

## **EF-E-1 School Meal Payments**

The district is committed to ensuring that all students receive the nutrition they need to engage in active learning during the school day. In accordance with applicable federal guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), this policy is intended to serve the purposes of meeting student needs, minimizing the identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals and maintaining the fiscal integrity of the district's school food service account.

### **Student meal accounts and meal charges**

Student meal accounts shall be established by the district.

Parents will be encouraged to pre-pay for students paying full or reduced price for meals. The district shall ensure that parents have access to at least one no-cost method of paying for meal services, such as the ability to pay in person.

Students will be permitted to pay for meals and/or add funds to student accounts on the day of service.

If a student has money to purchase a full or reduced price meal at the time of the meal service, the student must be provided a meal. The student's money may not be used to repay previously unpaid charges if the student intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal. A meal account balance remains with the student until the student is no longer enrolled in the district. Students with unused credit in their accounts at the point of disenrollment or graduation will receive a refund in the amount of the credit.

Students paying full or reduced price for meals and who do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of a meal at the time of service will be permitted to charge a meal.

Students may charge up to \$100.00 per school year before the student will no longer be permitted to charge meals. Students at the meal charge maximum will be provided a complimentary replacement meal.

### **Notification of low or negative balances**

Notification of a low balance on a student account will be provided privately by email if available or by US Postal Service when the lunch account drops below \$20.00

When notified of a low balance on a student account, parents will be reminded of this policy and the process for submitting applications for free or reduced price meal benefits. Parents will also be notified that any school meal debt accrued prior to the district's determination that the student is eligible for free or reduced lunch remains the parent's responsibility.

Notification of a negative balance on a student account will be provided by email, if available, or by US Postal Service on a weekly basis until the balance is paid in full.

### **Collection of meal charge debt**

In collecting debt, the district shall ensure that collection efforts do not have a negative impact on the students involved and instead focus on the adult(s) in the household responsible for providing funds for student meal purchases. The district will work with parents to establish repayment plans with payment levels and due dates appropriate to the household's particular circumstances.

For students with delinquent meal charges, the following process will be used to collect debt. The business manager will continue to send notifications to parents until the account is paid in full. If, at the end of the school year the balance is not paid, the account may be turned over to a collection agency in order to collect the debt.

### **Annual notice**

The district shall notify students and their parents about this policy at the beginning of each school year. Notification shall also be provided to those students who transfer into the district during the school year. Information about this policy may also be included in student handbooks, student enrollment or registration packets and/or back-to-school packets and posted on district and school websites.

This policy will also be communicated to school and district-level staff responsible for this policy's enforcement, such as school food service staff responsible for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, and staff involved in enforcing any other aspects of this policy.

## **August 2017**

LEGAL REF.: USDA Guidance SP 46-2016 (requires written policy regarding unpaid meal charges)