

Mr. Chairman and members of the education committee,

I currently have two children attending Legacy High School in Bismarck ND. Their schedule is quite unique and appears to be one of a kind in BPS, maybe in the whole state. This unique schedule is very fluid and at times can be at odds with mealtime. For example, last year one of my children did not have a slot available for a meal break. In order for her to get fed, she had to bring her meal to the classroom. If they have a designated slot for a meal, it will be a minimum of 20 minutes. That means they must exit the classroom, make the journey to the lunch area, step through the lunch line, find a table, consume the food, and finally tray cleanup all within 20 minutes before their next class.

This is concerning to me if a young growing person is expected to perform academically and physically when they are not given adequate time to recharge midday. What is interesting is that our state has a ND Labor law requiring employers to give their employees at least a 30 minute break for a meal (N.D. Admin. Code § 46-02-07-02(5)). Does this mean that our school faculty is guaranteed this meal break while our children are not?

There are many sources online that discuss the recommended school mealtime. The term I see come up often is "seat time". In other words, omit all the steps I mentioned above and only focus on the minimum time needed for when the student sits down and consume their meal. Some, including the Center for Disease Control, suggest 20 minutes of seat time¹ but there are other studies suggesting at least 25 minutes.² The American Federation of Teachers is also in agreement with this suggestion.³ The fact that there are several sources tackling this topic tells me that this is not isolated to our family's experience.

HB1333 would replicate the 30 minute time requirement outlined in the aforementioned century code and extend the same privilege to our students.

Thank you for your time and please accept this written testimony in support of House Bill 1333

Brendan Flemmer

Sources:

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/school-nutrition/school-meals/time-for-lunch.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/school_lunch.htm

² <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/why-20-minute-lunch-periods-arent-good-for-students/2019/10>

³ <https://www.aft.org/resolution/healthy-student-mandatory-minimum-25-minutes-seated-lunch-time>