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8500 FOOD SERVICES (M)

The Board of Education shall make school lunch available to all students enrolled in a school in the district unless less than five percent of enrolled students in the school are Federally eligible for a free or reduced price lunch in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:33-4. School lunches made available pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-4 and this Policy shall meet minimum nutritional standards, established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDOA).

Free or reduced price breakfast and lunch, as required, shall be offered, under a school lunch program, school breakfast program, or a breakfast after the bell program, to all enrolled students who are determined to be Federally eligible for free or reduced price meals. As provided by N.J.S.A. 18A:33-4.a.(3) and N.J.S.A. 18A:33-14a.a.(2), any student who is eligible for a reduced price lunch and breakfast, pursuant to Federal income eligibility standards and criteria, shall not be required to pay for such lunch or breakfast. Free lunch or breakfast shall also be offered to each enrolled student who is Federally ineligible for free or reduced price meals, but who has an annual household income that is not less than one hundred and eighty-six percent, and not more than one hundred and ninety-nine percent, of the Federal poverty level, as determined pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21b1.

A. Definitions – N.J.S.A. 18A:33-3.2

"Categorically eligible" means that a student is homeless, is a migrant child, is a runaway child, is a foster child, or is a Head Start child, as defined in 7 CFR Part 245, or is receiving assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or, to the extent that the USDOA authorizes the matching of Medicaid data to identify children who are eligible for free school meals, is a participant in the Medicaid program, and which student, by virtue of such status, is automatically eligible to be certified to receive free school meals under the National School Lunch Program or the Federal School Breakfast Program, without first submitting an application or being subject to the Federal income verification requirements established by 7 CFR Part 245.

"Eligible student" means a student who is categorically eligible or income-eligible for one or more subsidized school meals.

"Emergency meals distribution program" means a program, established under N.J.S.A. 18A:33-27.2, pursuant to which a school district is required to provide subsidized school meals to eligible students, through designated distribution sites, during any period in which a school in the district is subject to a public health-related closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Federal School Breakfast Program" means the Federal reimbursement program, established under the "Child Nutrition Act of 1966," 42 USC s.1771 et seq., pursuant to which the USDOA is authorized to provide grants-in-aid and other assistance to the States,

as may be necessary to help finance the establishment, maintenance, operation, and expansion of school breakfast programs and facilitate the provision of free and reduced price breakfasts to eligible students.

"Federally eligible for free or reduced price meals" or "Federally eligible" means that a student is categorically eligible for free lunch under the National School Lunch Program or for free breakfast under the Federal School Breakfast Program, or that the student satisfies Federal income eligibility requirements, adopted by the USDOA pursuant to 7 CFR Part 245, as is necessary to Federally qualify for and receive free or reduced price lunch under the National School Lunch Program or free or reduced price breakfast under the Federal School Breakfast Program.

"Federally ineligible for free or reduced price meals" or "Federally ineligible" means that a student is not categorically eligible for, and fails to satisfy Federal income eligibility requirements, adopted by the USDOA pursuant to 7 CFR Part 245, as is necessary for the student to Federally qualify for and receive free or reduced price lunch under the National School Lunch Program or free or reduced price breakfast under the Federal School Breakfast Program.

"Income-eligible" means that a student either satisfies Federal income eligibility requirements, adopted by the USDOA pursuant to 7 CFR Part 245, or satisfies State-level income eligibility requirements, set forth in N.J.S.A. 18A:33-4.a. or N.J.S.A. 18A:33-14a.a., as is necessary for the student to qualify for and receive subsidized lunch under the National School Lunch Program or subsidized breakfast under the Federal School Breakfast Program, on the basis of income.

"Low-income family" means a family with an annual household income amounting to not more than one hundred and eighty-five percent of the Federal poverty level.

"Middle-income family" means a family with an annual household income amounting to not less than one hundred and eighty-six percent, and not more than two hundred and twenty-four percent, of the Federal poverty level.

"National School Lunch Program" means the Federal reimbursement program established under the "Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act," 42 USC 1751 et seq., pursuant to which the USDOA is authorized to provide grants-in-aid and other assistance to the States, as may be necessary to help finance the establishment, maintenance, operation, and expansion of school lunch programs and facilitate the provision of free and reduced price lunches to eligible students.

"Participating school" means a public or nonpublic school that provides daily lunch to enrolled students, through a school lunch program operated pursuant to the National School Lunch Program, or that provides daily breakfast to enrolled students, through a school breakfast program or breakfast after the bell program operated pursuant to the Federal School Breakfast Program, or both.

“Participating school district or nonpublic school” means a public school district or a nonpublic school that is required, or elects, to participate in the National School Lunch Program, the Federal School Breakfast Program, or both, as the case may be.

“School breakfast program” means a program that is established and operated by a public or nonpublic school, in accordance with the requirements of the Federal School Breakfast Program and, in the case of a public school, in accordance with a plan adopted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-10 or N.J.S.A. 18A:33-10.1, and pursuant to which the school offers daily breakfasts to all enrolled students.

“School lunch program” means a program that is established and operated by a school district, or by a nonpublic school, in accordance with the requirements of the National School Lunch Program and the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-4, and pursuant to which the district or nonpublic school offers daily lunches to all students enrolled therein.

“Student” means a child eighteen years of age or younger who is enrolled at a school in the State.

“Subsidized school breakfast” or “subsidized breakfast” means a school breakfast that is offered to an eligible student, free of charge, and the costs of which are reimbursed by the State or Federal government, as provided by N.J.S.A. 18A:33-14a.a. and b.

“Subsidized school lunch” or “subsidized lunch” means a school lunch that is offered to an eligible student, free of charge, and the cost of which is reimbursed by the State or Federal government, as provided by N.J.S.A. 18A:33-14a.a. and b.

“Subsidized school meals” or “subsidized meals” includes both subsidized school breakfasts and subsidized school lunches.

“Subsidized school meals application” means an application that identifies a student’s annual household income and is completed by the student’s parent, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21b1, N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21.c., or applicable Federal law, and which may be used by a school district, or by a public school or nonpublic school, both for the purposes of determining whether a student is income-eligible for subsidized school meals and for the other limited purposes specified in N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21b1.c.

“Subsidized school meals certification process” or “subsidized meals certification” means the process pursuant to which a school or school district obtains and reviews a student’s subsidized school meals application, or engages in the review of other relevant documentation and materials pertaining to the student, as necessary to determine whether the student is categorically eligible or income-eligible for subsidized school meals under the National School Lunch Program, or under the Federal School Breakfast Program, or both.

“Summer Food Service Program” means the Federal reimbursement program, established under 42 USC 1761 and 7 CFR Part 225, pursuant to which the USDOA is authorized to provide grants-in-aid and other assistance to the States, as may be necessary to help schools, local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities, and summer

camps to finance the administrative and operational costs of providing meals to children, in low-income areas, during the summer months and other planned periods of school closure.

"Summer meals program" means the Summer Food Service Program, the Seamless Summer Option authorized by 42 USC 1761, or any other similar State or Federal program that is designed to ensure that children have access to nutritious meals during the summer months and other planned periods of school closure.

"Unsubsidized school breakfast" or "unsubsidized breakfast" means a school breakfast that is offered, upon the payment of a fee, to a student who is neither categorically eligible nor income-eligible for subsidized breakfast, regardless of whether such student remains income-eligible for subsidized school lunch under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-4, and the cost of which breakfast is not reimbursable by the State or Federal government.

"Unsubsidized school lunch" or "unsubsidized lunch" means a school lunch that is offered, upon the payment of a fee, to a student who is not categorically eligible or income-eligible for subsidized lunch, and the cost of which is not reimbursable by the State or Federal government.

B. Breakfast Program – N.J.S.A. 18A:33-10; 18A:33-10.1; 18A:33-11; 18A:33-11.1; 18A:33-11.3; 18A:33-14a.

If twenty percent or more of the students enrolled in a school in the district on October 1 of the preceding school year were Federally eligible for free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program or the Federal School Breakfast Program, the district shall establish a school breakfast program in the school in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-10.

Notwithstanding the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-10 to the contrary, if ten percent or more of the students enrolled in a school in the district on October 1 of the preceding school year were Federally eligible for free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program or the Federal School Breakfast Program the district shall establish a breakfast program in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-10.1.

If seventy percent or more of the students enrolled in a school in the district on or before the last school day before October 16 of the preceding school year were Federally eligible for free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program or the Federal School Breakfast Program, the district shall establish a breakfast after the bell program pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-11.3.

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:33-11, in implementing a school lunch program, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-4 et seq., a school breakfast program, pursuant N.J.S.A. 18A:33-9 et seq., or N.J.S.A. 18A:33-10.1, or a breakfast after the bell program, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-11.1 or N.J.S.A. 18A:33-11.3, each school and the district shall:

1. Publicize, to parents and students, the availability of the respective school meals program, as well as the various ways in which a student may qualify to receive subsidized

school meals under the program, as provided by N.J.S.A. 18A:33-4 and N.J.S.A. 18A:33-14a.

2. Make every effort to ensure that students receiving subsidized school meals are not identified, by the student body, faculty, or staff, in a manner that is distinct from the manner in which students receiving unsubsidized school meals are identified as program participants. Such efforts shall include, but need not be limited to, the establishment of a neutral meal plan or voucher system that does not make a distinction between these two groups of students; and

3. To the greatest extent practicable:

a. Facilitate and expedite the prompt and accurate identification of categorically eligible students who may be certified to receive subsidized school meals without first submitting an application therefore, and, whenever an application is required to establish income eligibility for subsidized meals, encourage students and their families to submit a subsidized school meals application for that purpose;

b. Facilitate and expedite the subsidized school meals application and income-eligibility determination processes that are used, by the school or school district, to certify a student for subsidized school meals on the basis of income, and assist parents in completing the subsidized school meals application; and

c. Encourage students who are neither categorically eligible nor income-eligible for subsidized school lunch or subsidized school breakfast to nonetheless participate, in the school lunch program or school breakfast program, or both, as appropriate, on a paid and unsubsidized basis.

If the district participates in the Federal School Breakfast Program, the district is encouraged to increase the number of students participating in the program by establishing a breakfast after the bell program that incorporates school breakfast into the first-period classroom or the first few minutes of the school day pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-11.1.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-14a., school breakfasts made available to students under a school breakfast program or a breakfast after the bell program shall meet minimum nutritional standards, established by the USDOA.

The State of New Jersey shall provide funding to each school in the district if the school operates a School Breakfast Program or a breakfast after the bell program, as may be necessary to reimburse the costs associated with the school's provision of free breakfasts, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-14a.b., to students who are Federally ineligible for free or reduced price meals.

C. Summer Food Service Program – N.J.S.A. 18A:33-23; 18A:33-24; 18A:33-25; 18A:33-26

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:33-24, if fifty percent or more of the students enrolled in the school district on or before the last school day before October 16 of

the preceding school year were Federally eligible for free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program or the Federal School Breakfast Program, the district shall become a sponsor or site under the Federal Summer Food Service Program or apply for a waiver pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-26.

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:33-23, the district shall notify each student enrolled in the school district and the student's parent of the availability of, and criteria of eligibility for, the summer meals program and the locations in the district where the summer meals are available. The district shall provide this notification by distributing flyers provided by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDOA) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-23.c. The district may also provide electronic notice of the information through the usual means by which the district communicates with parents and students electronically.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-26.a., the NJDOA may grant a waiver of the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-24 et seq. To be granted a waiver, the district must show that it lacks the staff, facilities, or equipment to sponsor the Federal Summer Food Service Program, or the means to finance the hiring or acquisition of such staff, facilities, or equipment. The NJDOA also may grant a waiver for one year to the district if a different sponsor currently runs the Federal Summer Food Service Program within the district's community.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-26.b., when requesting a waiver pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-26.a., the district shall report to the NJDOA, in the manner prescribed by the NJDOA, its reasons for requesting a waiver of the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-24. The report shall include, but need not be limited to, a description of the specific impediments to implementing the program and actions that could be taken to remove those impediments or, where applicable, the identification of the sponsor that currently runs the program within the same community.

D. Information Provided to Parents Regarding the National School Lunch Program and the Federal School Breakfast Program – N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21b1

1. At the beginning of each school year, or upon initial enrollment in the case of a student who enrolls during the school year, the participating school district shall provide each student's parent with:

a. A hard copy of information on the National School Lunch Program and the Federal School Breakfast Program, including, but not limited to:~~,~~

(1) Information on the ability of all categorically eligible and income-eligible students to receive free school lunch under the National School Lunch Program, as provided by N.J.S.A. 18A:33-4.a., and free school breakfast under the Federal School Breakfast Program, as provided by N.J.S.A. 18A:33-14a.a.;

(2) Information on the subsidized school meals application and certification processes that are used to determine whether a student is categorically eligible or income-eligible for subsidized school meals;

(3) Information highlighting the need for parents to complete a subsidized school meals application for each student, and encouraging parents to complete the application, both to ensure that the student will have access to all subsidized school meals for which the student is eligible and to ensure that the school and the district have the necessary information to facilitate relevant eligibility determinations, receive appropriate reimbursement, and engage in all other activities authorized under N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21b1.c.; and

(4) Information on the rights that are available to students and their families under N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21b1 and N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21; and

b. A hard copy of a subsidized school meals application ~~form~~, as well as instructions for completing the application, and, as necessary, assistance in completing the application.

2. The school meals information and application provided to parents, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21b1.a. shall:

a. Be communicated in a language that the parent understands;

b. Specify the limited purposes for which collected personal data may be used, as provided by N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21b1.c.; and

c. Include a notice that an application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast programs may be submitted at any time during the school year and is required to be submitted annually
The district may also provide the information and application electronically, through the usual means by which the district electronically communicates with parents.

3. A subsidized school meals application that is completed by a parent shall be confidential, and shall not be used or shared by the student's school or school district, except as may be necessary to:

a. Determine whether a student identified in the application is income-eligible for free or reduced price school meals and, if so, whether the student satisfies Federal or State-level income

eligibility requirements for subsidized school lunches, subsidized school breakfasts, or both;

b. Determine whether the school or school district is required, by N.J.S.A. 18A:33-11.3 or by N.J.S.A. 18A:33-24, to establish a breakfast after the bell program~~,~~ or to participate as a sponsor or site in the Federal Summer Meals Service Program;

c. Ensure that the school receives appropriate reimbursement, from the State and Federal governments, for subsidized school meals served to eligible students, free of charge, through a school lunch program, a school breakfast program, a breakfast after the bell program, a summer meals program, or an emergency meals distribution program; and

d. Facilitate school aid determinations under the "School Funding Reform Act of 2008," N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-43 et seq.

4. The school district shall require the parent to either submit an application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast programs or submit a signed card provided by the school district indicating that the parent has received the application and information and is not interested in participating in the school lunch and school breakfast programs. The card shall include a notice stating that a parent may submit an application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast programs at any time during the school year.

   If a school district does not receive an application or a signed card from the parent, the school district shall make at least one attempt to contact the student's parent and request that the parent submit either an application or signed card.

5. The provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21b1 shall not apply in the case of a school which participates in the Community Eligibility Provision.

E. Free or Reduced Price Meals' Application Process – 7 CFR 245

School meals applications shall be reviewed in a timely manner. An eligibility determination will be made, the family will be notified of its status, and the status will be implemented as soon as possible within ten operating days of receipt of the completed application pursuant to 7 CFR 245.6(c)(6). "Operating days" mean days that reimbursable meals are offered to eligible students under the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program. Any student found eligible shall be offered free or reduced price meals or free milk immediately upon the establishment of their eligibility and shall continue to receive such meals during the pendency of any inquiry regarding their eligibility in accordance with the requirements of the Division of Food and Nutrition, School Nutrition Programs, NJDOA. Carry-over of

previous year's eligibility for students shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Division of Food and Nutrition, School Nutrition Programs, NJDOA.

In accordance with 7 CFR 245.6(c)(1) and (2), eligibility for free or reduced price meals, as determined through an approved application or by direct certification, must remain in effect for the entire school year and for up to thirty operating days in the subsequent school year. Prior to the processing of an application or the completion of direct certification procedures for the current school year, children from households with approved applications or documentation of direct certification on file from the preceding year, shall be offered reimbursable free and reduced price meals, as appropriate.

In accordance with 7 CFR 245.6(c)(6)(iii), children from households that notify the local educational agency that they do not want free or reduced price benefits must have their benefits discontinued as soon as possible.

Pursuant to 7 CFR 245.6(c)(7), if the district receives an incomplete school meals application or a school meals application that does not meet the eligibility criteria for free or reduced priced benefits, the school meals application must be denied. The district shall document and retain the denied school meals application and reasons for ineligibility for three years in accordance with 7 CFR 245.6(e).

In accordance with 7 CFR 245.6(c)(7), parents of students who are denied benefits must receive prompt, written notification of their denial. The notification may be provided by mail or e-mail to the individual who signed the school meals application. Posting the denial on the "notification" page of an online system does not meet this requirement. Likewise, informing the parent of denial via telephone does not meet this requirement. If the district uses an automated telephone information system to notify parents of denied benefits, the district must also provide the parents with written notification of the denial. The notification must provide the: reason for denial of benefits; right to appeal; instructions on how to appeal; and ability to reapply for free and reduced price benefits at any time during the school year.

In accordance with 7 CFR 245.6(e), the district shall record the eligibility determination and notification in an easily referenced format. The record shall include the: denial date; reason for denial; date the denial notice was sent; and signature or initials of the determining official (may be electronic, where applicable).

Any parents of students who have benefits that are to be reduced or terminated must be given ten calendar days' written notice of the change prior to the date the change will go into effect pursuant to 7 CFR 245.6a(j). The first day of the advance notice period shall be the day the notice is sent. The notice of adverse action may be sent via mail or to the e-mail address of the parent. The district cannot notify the household of adverse action by phone only.

Pursuant to 7 CFR 245.6a(j), the notice of adverse action must advise the parents of: change in benefits; reasons for the change; an appeal must be filed within the ten calendar days advance notice period to ensure continued benefits while awaiting a hearing and decision; instructions on how to appeal; and the parents may reapply for benefits at any time during the school year.

If the district participates in any National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, or provides free milk under the Special Milk Program, the district shall submit to the NJDOA a free and reduced price policy statement pursuant to 7 CFR 245.10.

In accordance with 7 CFR 245.1(b), the district shall avoid any policy or practice leading to the overt identification of students receiving free or reduced price meal benefits. Overt identification is any action that may result in a child being recognized as potentially eligible for or certified for free or reduced price school meals. Unauthorized disclosure or overt identification of students receiving free and reduced price meal benefits is prohibited. The district shall ensure that a child's eligibility status is not disclosed at any point in the process of providing free and reduced price meals, including: notification of the availability of free and reduced price benefits; certification and notification of eligibility; provision of meals in the cafeteria; and the point of service. In addition, the district shall ensure students who receive free and reduced price benefits are not overtly identified when they are provided additional services under programs or activities available to low-income students based on their eligibility for free and reduced price meals.

Pursuant to 7 CFR 245.2, disclosure means revealing or using individual student's program eligibility information obtained through the free and reduced price meal or free milk eligibility process for a purpose other than the purpose for which the information was obtained. Disclosure includes, but is not limited to, access, release, or transfer of personal data about students by means of print, tape, microfilm, microfiche, electronic communication, or any other means. It includes eligibility information obtained through the school meals application or through direct certification.

If the district accepts both cash and electronic payments, the district shall ensure students are not overtly identified through the method of payment pursuant to 7 CFR 245.8(b). To the maximum extent practicable, the district must ensure the sale of non-program foods and the method of payment for non-program foods do not inadvertently result in students being identified by their peers as receiving free and reduced price benefits.

The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary or designee will verify applications of those eligible for free or reduced price meals in accordance with the requirements of the Division of Food and Nutrition, School Nutrition Programs, NJDOA.

F. Meal Charge Program – N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21

The Board of Education provides a meal charge program to permit students in the district to charge for breakfast or lunch. Collection of any payment for a meal charge program account that is in arrears shall be addressed in accordance with provisions of this Policy.

The Board of Education recognizes a student may not have breakfast or lunch (meal), as applicable, or money to purchase an unsubsidized school breakfast or school lunch at school on a school day causing the student's unsubsidized school breakfast or unsubsidized school lunch bill to fall into arrears. The participating school district shall contact the student's parent to provide notice of the arrearage and shall provide the parent with a period of ten school days to pay the amount due. If the student's parent has not made full payment by the end of the designated ten school day period, then the participating school district shall again contact the student's parent to provide notice of any action to be taken in response to the arrearage.

A parent who has received a second notice their student's unsubsidized school breakfast or unsubsidized school lunch bill is in arrears and who has not made payment in full within one week from the date of the second notice may be requested to meet with the Principal or designee to discuss and resolve the matter.

A parent's refusal to meet with the Principal or designee or take other steps to resolve the matter may be indicative of more serious issues in the family or household. However, when a parent's routine failure to provide breakfast or lunch is reasonably suspected to be indicative of child neglect, the Principal or designee shall immediately report such suspicion to the Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency as required in N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10. Such reporting shall not be delayed to accommodate a parent's meeting with the Principal or designee.

A participating school district shall report at least biannually to the NJDOA the number and percentage of enrolled students who have been denied school breakfast or school lunch on the basis of an unsubsidized meal bill arrearage, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21.a.(2) and this Policy.

Nothing in N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21 or this Policy shall be construed to:

1. Require the participating school district to deny or restrict the ability of a~~n d~~ student to access unsubsidized school breakfast or unsubsidized school lunch, respectively, whenever the student's unsubsidized school breakfast or unsubsidized school lunch bill is in arrears; or

2. Authorize the participating school district to deny or restrict the ability of a student who is income-eligible for subsidized school lunch, but who is not income-eligible for subsidized school breakfast, to continue to access subsidized school lunch whenever the student's unsubsidized school breakfast bill is in arrears.

The participating school district shall not:

1. Publicly identify or stigmatize a student who cannot pay for an unsubsidized school breakfast or an unsubsidized school lunch or whose unsubsidized school breakfast or lunch bill is in arrears, for example, by requiring the student to sit at a separate table, to wear a wristband, hand stamp, or identifying mark, or to accept an alternative meal;

2. Require a student, who cannot pay for an unsubsidized school breakfast or an unsubsidized school lunch or whose unsubsidized school breakfast or lunch bill is in arrears to do chores or other work to pay for the unsubsidized school breakfast or unsubsidized school lunch;

3. Require a student to discard an unsubsidized school breakfast or an unsubsidized school lunch after it has been served, either because ~~of~~ the student is unable to pay for the unsubsidized school breakfast or unsubsidized school lunch or because the student's unsubsidized school breakfast or unsubsidized lunch bill is in arrears;

4. Prohibit a student, or a sibling thereof, from attending or participating in non-fee-based extracurricular activities, field trips, or school events, from receiving grades, official transcripts, or report cards, or from graduating or attending graduation events, solely because of the student's unresolved breakfast or lunch ~~l~~ debt; or

5. Require a student's ~~the~~ parent to pay fees or costs in excess of the actual amounts owed for unsubsidized school breakfasts or unsubsidized school lunches, or both, which have been ~~meals~~ previously served to the student.

If a student owes money for the equivalent of five or more unsubsidized school meals, the Principal or designee of the participating school district shall:

1. Determine whether the student is eligible for subsidized school meals, by conducting a review of all available records related to the student, and by making at least two attempts, not including the initial attempt made pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21b1, to contact the student's parent and have the parent complete a subsidized school meals application; and

2. Contact the student's parent to:

    a. Offer assistance with respect to the completion of the subsidized school meals application; and

    b. Determine whether there are other issues in the household that have caused the student to have insufficient funds to purchase an unsubsidized school breakfast or unsubsidized school lunch, as the case may be; and

    c. Offer any other appropriate assistance.

The participating school district shall direct communications about a student's unsubsidized school meals arrearage to the parent and not to the student. Nothing in N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21 shall prohibit the participating school district from sending a student home with a letter addressed to a parent.

Notwithstanding the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21 and the provisions of any other law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, a student shall not be denied access to a school meal, regardless of the student's ability to pay or the status of the student's meal arrearages, during any period of time in which the participating school district is making a determination, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21.c., as to whether the student is eligible for, and can be certified to receive, subsidized school meals.

If the student's meal bill is in arrears, but the student has the money to purchase a meal on a subsequent school day, the student will be provided a meal with payment and the food service program will not use the student's payment to repay previously unpaid charges if the student intended to use the money to purchase that school day's meal.

Students receiving free meals will not be denied a meal even if they accrued a negative balance from other purchases in the cafeteria.

The school district may post this Policy on the school district's website provided there is a method in place to ensure this Policy reaches all households without access to a computer or the Internet.

G. Provision of Meals to Homeless Children – N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21c.

The district's liaison for the education of homeless children shall coordinate with district personnel to ensure that a homeless student receives free school meals and is monitored according to district policies pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21c.

H. Provision of School Meals During Period of School Closure – N.J.S.A. 18A:33-27.2

Whenever the Board receives a written directive, from either the New Jersey Department of Health or the health officer of the jurisdiction, instituting a public health-related school closure due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the district having jurisdiction over the closed school shall implement and operate an emergency school meals distribution ~~a~~ program~~,~~ during the period of the school closure. An emergency school meals distribution program implemented pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-27.2 shall provide for subsidized school meals to be made available, at meal distribution sites designated pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-27.2.b., to all students enrolled in the district who are either categorically eligible or income-eligible therefor.

In order to facilitate the emergency distribution of subsidized school meals in the event of an emergency public school closure, as described in N.J.S.A. 18A:33-27.2.a., each district shall identify one or more school meal distribution sites that are

walkable and easily accessible to students in the district. The district shall collaborate with county and municipal government officials in identifying appropriate distribution sites including, but not limited to: faith-based locations; community centers, such as YMCAs; and locations in the district where meals are made available through a summer meals program. In a district that includes high density housing, the district shall make every effort to identify an emergency school meals distribution site in that housing area.

The district shall identify students enrolled in the district who are categorically eligible or income-eligible for subsidized school lunch, subsidized school breakfast, or both, and for whom an emergency school meal distribution site, identified pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-27.2.b., is not within walking distance. In the case of these students, the district shall distribute the subsidized school meals to the student's residence or to the student's bus stop along an established bus route, provided that, in the latter case, the student or the student's parent shall be ~~is~~ present at the bus stop to accept ~~for~~ the distribution. Distributions made pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-27.2.c. may include up to a total of three school days' worth of food per delivery.

The district may use school buses owned and operated by the district to distribute subsidized school meals pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-27.2. If the district does not own and operate its own buses, the district may enter into a contract authorizing another party to engage in ~~for~~ the emergency distribution of subsidized school meals, on the district's behalf, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-27.2, and any such contract~~s~~ shall be exempt from the public bidding requirements established pursuant to the "Public School Contracts Law," N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq.

The district shall collaborate, as feasible, with other districts and with local government units when implementing an emergency meals distribution program, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-27.2, in order to promote administrative and operational efficiencies and cost savings.

School lunches and breakfasts that are made available~~,~~ through an emergency meals distribution program operating pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-27.2, shall be provided to eligible students~~,~~ free of charge, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-4.a. and N.J.S.A. 18A:33-14a.a.

I~~H~~. Statement of Compliance

All food service programs shall be operated pursuant to 7 CFR 245, as appropriate, and this Policy.

N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-42.1; 18A:33-4; 18A:33-5; 18A:33-10;
18A:33-10.1; 18A:33-11; 18A:33-11.1; 18A:33-11.2;
18A:33-11.3; 18A:33-14a.; 18A:33-21; 18A:33-21a.;
18A:33-21b1; 18A:33-21c.; 18A:33-23; 18A:33-24;
18A:33-25; 18A:33-26; 18A:33-27.2; 18A:58-7.1;
18A:58-7.2

N.J.A.C. 2:36
N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.6 et seq.
N.J.A.C. 8:24-2.1 through 7.5
7 CFR 210.1 et seq.

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