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SENATE BILL NO. 42**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations
on February 3, 2026)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Roem)

A BILL to require the Department of Education to evaluate the impact of requiring each school board to pay for the total unpaid school meal balance resulting from uncollectible school meal debts on any student account at the end of the school year; report.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *That the Department of Education (the Department) shall evaluate the impact of requiring each school board, at the end of each school year, to pay for the total unpaid school meal balance on the nonprofit food service account of each public elementary or secondary school in the school division resulting from uncollectible school meal debts on any student account. In conducting the evaluation, the Department, in consultation with the school divisions, shall review (i) the total amount of uncollectible school meal debt in public elementary and secondary schools in each school district; (ii) aggregate socioeconomic data on children and families with uncollectible school meal debt in each school district; (iii) the fiscal impact of school boards paying the uncollectible school meal debt on local school funds in each school district; (iv) current funding sources that school boards use to pay uncollectible school meal debt; and (v) best practices and other strategies employed in localities such as Prince William County to pay uncollectible school meal debt. The Department shall submit a report on any findings to the Chairs of the Senate Committees on Finance and Appropriations and Education and Health and the House Committees on Appropriations and Education no later than November 1, 2026.*