

Adopted: January 28, 2019 [New MSBA/Mandatory/Modified]
Board Information: February 22, 2021 [MSBA/Mandatory/Modified/Safe and Supportive Schools/Revised]
Board Revised: March 8, 2021 [MSBA/Mandatory/Modified/Safe and Supportive Schools]

Contact: Executive Director Finance and Support Services

POLICY 534 UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

I. PURPOSE OF POLICY

To provide guidance on the handling of unpaid meal charges (student meal debt).

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. When a student has unpaid meal charges:
- The student is not eligible to select a la carte (snack) items.
 - The student will still be served a school lunch.
- B. The District will have an unpaid meal charge reminder system that:
- Complies with applicable state law.

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REGULATION 534 UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

I. PAYMENT OF MEALS

Families may pay by cash, check or credit card. Cash may be sent with secondary students and deposited into the NetCash Machines. Send checks with the student to the school kitchen or mail or bring to the District Food Service Office for deposit to the student's account. Payments by credit card are done directly through PayPams.com.

- A. The District receives school lunch aid under Minn. Stat. § 124D.111, therefore it must make lunch available without charge to all participating students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals regardless of account balance.
- B. A student with an outstanding meal charge debt will be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.
- C. If a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a snack or a la carte items.
- D. If a parent or guardian sends in one payment which is to be divided between sibling accounts, the parent or guardian must specify how the funds are to be distributed to the students' accounts. Funds may not be transferred between sibling accounts unless permission is received from the parent or guardian.

II. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

- A. The District will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero.
- B. As a courtesy, families will be notified once the balance reaches negative \$0.05. Families who are registered on Paypams will also be notified by email.

III. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

- A. The District will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals for their children.

- B. The District will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.
- C. Negative balances not paid prior to the end of the school year may be turned over to an agency for collection. The collection process will follow the guidelines of Minnesota Management and Budget operating procedure 0504-01.01- Debt Collection Process and Action. Collection options may include, but are not limited to, use of collection agencies, claims in the conciliation court, or any other legal method permitted by law.
- D. The school may not enlist the assistance of volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.

IV. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back-to- school packet, student handbook, etc.) to:
 - 1. all households at or before the start of each school year;
 - 2. students and families who transfer into the District, at the time of enrollment; and
 - 3. all school personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- B. The District may post the policy on the District's website, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.