HOUSE . . . . . No. 4562

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, October 2, 2025.

The committee on Education, to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 539) of Michael S. Day and Natalie M. Blais relative to nutrition in public schools, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4562) ought to pass.

For the committee,

KENNETH I. GORDON.

FILED ON: 9/19/2025

HOUSE . . . . . No. 4562

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act relative to healthy school lunches.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 6 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 15ZZZZZZ, the following section:-

Section 15AAAAAAA.The governor shall annually issue a proclamation setting apart March 21 as Massachusetts Child Nutrition Day and recommending that the day be observed in an appropriate manner by the people.

SECTION 2. Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting, after section 99, the following new section:-

Section 100. (a) The purpose of this section is to ensure that the students of the Commonwealth are appropriately nourished in order to support a healthier, livable and more equitable future for all.

(b) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall have the following meanings:-

13 (i)food service management company is defined as a commercial enterprise or a nonprofit
14 organization which is or may be contracted with by the school food authority to manage any
15 aspect of the school food service

16 (ii)entrée is defined as the meat/meat alternate category within the USDA's Federal
17 Nutrition Standards

18 (iii)Fiber-rich" is defined as an entrée item that contains at least 14 g of fiber per
19 1000kcal from whole food sources such as whole grains, legumes, beans, pulses, fruits, and
20 vegetables

21 (iv)"Reimbursable meal" is any meal that meets the United States Department of
22 Agriculture (USDA) National School Lunch Program nutritional requirements for federal
23 reimbursement at

24 the annual allotted rate of any of the following: (a) free lunch; (b) reduced- price lunch;
25 or (c) paid lunch

26 (v) "ultra-processed food" is defined as industrial formulations of food substances never
27 or rarely used in kitchens (such as high-fructose corn syrup, hydrogenated or interesterified oils,
28 and hydrolysed proteins), or classes of additives designed to make the final product palatable,
29 appealing, or preservable (such as flavours, flavour enhancers, colours, emulsifiers, emulsifying
30 salts, sweeteners, thickeners, nitrates, nitrites, preservatives, and anti-foaming, bulking,
31 carbonating, foaming, gelling and glazing agents)

32 (c) Any food service management company selling food to Massachusetts public schools
33 for our children to consume shall ensure that at least 50% of the entrées sold and served for lunch

34 within school hours in schools, school districts, or other entities over the course of each week are
35 healthy foods containing whole grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes and other fiber-rich proteins
36 as part of a reimbursable meal offering within the federal National School Lunch Program.

37 (d) No food service provider may sell or serve in Massachusetts public schools, school
38 districts, or other entities more than 20% of entrée items that meet one or more of the following:
39 qualify as ultra-processed; have a nutritional composition that includes more than 30 milligrams
40 of cholesterol more than 5% of the entrées' total calories come from saturated fat as part of a
41 weekly reimbursable meal offering within the federal National School Lunch

42 (e) Each food service provider selling food to Massachusetts public schools for school
43 children to consume, shall keep itemized nutrition data that is made publicly available on a
44 monthly basis to demonstrate compliance with this statute.

45 (f) Each food service management company will have a phase in period of three years
46 following the initial date of their most recent contract with their respective school food authority
47 or by the first day of the school calendar year 2033-2034, whichever comes first.

48 SECTION 3. The board of elementary and secondary education shall establish a school
49 meal nutrition standards advisory council to advise the commissioner of elementary and
50 secondary education on implementation of the recommendations of the school meal nutrition
51 standards commission established in section 77 of chapter 28 of the acts of 2023. The council
52 shall 1) provide ongoing guidance in the development of comprehensive strengthened nutrition
53 standards aligned with the most current public health guidance and evidence-based nutrition
54 standards, 2) provide ongoing feasibility assessments, 3) work with school food authorities and
55 stakeholders to reduce barriers to feasibility of implementation on issues including but not

56 limited to procurement, facilities and workforce training. The members of the council shall serve
57 without compensation but may be reimbursed, subject to appropriation, for expenses necessarily
58 and reasonably incurred in the performance of the member's responsibilities. The council shall
59 consist of 11 members including 6 members to be appointed by the governor, who shall be
60 school nutrition operators or registered dieticians representing geographically, racially and
61 socioeconomically diverse school districts across the commonwealth; a representative from
62 Project Bread – The Walk for Hunger, Inc.; a representative from the School Nutrition
63 Association of Massachusetts, Inc.; and a representative from the Massachusetts Healthy School
64 Lunch Coalition. Members shall be appointed for a term of 3 years. Members serving on the
65 council shall represent a reasonable statewide geographic balance. The council shall meet not
66 less than four times each year. The council shall elect a chair to serve for a term of three years
67 who may appoint other officers as necessary.