

HB 1574-FN - AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

19Feb2026... 0632h

2026 SESSION

26-2877

12/08

HOUSE BILL

1574-FN

AN ACT relative to the extension of free and reduced price breakfast and lunch for students under the age of 22 and making an appropriation therefor.

SPONSORS: Rep. Weinstein, Rock. 10; Rep. Cornell, Hills. 22; Rep. Selig, Straf. 10; Rep. Sorensen, Rock. 28

COMMITTEE: Education Funding

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill extends breakfast and lunch aid for all students that are the age of 21 who previously qualified for the National School Lunch Program or National School Breakfast Program at the age of 20. The bill also permits participating schools as eligible to receive reimbursements for school breakfasts and lunches that are provided to qualifying students and makes an appropriation for such purpose.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT relative to the extension of free and reduced price breakfast and lunch for students under the age of 22 and making an appropriation therefor.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Statement of Findings. The general court finds that:

2 I. The state of New Hampshire recognizes the importance of supporting the health and
3 nutritional needs of special education students with disabilities who, under recent changes by the
4 department of education, may continue their education beyond the age of 21.

5 II. The current system does not provide access to free and reduced lunch benefits at age 21,
6 creating barriers to access and potentially compromising the well-being of these students.

7 2 New Paragraph; Free and Reduced Meals Expanded for Students Over 21. Amend RSA
8 189:11-a by inserting after paragraph I the following new paragraph:

9 I-a.(a) Any student who is 21 years of age, enrolled in their resident school district or a
10 chartered public school, and who qualified for the National School Lunch Program or the National
11 School Breakfast Program at age 20 shall remain eligible to receive breakfasts and lunches at rates
12 consistent with applicable federal standards until the earliest of the following occurs:

- 13 (1) The student reaches 22 years of age;
- 14 (2) The student graduates from school;
- 15 (3) The student withdraws from school; or
- 16 (4) The student otherwise completes the student's educational program.

17 (b) All public school districts and chartered public schools that participate in the
18 National School Lunch Program or the National School Breakfast Program shall be eligible for
19 reimbursement for breakfasts and lunches served to qualifying students at the reimbursement rates
20 established under each applicable federal program by the department of education consistent with
21 this section.

22 (c) For any meal served to a qualifying student under this paragraph, reimbursement
23 shall first be sought under the applicable federal National School Lunch Program or National School
24 Breakfast Program to the maximum extent permitted by federal law. State reimbursement shall be
25 available only for meals that are not eligible for federal reimbursement. Nothing in this paragraph
26 shall be construed to permit duplicate reimbursement for the same meal.

27 (d) The department of education shall include, in its biennial budget and in each
28 subsequent budget submission, a specific request for funding sufficient to carry out the provisions of
29 this section. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant from the education trust fund to satisfy
30 the state's obligation under this paragraph.

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1 (e) The state board of education may adopt rules pursuant to RSA 541-A relative to the
2 administration of extended breakfast and lunch aid under this paragraph.

3 3 Appropriation. There is hereby appropriated the sum of \$80,000 for fiscal year ending June
4 30, 2027 to the department of education for the purpose of implementing and administering the
5 extended school meal eligibility and reimbursement program established under this act. The
6 governor is authorized to draw a warrant from the education trust fund to satisfy the state's
7 obligation under this act the amount not otherwise appropriated.

8 4 Applicability. RSA 189:11-a as inserted in section 2 of this act shall apply to all eligible
9 students enrolled beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

10 5 Effective Date. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

HB 1574-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE (AMENDMENT #2026-0632h)

AN ACT relative to the extension of free and reduced price breakfast and lunch for students under the age of 22 and making an appropriation therefor.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	None			
Expenditures*	\$0	Up to \$145,000 Per Year		
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	Education Trust Fund			
Appropriations*	\$0	<u>Education Trust Fund</u> Statutory Open Warrant for Reimbursements <u>General Fund</u> \$80,000 in FY 2027 for Implementation/Admin Costs (Department Identified No Applicable Costs)		
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	General Fund and Education Trust Fund			

*Expenditure = Cost of bill

*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

Estimated Political Subdivision Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Local Revenue	\$0	Up to \$145,000 Per Year		
Local Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

METHODOLOGY:

This bill, effective July 1, 2026 (for the 2026-2027 school year), expands eligibility for free or reduced-price school breakfasts and lunches to students who are age 21 if they were eligible for the federal meal programs at age 20. These students remain eligible until they turn 22, graduate, withdraw, or complete their educational program. School districts and chartered public schools may receive federal reimbursement first, with state reimbursement available only for meals not eligible for federal funding. The Department of Education has provided assumptions and an estimate as to this bill's potential fiscal impact:

Assumptions

- Typically, students in this age range are all on an individualized education program (IEP).
- Currently there are 117 students age 21 and 1 student that is age 22.
 - It is unknown if the above students qualify for free or reduced priced meals.
 - Calculations will be made utilizing the current federal reimbursement for free meals.
- Each student eats both breakfast and lunch each school day.
- The number of school days is 180.
- The State will use the Federal Reimbursed Rates to reimburse local school districts for meals.
- Current federal reimbursement rates (School Year 25-26)
 - Breakfast:
 - \$2.49 free
 - \$2.16 reduced
 - Lunch
 - \$4.69 free
 - \$4.29 reduced
- The state currently pays reimbursement for each breakfast meal served under the federal program at a rate of \$0.03 per each free and paid meal and \$0.30 per reduced priced meal.
- There is no state reimbursement for lunch.
- The department confirmed with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) that according to federal regulation 7 CFR 210.2 (child) students above the age of 21 are not eligible for reimbursable meals and there is an age limitation on USDA definition of a child section.

Fiscal Impact

To provide reimbursement for free or reduced priced meals served to students aged 21 to 22 would cost approximately \$144,645 (maximum) per year utilizing the current data.

- Breakfast would cost a maximum of \$53,525 per year
 - Total students = 118
 - Federal Free Breakfast Reimbursement = \$2.49
 - State Breakfast Reimbursement = \$.03
 - 180 school days
 - Total estimated cost of breakfast reimbursement
 - $(118 * [\$2.49 + \$0.03]) * 180 = \$53,525$

- Lunch would cost a maximum of \$91,120 per year
 - Total students = 118
 - Federal Free Lunch Reimbursement = \$4.29
 - 180 school days
 - Total estimated cost of lunch reimbursement
 - $(118 * \$4.29 * 180 = \$91,120)$

This bill provides a statutory open warrant from the education trust fund to satisfy the state's reimbursement under this bill.

In addition, this bill makes a general fund appropriation of \$80,000 in FY 2027 to implement and administer the program. The Department has not identified any costs associated with administering this bill.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Department of Education