

Hunger Free Students' Bill of Rights

390-1

Pojoaque Valley School District shall provide a free, printed meal application in every school enrollment packet, or if the school chooses to use an electronic meal application, provide in school enrollment packets an explanation of the electronic meal application process and instructions for how parents or guardians may request a paper application at no cost; and meal applications and instructions in a language that parents and guardians understand. If a parent or guardian cannot read or understand a meal application, the school shall offer assistance in completing the application.

If a school becomes aware that a student who has not submitted a meal application is eligible for free or reduced-fee meals, the school shall complete and file an application for the student under the authority granted by Title 7, Section 245.6(d) of the Code of Federal Regulations.

The district liaison, required of a school, pursuant to the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, shall coordinate with the Food Services Department to make sure that identified homeless students receive free school meals and shall be appropriately coded and entered in the student-teacher accountability reporting system.

Regardless of whether or not a student has money to pay for a meal or owes money for earlier meals, a school shall provide a United States department of agriculture reimbursable meal to a student who requests one, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal; and shall not require that a student throwaway a meal after it has been served because of the student's inability to pay for the meal or because money is owed for earlier meals.

If a student owes money for five or more meals, a school shall:

- check the state list of students categorically eligible for free meals to determine if the student is categorically eligible;
- make at least two attempts, not including the application or instructions included in a school enrollment packet, to reach the student's parent or guardian and have the parent or guardian fill out a meal application; and
- require a principal, assistant principal or counselor to contact the parent or guardian to offer assistance with a meal application, determine if there are other issues within the household that have caused the child to have insufficient funds to purchase a school meal and offer any other assistance that is appropriate.

A school shall not:

- publicly identify or stigmatize a student who cannot pay for a meal or who owes a meal debt by, for example, requiring that a student wear a wristband or hand stamp; or
- require a student who cannot pay for a meal or who owes a meal debt to do chores or other work to pay for meals; provided that chores or work required of all students regardless of a meal debt is permitted.

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A school shall direct communications about a student's meal debt to a parent or guardian and not the student. Nothing in this policy prohibits a school from sending a student home with a letter addressed to a parent or guardian.

A school shall not require a parent or guardian to pay fees or costs from collection agencies hired to collect a meal debt.

The Hunger-Free Students' Bill of Rights Act (SB 374) applies to a public school district, a public school, a private school or a religious school that participates in the national school lunch program or school breakfast program.