



SOMERSWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (S.A.U. 56)
Office of the Superintendent of Schools

January 14, 2026

To the Honorable Chair and members of the Committee,

As the superintendent of schools of the Somersworth School District, I respectfully – and with great urgency – ask you to support HB 1727.

During the school year, our students have access to two meals a day – allowing them to learn, to stay focused, and to reach their full potential. But when school lets out and summer starts, this support disappears. For our low-income students and their families, this means an additional strain on already tight household budgets. The Summer EBT program is designed to bridge this gap and to ensure that children have enough to eat when school is not in session.

The current system for delivering Summer EBT benefits is failing our students and their families. While schools already collect address information for students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals, state law prevents the Department of Education from sharing this information with the Department of Health and Human Services. As a result, DHHS is missing the addresses for more than 4,600 eligible children statewide whose families are not enrolled in other assistance programs.

Somersworth School district has an enrollment of 1300 students. Approximately 450 students receive free or reduced priced school breakfast and lunch and 315 students are directly certified through SNAP, TANF, and McKinney Vento. This past year, these kids were enrolled directly into the S-EBT program to bridge the gap in the summer months (when school meals are not available). Unfortunately, the remaining 135 students who were solely qualified through the free and reduced applications did not receive the additional dollars. These families are among our most vulnerable populations and rely on the systems in our community to nurture them.

Please vote to ease our access to these children and to reduce barriers to the proper nutrition they need to grow. HB 1727 is a clear and practical solution to a problem that affects our kids. It is an investment in our students, their academic success, and the health of our communities. I respectfully ask you to support this bill. Thank you for your consideration – and thank you for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Shea".

John Shea
Superintendent of School

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