

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.
Act 656 of the Regular Session

1 State of Arkansas As Engrossed: S3/29/23 S3/30/23

2 94th General Assembly

A Bill

3 Regular Session, 2023

SENATE BILL 477

4

5 By: Senators J. Dismang, C. Tucker, J. Boyd, J. Bryant, Caldwell, L. Chesterfield, A. Clark, Crowell, B.
6 Davis, Dees, J. Dotson, J. English, Flipppo, S. Flowers, Gilmore, K. Hammer, Hester, Hickey, Hill, Irvin,
7 B. Johnson, M. Johnson, G. Leding, F. Love, M. McKee, R. Murdock, J. Payton, C. Penzo, J. Petty, Rice,
8 Stone, D. Sullivan, D. Wallace

9 By: Representatives Vaught, McCullough, *Achor, Andrews, Barker, Beaty Jr., M. Berry, Breaux, Brooks,*
10 *K. Brown, M. Brown, Joey Carr, John Carr, Cavanaugh, Clowney, A. Collins, Cozart, Crawford, Dalby,*
11 *Duffield, Eaves, Ennett, Eubanks, Evans, D. Ferguson, C. Fite, V. Flowers, D. Garner, Gazaway,*
12 *Gramlich, Haak, Hawk, Holcomb, Hudson, Lynch, Maddox, McClure, McGrew, S. Meeks, Milligan, J.*
13 *Moore, K. Moore, Nicks, Painter, Pearce, Perry, Pilkington, Puryear, J. Richardson, Richmond, Rose,*
14 *Scott, T. Shephard, M. Shepherd, Steimel, Tosh, Walker, Wardlaw, Warren, D. Whitaker, Wooldridge,*
15 *Wooten*

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For An Act To Be Entitled

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AN ACT CONCERNING FEDERALLY FUNDED CHILD NUTRITION
19 PROGRAMS; TO CREATE A MEANS BY WHICH STUDENTS WHO
20 QUALIFY FOR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS AT SCHOOL RECEIVE
21 FREE MEALS AT SCHOOL; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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23

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Subtitle

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TO CREATE A MEANS BY WHICH STUDENTS WHO
26 QUALIFY FOR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS AT SCHOOL
27 RECEIVE FREE MEALS AT SCHOOL.

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30 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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32 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 18, Subchapter 7, is amended
33 to add an additional section to read as follows:

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6-18-720. Free and reduced-price meals.

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(a) Federal funds appropriated to the Department of Education for a
36 child nutrition program shall be used to provide school breakfasts and



1 lunches at no cost to each qualifying student.

2 (b)(1) A public school that serves a school breakfast or a school
3 lunch as part of a child nutrition program shall not charge a qualifying
4 student a reduced-price copayment for a school breakfast or a school lunch.

5 (2)(A) If necessary to comply with the requirements of this
6 section, the department shall provide funds that have been disbursed to the
7 department from the federal government for purposes of funding child
8 nutrition programs to each public school that serves a school breakfast or a
9 school lunch as part of a child nutrition program to cover the cost of
10 eliminating reduced-price copayments as required by subdivision (b)(1) of
11 this section.

12 (B) If federal funds appropriated to the department for a
13 child nutrition program are insufficient to provide a school breakfast or a
14 school lunch at no cost under subdivision (b)(2)(A) of this section, the
15 department shall use funds as authorized by law to provide a school breakfast
16 or a school lunch not initially covered by federal funds under subsection (a)
17 of this section or other funds as authorized by law.

18 (c)(1) Annually by November 15, the Department of Education shall
19 report on and provide to the House Committee on Education and the Senate
20 Committee on Education an overview of each child nutrition program offered in
21 public schools.

22 (2) The report required under subdivision (c)(1) of this section
23 shall include without limitation:

24 (A) The procedure for applying for free or reduced-price
25 meals in public schools; and

26 (B) The number of students who:

27 (i) Apply for free or reduced-price meals;

28 (ii) Are accepted to receive free or reduced-price
29 meals;

30 (iii) Are denied from receiving free or reduced-
31 price meals; and

32 (iv) Automatically qualify for free or reduced-price
33 meals based on federal eligibility requirements.

34 (d)(1) Arkansas Legislative Audit shall audit the Arkansas Department
35 of Education Child Nutrition Unit by December 15, 2023, and report the audit
36 findings to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on

1 Education.

2 (2) The audit required under subdivision (d)(1) of this section
3 shall determine whether each public school's participation in a child
4 nutrition program effectively:

5 (A) Serves the intent of the General Assembly to expand
6 students' access to free meals in public schools; and

7 (B) Complies with federal and state law and rules.

8 (e) As used in this section:

9 (1) "Child nutrition program" includes the following as
10 established under the National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1751 et seq., as
11 it existed on January 1, 2023:

12 (A) The National School Lunch Program; or

13 (B) The School Breakfast Program; and

14 (2) "Qualifying student" means a kindergarten through grade
15 twelve (K-12) student enrolled in a public school who is eligible for receipt
16 of a reduced-price meal in a child nutrition program.

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18 */s/J. Dismang*

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21 **APPROVED: 4/11/23**

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