

Board Adopted: January 28, 2019
Last Reviewed: May 13, 2024 [5 year cycle]
Board Revised: March 11, 2026
Board Approved: March 23, 2026

Contact Person: Executive Director Finance and Support Services

POLICY 534 SCHOOL MEAL POLICY

I. PURPOSE

To ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the District’s nutrition program and that the District employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The District is to provide meals to students in a respectful manner:
- Maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or otherwise ostracizing the student
 - Seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and
 - Minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for a la carte items or second school meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.
- B. 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.
- C. The District will have an unpaid meal charge reminder system that:
- Complies with applicable state law.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)
 Minn. Stat. § 124D.111 (School Meals Policies; Lunch Aid;
 Food Service Accounting)
 42 U.S.C. § 1751 et seq. (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)
 7 C.F.R. § 210 et seq. (School Lunch Program Regulations)
 7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)

Board Adopted: January 28, 2019
Last Reviewed: May 13, 2024 [5 year cycle]
Board Revised: March 11, 2026
Board Approved: March 23, 2026

Contact Person: Executive Director Finance and Support Services

REGULATIONS 534 SCHOOL MEAL POLICY

I. PAYMENT OF MEALS

Families may pay by check or credit card. 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 the District contracted vendor.

- A. The free school meals program is created within the Minnesota Department of Education.
- B. Each school that participates in the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch program and has an Identified Student Percentage at or above the federal percentage determined for all meals to be reimbursed at the free rate must participate in the federal Community Eligibility Provision in order to participate in the free school meals program.
- C. Each school that participates in the free school meals program must:
 - 1. participate in the United States Department of Agriculture School Breakfast Program and the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program; and
 - 2. provide to all students at no cost up to two federally reimbursable meals per school day, with a maximum of one free breakfast and one free lunch.
 - 3. A student who has been determined eligible for free and reduced-price meals must always be served a reimbursable meal even if the student has an outstanding debt.
- D. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meals balance.
- E. When a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a snack item.

- F. 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.
- G. A student may purchase a second breakfast at the nonprogram price if the student has already selected a reimbursable breakfast.
- H. A student may purchase a second lunch at the nonprogram price if the student has already selected a reimbursable lunch.

[NOTE: New paragraphs G and H apply if a school district receives school breakfast aid under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.111 or school lunch aid under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.111 respectively.]

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 the District contracted vendor website will also be notified by email.
- C. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program, including, but not limited to, dumping meals, withdrawing a meal that has been served, announcing or listing students' names publicly, providing alternative meals not specifically related to dietary needs; providing nonreimbursable meals; or affixing stickers, stamps, or pins.

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 or 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. 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 District may not enlist the assistance of volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.
- E. The District will not impose any other restriction prohibited under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.37 due to unpaid student meal balances. The District will not limit a student's participation in any school activities, graduation ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs or other extracurricular activities or access to materials, technology, or items provided to students due to an unpaid student meal balance.

IV. COMMUNICATION 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 District 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.