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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

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RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1       SECTION 1. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
2 amended by adding a new section to subpart C of part II to be  
3 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

4       "§302A- Free school lunch pilot program. (a) The  
5 department shall develop and implement a pilot program that,  
6 beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, provides free school  
7 lunches to all students enrolled at a department school.

8       (b) The department shall adopt rules pursuant to  
9 chapter 91 for the administration and operation of the free  
10 school lunch pilot program.

11       (c) The department shall submit an interim report on:

12       (1) The department's progress in implementing the free  
13 school lunch pilot program;

14       (2) Preliminary results of the free school lunch pilot  
15 program; and

16       (3) The department's findings and recommendations,  
17 including any proposed legislation,



1 to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the  
2 convening of the regular session of 2026.

3 (d) The department shall submit a final report of its  
4 findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
5 legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior  
6 to the convening of the regular session of 2027. The report  
7 shall include the results of the free school lunch pilot program  
8 and a recommendation as to whether the program should be made  
9 permanent, with or without modifications.

10 (e) The free school lunch pilot program shall terminate on  
11 June 30, 2027."

12 SECTION 2. Section 302A-404, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
13 amended to read as follows:

14 "§302A-404 School meals[-]; free school lunch. (a)  
15 School meals shall be made available under the school meals  
16 program in every school where the students are required to eat  
17 meals at school.

18 (b) Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, free school  
19 lunch shall be provided to every student enrolled at a  
20 department school. Free school lunch shall meet the meal



1 requirements for lunches established pursuant to title 7 Code of  
2 Federal Regulations section 210.10.

3 ~~[(b)]~~ (c) No student shall be denied a meal solely for  
4 failure to pay:

5 (1) Within the first twenty-one days of the first semester  
6 of a school year while the student's application for  
7 free or reduced lunch is being processed; or

8 (2) Within seven days after a student's meal fund account  
9 reaches a zero or negative balance.

10 ~~[(e)]~~ (d) The department may adopt rules or policies  
11 governing the collection of funds for student meal accounts with  
12 a negative fund balance; provided that no rule or policy shall  
13 prohibit feeding a student as required pursuant to  
14 subsection (b).

15 (e) It is the intent of this section not to jeopardize the  
16 receipt of any federal aid and to the extent, and only to the  
17 extent necessary to effectuate this intent, the governor may  
18 modify the strict provisions of this section, but shall promptly  
19 report any modification with the governor's reasons therefor to  
20 the next succeeding session of the legislature for review."



1       SECTION 3. Section 302A-405, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
2 amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

3       "(a) [The] Except as provided in section 302A-404(b), the  
4 price for school meals shall be set by the department to ensure  
5 that moneys received from the sale of the meals shall be not  
6 less than one-half of the cost of preparing the meals. The  
7 prices for school meals may be adjusted annually based on the  
8 previous year's costs rounded to the nearest five cents;  
9 provided that the department by rule shall provide a lower rate  
10 or free meals to children based on their economic need."

11       SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$           or so  
13 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and  
14 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal  
15 year 2026-2027 for the school food services branch of the  
16 department of education for total plate costs associated with  
17 the free school lunch pilot program established by this Act,  
18 after federal funding has been accounted.

19       The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
20 of education for the purposes of this Act.



1       SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
2 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

3       SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025, and  
4 shall be repealed on June 30, 2027; provided that sections 302A-  
5 404 and 302A-405, Hawaii Revised Statutes, shall be reenacted in  
6 the form in which they read before the effective date of this  
7 Act.

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INTRODUCED BY:

Irish LeChica

JAN 16 2025



# H.B. NO. 335

**Report Title:**

DOE; Pilot Program; Free School Lunches; Reports; Appropriations

**Description:**

Establishes a two-year pilot program that, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, requires the Department of Education to provide free school lunch to all students enrolled at a department school. Requires reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Repeals on 6/30/2027.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

