AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

On Program Unpaid Meal Charge Policy

1. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food service department, along with the campus.

2. SCOPE.

2.1 Responsible Department(s). All departments.

2.2 Responsible Parties.

The Food Program Department, Campus Directors, and Campus Office Managers are responsible for maintaining charge records and for regularly reviewing student's accounts. Campus directors are responsible for assigning responsibility to an office staff member who will be in charge of notifying students' parents/guardians regarding unpaid charges, sending out statements regularly, and obtaining immediate payment or setting up payment arrangements. Those staff members will be responsible for following up with families who may default on any payments arrangements. If the campus has tried all efforts to contact a family in regards to setting up payment arrangements and have had no success, the food programs department can step in to help contact those families.

3. Policy.

3.1 General Guidelines.

This policy addresses the need for School Food Authorities (SFA) to institute and clearly communicate a meal charge policy. All students may receive school meals, however; American Leadership Academy must have a policy in place for children at all campuses, including those who participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and may have charges to their food account at the Reduced, as well as the Paid, meal rate. These guidelines seek to address student and staff meal accounts that either do not have enough money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service. This policy ensures that school food service professionals, school administrators, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations in these situations.

3.2 Goals

* To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts

* To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, student and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible

* To establish policies that are age appropriate

* To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student

* To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges

4. Administration.

4.1. Benefits. Families at participating NSLP campuses (Signal Butte, Anthem, Ironwood K-6, San Tan, Sierra Vista K-12) are encouraged to apply for free and reduced price meal benefits. Any family at these campuses that falls into a

negative balance will receive a written notification, provided by the campus, to encourage them to apply for free or reduced price meal benefits.

4.2. **Prepayment**. Families are encouraged to prepay for meals and money is accepted in the school office during the operating day & online via Infinite Campus Parent Portal access. Written notification of prepayment options occurs at the beginning of each school year, is given to each new transfer student, and is included in the student handbook. Please contact your campus Office Manager or visit the ALA website for a copy of the ALA student handbook if needed.

4.3. **Dissemination**. Families will be notified of the school Unpaid Meal Charge Policy via email blasts to all families.
Collection. The following procedures are conducted for students whose balances that are negative:

4.4.1. Calls, emails, and invoices placed in the student's backpack on delinquent accounts are made on a weekly basis to try to collect payment. If students' accounts are negative, Infinite Campus sends a daily reminder of their negative balances.

4.4.2. **If a child has money to purchase a reduced price or paid meal at the time of the meal service, the child must be provided a meal. What about previous balances? Can we implement a payment plan before this is the case?**

4.4.3. Charges are carried over from the previous year, and payment plans can be set in place. This will be at the discretion of the director and all payment plans must be set up with the campus director.

4.4.4 If a student has previous balance, at the director's discretion, student may lose privileges such as loss of field trips, non participation in school events, Senior students may not participate in graduation.

4.5. **Value Meal**. A meal will be provided to the student if their meal balance account has gone negative and no payment arrangement has been made.

4.5.1. The Value meal will include a well balanced meal, which will include an entree of the students choice with fruit/vegetable and milk but not given extras or an extra meal. This will apply to students who have a negative $30 or more balance.

4.6. **Hardship.** If families need to make a long-term payment arrangement due to extreme hardship, their negative balance will be carried over at the end of the fiscal year (beyond June 30) as a delinquent debt and collection efforts will continue into the new school year. It is at the discretion of the site Director and administrative team to coordinate payment arrangements, and take each family's individual circumstance into consideration.