



## NORTH CAROLINA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH

### School Nutrition Programs Forced to Raise Prices

As School Nutrition Programs (SNPs) begin their first year of operation after the COVID-19 child nutrition waivers expire on June 30, 2022, with food, labor, and supply costs more expensive than in past years, more districts are increasing their paid meal rate.

By the end of May 2022, the school boards of six districts increased their paid meal rates for the 2022-2023 school year, with more scheduled to increase their paid meal rates in the upcoming months.

School District	Breakfast Increase	Lunch Increase
Buncombe County	Universal Free	\$0.90
Columbus County	Universal Free	\$0.90-0.95
Durham County	Universal Free	\$0.85
Elkin City	\$0.05	No change
Graham County	\$0.15	\$0.65
Harnett County	\$0.50	\$0.40-0.50
Haywood County	\$0.75	\$0.95
Johnston County	\$0.85	\$0.70-0.90
Lincoln County	Universal Free	Universal Free
New Hanover County	\$0.65	\$0.95
Wake County	\$0.25	\$0.25

**This will bring the price of paid lunches to as high as \$3.75 in some schools when families are still recovering from the pandemic.**

In North Carolina, SNPs are considered enterprises, meaning they are responsible for raising their own revenue, relying on:

- federal reimbursements for free- and reduced-price meals *actually served*;
- state reimbursements for reduced-price breakfast and lunch copays; and
- student meal payments from reduced-price and full-price meals and a la carte items.

Of the funding sources, federal reimbursements are the largest source of funds. In a typical school year, student meal payments are the second largest source of funds. State reimbursements are the smallest source of funding, totaling only about 1% of the total funds spent on school nutrition programs.

**Increasing state support for SNPs is more critical than ever.**