



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

JB PRITZKER
GOVERNOR

August 11, 2023

To the Honorable Members of
The Illinois House,
103rd General Assembly:

Today, I will veto House Bill 3643 from the 103rd General Assembly. The bill would have amended the School Code to require the Illinois State Board of Education enter into a statewide master contract to provide religious dietary options to all Illinois school districts.

I appreciate the hard work of the sponsors in the House and Senate and the advocates who worked to get this bill passed. Providing students with culturally appropriate meals at school is an effort I support. However, while well-intentioned, this bill requires the Illinois State Board of Education to enter into a master contract they cannot execute. Further, the General Assembly did not appropriate funding for such a contract.

Local school districts, not the Illinois State Board of Education, have the expertise and understanding of local needs required to enter into food service contracts. Districts are already responsible for all their food service contracts and will continue to have the capability to enter into contracts with meal vendors based on the unique cultural needs of the students in their communities. Local school districts currently already engage in this practice and do so based on federal USDA nutrition guidelines. I look forward to continuing our work together to ensure every child receives a nutritious, culturally appropriate meal according to the existing USDA guidelines.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 9(b) of Article IV of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return House Bill 3643, entitled "AN ACT concerning education," with the foregoing objections, vetoed in its entirety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB Pritzker".

JB Pritzker
Governor, State of Illinois