

## Different States, Different Priorities

Letter to the editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 10.05.23

Hunger and food insecurity are pervasive problems across America and in North Carolina. [Studies have shown](#) that an astounding 80% of teachers in a pre-pandemic survey reported hunger-related concentration problems among their students. Other issues resulting from hunger included poor academic performance, behavioral issues, and increased rates of illness.

To address such concerns, breakfast and lunch will now be [free](#) for every public school student in grades K-12 in Massachusetts. That means no more cumbersome paperwork for teachers, no more pressure on children and their families (who are expected to save about \$1,200 a year), and no more kids going hungry in class ever again.

North Carolina public school students aren't as lucky. Our 2023 budget includes a [massive line item](#) for "Opportunity Scholarship" private school vouchers for families of all income levels. Where did they find the money? By bleeding the public-school budgets. It's the MAGA Republican plan to starve the public schools that millions of American families depend upon.

MAGA Republican legislators see the potential for massive profits in the private and charter schools, and in their minds, profit always trumps compassion. Cutting budgets for kids and families is nothing new to them.

Here in Brunswick County, we can "thank" Hurricane Florence in 2018 for [extending](#) the US Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program for our public schools. This brief respite for families ensured that their kids could learn free from hunger.

Families' inability to pay causes [school lunch debt](#) to accumulate, stigmatizing students from needy families with a sense of shame that can haunt them long after they leave the school system. Our North Carolina MAGA Republicans have no shame, as they've proven with their budgetary priorities that adversely impact kids and families. Remember that when you're at the ballot box.

Robert Bannerman  
Supply