

## **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.

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  \$250.00  per school year before collection procedures will begin.

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

Parents will not be notified when low balances occur. They are able to check current lunch balances daily through district's PowerLunch program. The district does however, mail current lunch balance notices weekly to students K – 6 and monthly to students 7 – 12

Parents are encouraged to apply for free and reduced lunches. During that process the 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 balance notices until the maximum of \$250.00 is reached. A letter will be mailed once that amount is reached. After 30 days if the balance has not been paid a second letter will be mailed with a payment plan outlined. If the payment plan is not started within

30 days then notification will be sent that indicates the district intent to start collection procedures.

### **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.

Collection efforts from one school year may continue into the following school year, including when students transfer to a school outside of the district.

### **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 point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, and staff involved in enforcing any other aspects of this policy.

(Issue Date: July, 2017)

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