

## 2021 LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY PRIORITY

### FOOD SECURITY & CHILD NUTRITION

In North Carolina, hunger is a critical threat, and it was urgent before the pandemic. One in five children in North Carolina live in families that are considered “food insecure.” Food insecurity can mean being worried about running out of food before your next paycheck, cutting the size of children’s meals, or skipping meals entirely because there isn’t enough money for groceries. In North Carolina, we have the 10th highest rate of food insecurity in the nation, with nearly 480,000 children without enough to eat, and that was before COVID-19.

North Carolina PTA will support initiatives as well as encourage and advocate for legislation and policies that:

- Support the NC Farm to School program:
  - Seek funding to include \$10.7 million recurring and \$1.7 million nonrecurring from the NC General Assembly to increase school nutrition programs’ ability to purchase North Carolina grown food.
- Support the NC School Nutrition Indirect Costs Policy/Financial Solvency Initiative:
  - Amend the statute to require three months of operating costs in the school nutrition program account before indirect costs can be assessed and capping the amount of indirect costs that can be assessed at 8%.
- Support the NC School Lunch Reduced Price Co-Pay initiative:
  - Seek recurring annual funding to eliminate the reduced-price co-pay for school lunches. Prevent schools from charging school employees and parents more for the same meal.
- Support the Categorical Eligibility School Meal Qualification Policy Initiative:
  - Change state policy to reduce the administrative burden on school nutrition programs.
- Support GAP Certification
  - Support CFSA in getting funding to be included in the state budget to cover the costs of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification for farmers, which is required to sell to schools.
- Boosts child health by including robust school meal requirements on milk, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, calorie limits, and sugar and sodium limits.
- Requires schools to make nutrition information more readily available and enhance parents’ and caregivers’ opportunities to participate in the development of local school wellness policies.
- Ensures all students have access to school meal programs.
- Delivers technical assistance and resources to schools that are not meeting the nutrition standards.
- Establishes guidelines to provide adequate time during the school day for students to eat and to recreate.