

ASSEMBLY, No. 4020

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 4, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman EDWARD H. THOMSON
District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)

SYNOPSIS

Provides anti-stigmatization protections to public school student whose school breakfast or school lunch bill is in arrears.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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

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

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

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

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37 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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40 STATEMENT

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42 Current law provides a process for notifying a parent or guardian
43 when a public school student's school breakfast or school lunch bill
44 is in arrears and allowing the parent or guardian a certain amount of
45 time to pay the amount due. Under this law, a student is not

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 suddenly denied a school meal because the school district
2 determines that the student's school meal bill is in arrears.

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