

STUDENT MEAL CHARGES AND PROCEDURES
FOR COLLECTION OF DEFICIENT ACCOUNT BALANCES

Purpose: The Board acknowledges the need to have a policy to allow meal charges and a policy to collect deficient account balances.

Authority: The Board authorizes the Superintendent or Designee to carry out the policy and enforce the practices to collect deficient account balances.

Guidelines: The Iroquois School District utilizes a Point of Service System for meal purchases. With this system, each secondary student is issued an Identification Number and each elementary student uses their name to activate their picture identification. Even though the ID number or ID picture may be coded to receive a free or reduced lunch, all students have the ability to deposit cash into their student accounts and to make meal purchases in the cafeteria. The Iroquois Elementary School is enrolled in the Community Eligibility Program where all students receive a reimbursable breakfast and a reimbursable lunch per school day, at no charge. As a convenience to parents, Iroquois permits secondary students who forget their lunch money or who do not have sufficient funds in their student account to charge their reimbursable breakfast and/or lunch. These charged meals will continue to accrue in the students account.

1. The District's Food Service Director will provide a report indicating students with negative balances at \$10.00 or over to the school Principal. District's Principals or their designees shall draft written notice letters and/or make phone calls advising parents/guardians when a student's account has a negative balance of \$10.00 and requesting that the parents/guardians add additional funds to the account. The frequency of said communication shall be, at a minimum, weekly, and the preferred method of communication shall be by phone.
2. The District's Food Service Director will provide a report indicating students with negative balances at \$25.00 or over to the District's Director of Business Services. The District's Director of Business Services or his/her designee shall draft a notice letter advising parent/s guardians when the student's account reaches a negative balance of \$25.00. Said notice shall include a description of the potential legal consequences for the parents/guardians if the account balance is not paid in full. The notice shall also (i) inform the parent/s guardians that so long as there is a negative balance the student shall not be permitted to charge ala carte items, including milk or second meals/extras, but that these items will be provided to the student if he/she has the cash to pay for them; (ii) inform the parents/guardians that, if their child requests a regular meal, it will be provided and charged to the account and that additional charges to the account can be avoided by sending a meal to school with their child; and (iii) advise the parents/guardians of the potential availability of the free or reduced lunch program.
3. The District's administration is encouraged to work with parents/guardians to develop a payment plan to pay a negative account balance. It shall be the responsibility of the District to determine at what point legal action is necessary and to take any legal action to collect unpaid student balances from parents/guardians.
4. When engaging in collection efforts, the District and FSMC shall ensure that the identity of each student is protected if required by FERPA or other applicable laws.
5. The student account balance (positive or negative) will remain with the student from year to year through the time of graduation from high school. It will be tracked by the Food Service Director and reported to the student's school office at the end of each school year, to be included with other charges owed.

6. When the District's Director of Business Services or his/her designee has determined that a delinquent debt is uncollectible and no further collection efforts will be made, the debt shall be reclassified as bad debt by the District and shall be written off as operating losses.
7. When communicating with a student regarding a negative account balance, District personnel and the personnel of the contracted food service provider should use best efforts to communicate discreetly and privately so as not to cause undue distress or embarrassment for the student. To this end, the following actions are prohibited:
 - A. Publicly announcing the names of students or stigmatizing students with negative account balances.
 - B. Requiring students with a negative account balance to use a different serving line.
 - C. Requiring students with a negative account balance to take an alternate meal.
 - D. Using hand stamps, stickers, or other physical markers to identify students that have a negative account balance.
 - E. Enlisting volunteers or other parents/guardians to request payment from a family with unpaid meal charges.
 - F. Taking away a child's meal or throwing a child's meal in the trash if he/she is unable to pay.
 - G. Requiring children with a negative account balance to perform work in exchange for a meal.
 - H. Directly giving the student a paper notice indicating a negative balance.
8. When a child is able to pay cash for an ala carte item or second meals/extras, the item shall be provided to the student regardless of any negative account balance and may not be denied as a means to punish the child or otherwise.
9. Under no circumstances shall a student that requests a reimbursable meal (both breakfast and lunch) be denied the reimbursable meal as a form of punishment or otherwise. If a parent/guardian desires to prevent additional charges to the account, he/she should send a meal to school with the child so that a reimbursable meal is not requested. Parents may contact the Director of Food Services anytime during the school year indicating that their child is not to receive a school breakfast or lunch. The Director of Food Services will provide the parent/guardian with a form to complete indicating this request.
10. Students with special diets/allergies per the school nurse and medical documentation must receive the special diet meal even if they have a negative balance.
11. Negative balancing can be avoided by making payments in any amount in the form of cash or check (made out to Iroquois School District Cafeteria). Deposits can also be made using the districts on-line payment software.