**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**S. 425**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Senators Davis, Hembree, Ott, Elliott and Jackson

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Introduced in the Senate on March 5, 2025

Currently residing in the Senate Committee on **Education**

Summary: School meals for students in poverty

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 3/5/2025 Senate Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal‑page 19)

 3/5/2025 Senate Referred to Committee on **Education** (Senate Journal‑page 19)

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=425&session=126&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[03/05/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/425_20250305.docx)

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 59‑63‑795 SO AS TO PROVIDE EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUALLY SHALL IDENTIFY THE NUMBER OF ITS STUDENTS WHO LIVE IN POVERTY AND INCREASE ACCESS TO FREE SCHOOL BREAKFASTS AND LUNCHES FOR THESE STUDENTS, TO PROVIDE CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY, TO PROVIDE RELATED REQUIREMENTS OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS, SCHOOLS, AND SCHOOL BOARDS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Article 7, Chapter 63, Title 59 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

 Section 59‑63‑795. (A) Each public school district annually shall identify the number of its students who live in poverty and increase access to free school breakfasts and lunches for these students. This number must be obtained from the annual State Aide to Classrooms formulation in the annual state budget. For purposes of this section, “students in poverty” means students who:

 (1) qualify for Medicaid benefits;

 (2) qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits;

 (3) qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits; or

 (4) are homeless, transient, or in foster care.

 (B) The local board of trustees of a district in which all schools are eligible to receive the free federal reimbursement rate for all reimbursable school breakfasts and lunches served, pursuant to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) in Section 1759(a) of Title 42 of the United States Code, shall adopt a resolution indicating its degree of participation, if any, in CEP. If a district is unable to participate in CEP because participation would cause a financial hardship, its board shall adopt a resolution stating that it is unable to participate in CEP and demonstrate the financial hardship. The resolution must be published on a public meeting agenda concurrently with the proposed district budget as an action item. A majority of the board members is required to approve any resolution under this subsection.

 (C) A district shall ensure that the parents or guardians of students eligible for free and reduced lunch receive the necessary applications and instructions and, upon request, are provided with assistance in completing the paperwork. If a student is unable to pay for a meal or accrues meal debt, the student’s district or school may not publicly identify or penalize the student in any way including, but not limited to, denying meals, serving alternative meals, discarding meals after serving them to the student, requiring chores or work in exchange for meals, prohibiting participation in extracurricular activities, denying participation in graduation, withholding diplomas, or refusing transcript requests. Communications from the district or school regarding any meal debt owed only may be directed to the parent or guardian of the student and may be sent home through the student.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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