

CHARGING SCHOOL MEALS AND PROHIBITION AGAINST SHAMING

The Board of Education recognizes that on occasion, students may not have or may forget to bring sufficient funds to purchase a meal. To ensure that students do not go hungry, but also to promote responsible student behavior and minimize the fiscal burden to the District, the Board will allow District students who do not have enough funds to "charge" the cost of meals, to be paid back at a later date subject to the terms of this policy.

To comply with the state guidelines and maintain a system for accounting for charging meals, regarding both full and reduced-price meals, the Board shall:

1. Allow only regular reimbursable meals, excluding extras, a la carte items, and snacks, to be charged.
2. Use a computer-generated point of sale system, which identifies and records all meals as well as collects repayments.

Charged meals must be counted and claimed for reimbursement on the day that the student charged (received) the meal, not on the day the charge is paid back. When charges are paid, these monies are not to be considered "a la carte" transactions as a section on the daily sales report or deposit summary reads "charges paid."

Students shall not be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from other cafeteria purchases, unless the parent/guardian has provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal. No student with unpaid charges will be prohibited from purchasing food if they have money that day.

If school food authorities (SFAs) suspect that a student may be abusing this policy, written notice will be provided to the parent/guardian.

Students who cannot pay for a meal or who have unpaid meal debt shall not be publicly identified or stigmatized (including wristbands or hand stamps), required to do chores or work to pay for meals, or have meals thrown away after they have been served. District staff shall not discuss a student's unpaid meal debt in front of other students. The district shall not take any action directed at a student to collect unpaid school meal fees. However, the district may discreetly notify students of their account balances, and why certain items (e.g., à la carte, etc.) could not be provided with charged meals.

The School District shall send a letter home to all parents on an annual basis prior to the opening day of school outlining the requirements of this policy. The policy shall also be published in appropriate school and District publications

Remaining funds may be carried over to the next school year. When students leave the district or graduate, the district will attempt to contact the parent/guardian to return remaining funds. Parents/guardians may request that funds be transferred to other students (e.g., siblings, unpaid accounts). All transfer requests must be in writing. Unclaimed funds remaining after three months shall be absorbed by the school meal account.

Staff members are allowed to purchase food from the district's food services. However, all purchases must be paid at the point of sale via cash or using a pre-paid account. Staff members are not allowed to charge meals to be repaid later.

Staff members who violate this policy may be subject to discipline.

Ref: 42USC 1779 (Child Nutrition Act of 1966)
42USC 1759 (t) (I); 1766(a) (National School Lunch Act)

1st Reading for Adoption August 8, 2017
2nd Reading for Adoption August 22, 2017

1st Reading for Re-Adoption September 25, 2018
2nd Reading & Re-Adoption: October 23, 2018

1st Reading for Re-Adoption September 22, 2021
2nd Reading & Re-Adoption: November 22, 2021