

## NON-INSTRUCTIONAL OPERATIONS

### Food Services

#### UNPAID MEAL BALANCES THRESHOLD AND COMMUNICATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- Annually, Nutrition Services will determine a threshold for follow-up on students that have a negative meal account balance that is five times the price for paid student breakfasts.
- When a student has reached this threshold, the following actions will take place:
  - Nutrition Services will determine if the student is categorically eligible for free meals
  - The School Cashier will attempt to contact the parent/guardian no less than twice to request submission of a Free and Reduced Price Meal application. Notes with date of contact must be made.
  - The School Cashier will send a weekly list of students who exceed the threshold to the Principal for follow up (see below).
  - The Principal, Assistant Principal or Counselor will contact the parent/guardian to:
    - Offer assistance in completing a Free and Reduced Price Meal application
    - Determine if there are household issues preventing payment for meals
    - Offer appropriate assistance
- At no time will adults be allowed to charge for meals.

#### PROHIBITED COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS REGARDING MEAL ACCOUNT BALANCES

No school personnel will overtly identify students who cannot pay for meals.

- Specifically prohibited practices include:
  - The use of wristbands, hand stamps or other markers.
  - Alternative meals.
  - Requiring a student to work for meals (unless all students perform similar work)
  - Requiring a student to dispose of a meal already served
  - Allow disciplinary action against a student who cannot pay
  - Requiring fees above the meal price

#### COMMUNICATION REGARDING NEGATIVE BALANCES WITH STUDENTS AND PARENT/GUARDIANS

Communication about negative meal balances can only be directed at parent/guardians or students 15 years old or older (Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors in High School).

Communication about positive meal balances can happen with any student at any time.

Procedures for this communication includes:

- Communication in the lunch line should happen with students regularly:

## Administrative Regulation No. 8200

### Food Services - Continued

- Cashiers will remind all students in the lunch line daily of their account balances from under \$20 to \$0.
- Cashiers will tell any student 15 years (Sophomore) or older that they will not be allowed to get into the lunch line if they have no money in their account.
- Nutrition Services will notify parent/guardians of negative balances no later than 10 days after the money is owed.
  - Cashiers must print payment reminders for students who have negative balances and distribute them to teacher's boxes every Tuesday and Thursday.
  - The Nutrition Services office, working with the District's Information Technology Department, will send a weekly automated message via e-mail and text to all parent/guardians of students that have a low or negative balance.
  - The Nutrition Services office will communicate with families that have a negative balance over -\$100.
- Within 30 days of negative balance notification, Nutrition Services shall exhaust all options to directly certify the student and during this time, the student may not be denied access to meals unless the district has determined they are not eligible for free or reduced meals.
- If the student is not directly certified, Nutrition Services shall provide the parent/guardian a copy of a paper Free and Reduced Price Meal application or link to an online Free and Reduced Price Meal application.

#### AUTOMATED COMMUNICATION

To ensure Nutrition Services communicates balance information with parent/guardians, every week an automated message will be sent via e-mail and text to all families that have a low (+\$5) or negative balance. The District's Student Information System has a communications tab that allows parent/guardians to opt in to receive these messages or opt out if they desire. For help on how to set this up, parents can contact the Information Technology department.

#### MANUAL COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

The School Cashier will send a message home to all families with balance of less than \$0 each week. The note will be folded over and addressed to the parent so the student cannot see the content of the message. In addition, the School Cashier will call all families with students that have a negative balance over the threshold. Nutrition Services will communicate with families that have a balance over -\$100.

#### METHODS FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN PAYMENT AND BALANCE REVIEW

The Nutrition Services Department will provide parents with information on how to review their student's meal account balances, how to review purchase history, and how to make deposits into the student's account.

#### DELINQUENT NEGATIVE BALANCE ACCOUNTS

Parent/guardians who fail to keep their student meal accounts current will lead to the following actions by the District:

- Each semester, negative balance data will be populated in the fine list
- Diplomas for seniors will be held until the student meal account is made current
- Report cards will not be distributed to students with a negative account balance

Administrative Regulation No. 8200  
Food Services - Continued

- Printed schedules will be withheld until the account is made current.

Legal Reference: [WA HB 2610](#) Creating the hunger-free students' bill of rights act.

December 17, 2019