TESTIMONY ON HB 1491
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
January 30, 2023
By: Linda Schloer, Director of child Nutrition and Food Distribution Programs
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Chairman Heinert and Members of the Committee:

My name is Linda Schloer, and I am the Director of Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Programs with the Department of Public Instruction. I am here to provide information regarding HB 1491 regarding grants to schools to provide free lunches to students.

First, I need to clarify that the appropriation amount listed in this bill includes that cost of providing both school lunch and breakfast. The calculation was requested from our office last fall and I probably failed to clarify that fact.

Today I would like to explain how the funding amount in HB 1491 was calculated. The calculation is based on current daily student participation in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast program and student eligibility for free, reduced price or paid meals. The cost per meal is calculated by subtracting the federal reimbursement received for each meal from the free reimbursement rate. For example, a district receives 85 cents in federal reimbursement for each lunch claimed under the paid category. The free reimbursement rate is $4.41. Subtracting .85 from $4.41 equals $3.56, which would be the state cost for the meal. The estimated total

number of meals by type (breakfast or lunch) and by eligibility category (free, reduced price and paid) claimed each year was then multiplied times the State rate.

Student access to meals at no charge in North Dakota has shown to have an impact on student participation in the school breakfast program, but not lunch. Daily breakfast participation in SY 21-22 averaged around 38,000 meals/day. The daily average this year is about 32,000. Lunch participation, which averages around 88,000 meals per day is about the same as SY 21-22 participation.

Chairman Heinert and Members of the Committee that concludes my prepared testimony and I will stand for any questions that you may have.