

**ASSEMBLY, No. 3157**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**219th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 24, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY**

**District 7 (Burlington)**

**Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE**

**District 37 (Bergen)**

**Assemblyman JAMES J. KENNEDY**

**District 22 (Middlesex, Somerset and Union)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Provides anti-stigmatization protections to public school student whose school breakfast or school lunch bill is in arrears and requires school district to communicate about arrearages to parent and not to student.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/5/2020)**

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

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

21 b. A school district shall not:

22 (1) publicly identify or stigmatize a student who cannot pay for  
23 a school breakfast or a school lunch or whose school breakfast or  
24 school lunch bill is in arrears by, for example, requiring that the  
25 student wear a wristband or hand stamp or by prohibiting the  
26 student from participating in field day, a class trip, or other  
27 extracurricular activities; or

28 (2) require a student who cannot pay for a school breakfast or a  
29 school lunch or whose school breakfast or school lunch bill is in  
30 arrears to do chores or other work to pay for the school breakfast or  
31 school lunch.

32 c. A school district shall direct communications about a  
33 student's school breakfast or school lunch bill being in arrears to  
34 the parent or guardian and not the student. Nothing in this  
35 subsection shall prohibit a school district from sending a student  
36 home with a letter addressed to a parent or guardian.

37 (cf: P.L.2018, c.27, s.1)

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39 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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## STATEMENT

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44 Current law provides a process for notifying a parent or guardian  
45 when a public school student's school breakfast or school lunch bill  
46 is in arrears and allowing the parent or guardian a certain amount of

**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 time to pay the amount due. Under that law, a student is not  
2 suddenly denied a school meal because the school district  
3 determines that the student's school meal bill is in arrears.

4 This bill provides additional protections for a student whose  
5 school meal bill is in arrears. Under the bill, the school district  
6 would not be permitted to publicly identify or stigmatize a student  
7 who cannot pay for a school breakfast or a school lunch or whose  
8 meal bill is in arrears by, for example, requiring the student to wear  
9 a wristband or hand stamp or by prohibiting the student from  
10 participating in field day, a class trip, or other extracurricular  
11 activities. In addition, the district would not be permitted to require  
12 the student to do chores or other work to pay for the school  
13 breakfast or school lunch. The bill also requires a school district to  
14 communicate about a meal bill in arrears to the parent or guardian,  
15 not to the student. The bill clarifies, though, that a school district is  
16 allowed to send a student home with a letter addressed to a parent  
17 or guardian regarding the meal bill matter.