

State of Maine
Department of Education

Testimony of Jane McLucas, Director of Child Nutrition, Maine Department of Education

In Support of: L.D. 2017

An Act to Update Certain Statutes Governing School Nutrition

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Sponsored by: Representative Murphy

Date: January 21, 2026

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Jane McLucas, and I am here today representing the Department speaking in support of L.D. 2017 An Act to Update Certain Statutes Governing School Nutrition. This bill seeks to update certain sections of the Maine School Lunch statutes in order to align with recent program changes. First, LD 2017 removes the requirement that the Maine Department of Education (DOE) contract for an internet-based application for free or reduced-price school meals and instead simply allows the Department to take that action. It also removes the burdensome requirement that a public school is solely responsible for processing that school's online applications. Second, the bill removes an exemption related to alternative breakfast delivery service which we no longer have the data for.

In many cases, these changes are required as a result of the Governor's successful no-charge meals in Maine and seek to further reduce the stigma of school meal debt and further ensure student access to nutritious food. An added benefit of LD 2017 is that it reduces the administrative burden on our school administrative units (SAUs). By allowing flexibility in the provision of the online free and reduced-price meal application, SAUs will be empowered to make a choice that suits their needs.

The Department would like to offer a friendly amendment to the bill. We suggest leaving 20-A Chapter 223 subchapter 11 intact.

Department of Education is in support of L.D. 2017. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have, and I will be available for work sessions on this bill.