

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
ASSEMBLY, Nos. 1630 and 1631

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

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District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Assemblywoman BRITNEE N. TIMBERLAKE

District 34 (Essex and Passaic)

Assemblywoman JOANN DOWNEY

District 11 (Monmouth)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywomen Vainieri Huttle, Reynolds-Jackson, McKnight, Quijano,

Assemblymen Benson, Danielsen, Caputo, Thomson, Assemblywoman

Speight, Assemblyman Mejia, Assemblywomen Mosquera, Murphy and

Lopez

SYNOPSIS

Requires school districts to take certain actions in circumstances when school meal bill is in arrears; prohibits shaming students with school meal bills in arrears; prohibits certain district actions in collecting unpaid school meal fees.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Substitute as adopted by the Assembly Education Committee.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/24/2020)

1 AN ACT concerning school meals and amending P.L.2015, c.15.

2

3 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
4 of New Jersey:

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6 1. Section 1 of P.L.2015, c.15 (C.18A:33-21) is amended to read
7 as follows:

8 1. a. In the event that a school district determines that a
9 student's school breakfast or school lunch bill is in arrears, the
10 district shall contact the student's parent or guardian to provide
11 notice of the arrearage and shall provide the parent or guardian with
12 a period of 10 school days to pay the amount due. If the student's
13 parent or guardian has not made full payment by the end of the 10
14 school days, then the district shall again contact the student's parent
15 or guardian to provide notice **that school breakfast or school lunch,**
16 **as applicable, shall not be served to the student beginning one week**
17 **from the date of the second notice unless payment is made in full**
18 **of any action to be taken by the school district in response to a**
19 **student's school breakfast or school lunch bill being in arrears.**

20 A school district shall report at least biannually to the
21 Department of Agriculture the number of students who are denied
22 school breakfast or school lunch pursuant to this section.

23 Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a school
24 district to deny or restrict access to school breakfast or school lunch
25 to a student whose school breakfast or school lunch bill is in
26 arrears.

27 b. Prior to initially contacting the parent or guardian to provide
28 notice of a school breakfast or school lunch bill in arrears as
29 provided in subsection a. of this section, the school district shall
30 exhaust all options and methods to directly certify the student for a
31 free or reduced priced meal. If the school district is not able to
32 directly certify the student, the school district shall provide the
33 parent or guardian with a paper copy of, or an electronic link to, an
34 application for the free or reduced priced meal program with the
35 notification of the arrearage and contact the parent or guardian to
36 encourage application submission.

37 c. A school district shall ensure that a student whose school
38 breakfast or school lunch bill is in arrears is not shamed, treated
39 differently, forced to go to the end of the food line, or served a meal
40 that differs from what a student whose school breakfast or school
41 lunch bill is not in arrears would receive. This subsection shall not
42 prohibit a school district from serving an alternative reimbursable
43 meal to a student who may need one for dietary or religious reasons.

44 d. A school district shall not permit any action directed at a
45 student to collect unpaid school meal fees. A school district may

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **thus** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 attempt to collect unpaid school meal fees from a parent or
2 guardian, but shall not threaten to make a child protective services
3 report solely in regard to the arrearage.

4 (cf: P.L.2018, c.27)

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6 2. This act shall take effect on the first day of the first full
7 school year following the date of enactment.