**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.

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.  The District currently has two no cost methods, 1) pay in person & 2) pay via the Parent Portal in Infinite Campus. 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 that 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.

**Elementary** **students** paying full 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 at the schools to charge up to 6 meals, at which time parents will be notified by phone call to either bring a lunch for their child or pay the lunch balance.

**Middle school students** paying full or reduced price for meals can charge 2 meals then the student will be sent to the office to call their parents in order to ensure payments will be made for the following day and no more meals will be served to that student if funds are not available.

**High school** **students** paying full or reduced price will not be offered any meals if funds are not available.

**Notification of low or negative balances**

Notification of a low balance on a student account will be provided privately by email including the amount that constitutes a low balance and payment reminders, such as payment notices sent directly to the parent's email address.  It is the parents’ responsibility to provide the District current contact information.

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 districts 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 sent from the online payment system. All balances and transactions can be viewed through the parent portal.

**Collection of meal charge debt**

In collecting debt, the district shall ensure that the 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. Collection efforts from one school year may continue into the following school year. The district would like to have all debts paid by the end of the current school year. Any debt not paid will continue to receive daily reminders of negative balances.

**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  enforcement, such as school food service staff responsible for collecting payment from meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying family list of low or negative balances, and staff involved in enforcing any other aspects of this policy.