



2023 State Legislative Position Paper

The Georgia School Nutrition Program provides fuel for a successful Georgia by offering healthy and accessible food to its students, by procuring locally sourced foods to support Georgia's economy and offering a workforce to residents across the state. It is critical these elements are not significantly and continuously impacted.

Over the past several years, Georgia's school nutrition programs have faced many impactful variables that if made permanent would be detrimental to the program. Issues with personnel retention, food shortages, delivery problems, and remaining compliant with federal regulation have affected the ability to operate effectively. It is important to remember that food and agriculture essential workers span the entire food supply chain, from farm workers to restaurant and school nutrition employees.

In school year 2021-2022, Georgia schools served approximately 195 million lunches and 112 million breakfasts to meet the needs of over 1.5 million students. A team of approximately 14,900 School Nutrition Employees working across Georgia in the school setting accomplished this very important feat. Georgia school nutrition programs also provide support to the Georgia agricultural industry through more than \$59M in purchases of Georgia Grown items in school year 2021-2022 alone.

To support the continued health of Georgia's students, and ensure the financial sustainability of Georgia's economy and school nutrition programs, GSNA requests the General Assembly:

1. Provide \$5.5 million to state funding for School Nutrition in the FY 2023 budget. The addition of these funds would be earmarked to cover the cost of Breakfast for reduced paying students.

2. Expand the funding (multiplier) for the Public-School Employee's Retirement System (PSERS) \$0.50 from the current \$16.00 to \$16.50 to be included in the FY 2024 budget.

3. Support SB105: Increase the minimum amount of monthly retirement payment to \$17.00 x the number of member's years of creditable service with the opportunity to increase thereafter.