



SENATE BILL 487: Student Meal Debt Policy.

2019-2020 General Assembly

Committee: Senate Education/Higher Education. **If Date:** May 2, 2019
favorable, re-refer to Appropriations/Base Budget. If favorable, re-refer to Rules and Operations of the Senate

Introduced by: Sen. B. Jackson

Prepared by: Kara McCraw

Analysis of: Second Edition

Committee Counsel

OVERVIEW: SB 487 would require the State Board of Education to adopt a policy to ensure all local school administrative units administer unpaid meal charges for school lunch programs in the same manner, including a requirement that students not be prevented from receiving nutritious meals because of an unpaid meal charge. SB 487 would also appropriate \$3 million to free lunches to students who qualify for reduced-price lunch.

CURRENT LAW: Part 2 of Article 17 of Chapter 115C requires local boards of education to provide, to the extent practicable, school food services in schools. In their operation of a public school nutrition program, public schools are required to participate in the federal National School Lunch Program (NSLP). School food services are operated on a nonprofit basis, with earnings above the cost of operation used to reduce food costs, serve better food, or provide free and reduced lunch to indigent children.

Under the NSLP, students who meet certain income requirements can qualify to receive free or reduced price lunches, which are partially reimbursed through federal funds. Additionally, schools or districts in high-poverty areas may adopt the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) to provide breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications on income requirements. CEP districts are partially reimbursed through federal funds calculated from the percentage of students categorically eligible for free meals based on their participation in other specific means-tested programs.

BILL ANALYSIS: SB 487 would require the State Board of Education to adopt a policy to ensure that all local school administrative units administer unpaid meal charges in the same manner. At a minimum, the policy would have to guarantee that students are not prevented from receiving nutritious meals because of an unpaid meal charge.

SB 487 would also appropriate \$3,000,000 in recurring funds for the 2019-2020 fiscal year to be used to provide school lunches at no cost to students of all grade levels qualifying for reduced price meals in all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. The bill would also authorize use of excess funds appropriated for the National School Breakfast Program for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE: SB 487 would become effective when it becomes law, and would apply beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

Karen Cochrane-Brown
Director



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Legislative Analysis
Division
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