year on options to reform, modify or extend this program in a way that promotes equity, maximizes federal revenue and improves predictability and sustainability of funding into the future. **(Passed)**
- [HB3993](#): Proposes the establishment of a 3-year pilot program to reimburse school food authorities and licensed early education and care programs for purchases of locally sourced food.
- [H558](#): Establishes a farm to school grants program within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to promote healthy eating.

Michigan

- [SB0500](#) and [HB5042](#): Establishes a free school breakfast and lunch program.

Minnesota

- [SF158](#) or [HF 2043](#): Establishes a farm to school program to facilitate and increase the procurement of Minnesota-grown unprocessed or minimally processed food by eligible recipients in order to increase Minnesota children's access to healthy, fresh, locally produced food and to support the farmers and processors who sell their products to eligible recipients.
-  [HF 5](#) or [SF 123](#): Amends the current statute and require all schools that participate in the federal school breakfast and lunch programs to provide breakfast and lunch at no cost to all students. **(Passed)**
-  [SF 2684](#) or [HF 2497](#): Creates the free school meals program and policies school have to comply with. Makes appropriation to fund school meal programs. **(Passed)**
- [SF2643](#): Authorizes Minnesota schools to serve two percent and whole milk to kindergarten students as part of the state-sponsored school milk program.


Missouri

- [HB172](#): Requires public schools to provide free breakfasts and lunches to all students attending classes in such school.
- [SB321](#) and [HB977](#): Establishes the "Missouri Universal School Meals Act." Subject to appropriations, schools shall provide a U.S. Department of Agriculture reimbursable meal to a student who requests one, at no cost to the student, unless the student's parent or guardian provides notice to the school that the parent or guardian will provide the student's meal. A school shall determine which students are eligible for free and reduced price meals under the federal student meals programs and shall provide information and assistance to parents and guardians for purposes of filling out meal assistance applications. Schools shall seek to maximize federal meal assistance, but shall not publicly identify or stigmatize students who are eligible for such assistance.
- [HB 565](#): Requires schools to provide a reimbursable meal to any student who requests it, regardless of whether the student can pay for a meal or owes money for earlier meals, unless the student's parent or guardian has provided written permission to withhold a meal. Schools may not require a student to throw a meal away because of inability to pay for the meal or because of a meal debt, nor may they publicly stigmatize or identify students. The bill also specifies that if a student owes money for five or more meals, the school must determine if the student is eligible for free meals, attempt to have the student's parent or guardian fill out a meal application, and contact the student's parent or guardian to offer assistance with a meal application. The bill also requires schools to direct communication about any student's meal debt to a parent or guardian, not the student. Schools may not require a parent or guardian to pay fees or costs from collection agencies hired to collect meal debts.
- [HB446](#): Requires certain public schools to offer breakfast after the bell, a program that provides breakfast to students after the start of the school day.
- [HB878](#): Creates the "Missouri Universal School Meals Act," which would require schools to provide free meals to all students who request them, unless their parents opt out. The bill also creates a fund to reimburse schools for the cost of providing such meals and a task force to study the feasibility and benefits of universal school meals.
- [HB908](#): Creates new provisions related to serving meals to students, such as prohibiting schools from denying meals to students who cannot pay or owe money for previous meals, requiring schools to communicate with parents about meal debts and assistance programs and prohibiting schools from using collection agencies or legal actions to collect meal debts.

Montana


- ○ [HB863](#): Funds school meals for all students, subject to appropriations. The bill also creates a task force to study the feasibility and benefits of universal school meals.

Nebraska

- [LB99](#): Adopts the "Hunger-Free Schools Act" to provide free breakfast and lunch to all public school students. Schools would be reimbursed by the State for any meal costs that are not reimbursed by the federal school breakfast, lunch, or summer meals program. Participation in the Community Eligibility Provision, a federal program that provides meals at no cost to all students in eligible schools, would be required for eligible schools.
-  [LB754](#): Requires schools to provide a breakfast program if at least 40% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The bill also increases the reimbursement rate for

breakfasts served to students who qualify for reduced-price meals from 30 cents to 55 cents.

(Passed)

-  [LB753](#): Changes provisions relating to the distribution of lottery funds used for education, early childhood, and the Nebraska Opportunity Grant Act. The bill allocates \$5 million annually from the Education Innovation Fund to the Department of Education for grants to schools for breakfast and lunch programs. **(Passed)**
- [LB627](#): Adopt the Free Student Meals Act. Creates a grant program, administered by the State Department of Education, to reimburse participating public or nonprofit private schools who offer breakfasts and lunches at no cost to all students.

Nevada

- [SB340](#): Requires the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of a charter school, as applicable, to provide school breakfast and lunch to students who attend summer school. Establishes reporting requirements.
- [AB319](#): Extends free school meals for all Nevada students to the 2024-25 school year, using \$43 million from the American Rescue Plan funds.

New Hampshire

- [HB 181](#): Establishes a committee to study school meal programs in New Hampshire's public schools and nonsectarian schools that utilize public funds.
- [HB 619](#): Requires the Department of Education to reimburse school districts for the cost of providing healthy school breakfast and lunch to all students. The bill also requires schools to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision.

New Jersey

- [S 1222](#) or [A811](#): Directs the Department of Agriculture to implement online applications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.
- [A 3925](#) or [S 531](#): Requires public schools to comply with the school lunch and breakfast nutrition standards adopted by USDA in 2012.
- [A 4132](#) or [S 3426](#): Establishes the New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week. It would be an annual week-long celebration to teach children, through a book designation and classroom activities, the importance of agricultural products and the role they play in providing the ingredients for meals.
- [A5164](#) or [S530](#): Requires certain school meal information be provided to public school students' parents and requires school districts to request that families apply for school meals under certain circumstances. **(Passed)**
- [S3480](#) or [A5595](#): Requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a universal free school meal program for all public school students by the 2027-28 school year. The bill also creates a fund to reimburse schools for the cost of providing free meals to all students and a task force to study the feasibility and benefits of universal free school meals.
- [A5684](#) or [S4055](#): Requires certain nonpublic schools to provide meals to all students under "Working Class Families Anti-Hunger Act"; authorizes limited expansion of income eligibility to qualify public and nonpublic school students for free lunch. **(Passed)**
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[A5573](#) or [S3956](#): Requires schools with lunch programs to provide free lunch to gradually increasing numbers of income-eligible students and, after five-year phase-in period, to provide free lunch to all

students, regardless of income or federal eligibility.

[S4045](#) or [A5459](#): Requires Secretary of Agriculture to establish Farm to School Local Food Procurement Reimbursement Grant Program to reimburse school districts for costs expended in sourcing and procuring local foods for students; appropriates \$6,500,000.

[A5164](#): Requires certain school meal information be provided to public school students' parents and requires school districts to request that families apply for school meals under certain circumstances.


New Mexico

-  [SB4](#): Enacts the “Healthy Universal School Meals Act” to ensure free, healthy school meals for all students. Makes an appropriation. **(Passed)**
-  [HB2](#): Appropriates \$22.5 million for the implementation of SB4 and universal free school meals in New Mexico. **(Passed)**

New York


- [A 03923](#): Enacts the "Making Equitable and Alternative lunches (MEAL) Act;" requires a public school to offer a plant-based food option, a halal food option, and a kosher food option as an alternative to every meal and offered in food service to any student who chooses such alternative meal or snack as an option.
- [S1964](#): Directs the Department of Health to develop state food guidelines for foods purchased, served, and sold by State agencies, programs, and institutions and on state property.
- [A01941](#) or [S1678A](#): Requires all public school districts, charter schools and non-public schools that participate in the national school lunch program or school breakfast program to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to students.
- [S 3480](#) or [A 5595](#): Requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a free school meal program for all public-school students by the 2027-28 school year. The bill also creates a fund to reimburse schools for the cost of providing free meals to all students.
- [S996](#): Requires public schools to offer plant-based food options in food service.
- [A1373](#): Requires school meal nutritional facts and ingredient list be provided for such meals.

North Carolina


- [H509](#): Appropriates \$3,166,600 for 2023-24 from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction. This would be used to satisfy any outstanding school nutrition program debt.
-  [S582](#): Requires public schools and charter schools to have 100% muscadine grape juice available to students as part of the school's nutrition program or through the operation of the school's vending facilities. **(Passed)**
- [H 653](#): Requires school food authorities to offer at least one plant-based meal entrée option at every breakfast and lunch served. Defines a plant-based meal as one that is free of all animal products, including meat, poultry, fish, dairy and eggs.
- [H 777](#): Requires public schools to offer students breakfast and lunch each day. Appropriates \$148.8 million in recurring funds for SY2023-24 to provide nutrition services to students in public school units at no cost to the students. Allows the use of funds appropriated to State Aid for Public Schools for this purpose if this funding is insufficient for SY2023-24.
- [H844](#): Requires public schools to provide students with free breakfast and lunch. The bill also includes the following provisions:
 - Requires the State Board of Education to allocate funds.

- Requires charter schools, regional schools, schools for students with visual and hearing impairments and laboratory schools to provide school nutrition services.
- Appropriates \$172 million in recurring funds for SY2023-24 from the General Fund to provide nutrition services to students in public school units at no cost to the students.
- Allows the use of funds appropriated to State Aid for Public Schools for this purpose if this funding is insufficient for SY2023-24.

North Dakota

- [HB1491](#): Provides an appropriation of \$89,500,000 to the superintendent of public instruction to provide grants to defray the expenses of providing lunch, free of charge, for all students enrolled in public schools, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025.
-  [HB1494](#): Prohibits schools from denying a reimbursable meal to a student who requests one unless the student's parent or guardian has provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal. It also prohibits taking away meals or providing alternative meals to students who have school meal debt; publicly identifying or stigmatizing students that don't have the money to pay for a meal or who receive free or reduced-price lunches; disposing of food that has already been served to a student; limiting a student's participation in any school activities or requiring students to provide services or perform work to pay for school meal debt. **(Passed)**

Ohio

-  [HB33](#): Includes a provision to fund reduced-price school meals. The bill allocates \$13,163,000 from the General Revenue's Fund. Reduced-price meals are available for households at 185% of the federal poverty level, or an income of \$51,338 for a family of four. **(Passed)**

Oklahoma

- [HB1885](#): Creates the Healthy School Meals for All Act. Requires sufficient appropriation by the legislature to provide meals at no cost to all children enrolled in the school district.

Oregon

- [HB 3030](#): Establishes Universal School Meal Account for purpose of reimbursing school districts for certain costs incurred in providing federally reimbursable meals.

Pennsylvania

- [SB 180](#) or [HB180](#): Provides for the Universal School Meal Program; establishes the Universal School Meal Fund; and makes an interfund transfer and an appropriation.

Rhode Island

- [H 5141](#): Requires all public elementary and secondary schools to offer free lunch to all students.
- [H 5639](#): Requires all elementary and secondary schools to provide breakfast and lunch to students at no cost.
- [H6007](#): Requires all public elementary and secondary schools to make reimbursable breakfasts and lunches available to all students.
- [SB 68](#): Amends the Rhode Island current statute and requires elementary and secondary public schools to provide all students with free lunches, to the extent state and federal funds are available.
- [SB 71](#): Amends the current statute and require elementary and secondary public schools to provide all students with free lunches, to the extent state and federal funds are available.

South Carolina

[S 148](#): Requires eligible schools to offer breakfast and lunch at no cost to all students. Amends the current statute to require schools to provide students with at least 30 minutes to eat lunch between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

South Dakota

- [HB 1221](#): Prohibits school districts from charging students for meals issued by a foodservice program.
- This bill also requires the state Department of Education to reimburse school districts for the cost of providing school meals for all at no cost.
- [SB3323](#): Provide students eligible for free and reduced-price meals must be offered the same federally reimbursable meal as ineligible students. Such meals must be offered regardless of whether students owe money for previous meals. Schools that offer food and beverages separately from federally reimbursable meals may not allow students to accrue balances when purchasing such items and only may accept cash payment or allow funds to be electronically drawn from prepaid balances. Schools and school districts may not penalize students for failing to pay for school lunches, and to provide the state department of education shall develop and provide a model policy and template regarding the collection of school meal debt to each school district.


Tennessee

- [SB 0208](#) or [HB 0255](#): Requires the state to reimburse each LEA the cost of providing a free breakfast and lunch to each student enrolled after all federal funds available pursuant to the national school lunch program and the federal school breakfast program, or any other federal program, have been applied. This bill also indicates that students must meet the eligibility requirements for free or reduced price lunch under federal law.

Texas

- [HB 3589](#): Transfers the administration of school nutrition programs from the Texas Department of Agriculture to the Texas Education Agency.


Vermont

-  [H. 165](#): Requires all public schools to provide school breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge. (Passed)

Virginia

- [HB 1967](#): Requires public elementary and secondary schools to participate in the federal National School Lunch Program and the federal School Breakfast Program or the Community Eligibility Provision. The bill also requires schools to provide lunch and breakfast at no cost to any student who requests it, unless parents provide written instruction indicating otherwise.
- [HB 2031](#): Establishes a Farm to School Program Task Force. Requires the Department of Education to establish and appoint such members as it deems necessary or appropriate to the Farm to School Program Task Force for the purpose of increasing student access throughout the Commonwealth to high-quality farm to school programs.

Washington

-  [HB 1238](#) or [SB 5339](#): Requires all public schools to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision if 40% or more of its students are eligible for free or reduced price meals. It includes the provision of school meals to all students in its definition of "basic education." **(Passed)**

West Virginia

- [HB3296](#): Provide for statewide participation in the federal Community Eligibility Provision for its duration.

Wyoming

- [HB0192](#): Establishes a financial assistance program for public schools to operate food service programs, requires school districts to establish food service programs, and requires school districts to make lunch available to every student at no cost.