

SENATE, No. 1031

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 30, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires certain school meal information be provided to public school students' parents and requires school districts to request that families apply for school meals under certain circumstances.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning school meals and supplementing P.L.2015, c.15
2 (C.18A:33-21).

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

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7 1. a. At the beginning of each school year, and upon initial
8 enrollment in the case of a student enrolling during the school year,
9 a school district shall provide to the parent or guardian of each
10 student:

11 (1) a hardcopy of information on the National School Lunch
12 Program and the federal School Breakfast Program; and

13 (2) a hardcopy application to apply for the school lunch and
14 school breakfast programs and instructions for completing the
15 application.

16 The school district may also provide the information and
17 application electronically, through the usual means by which the
18 district communicates with parents electronically. The information
19 and application shall be in a language that the parent or guardian
20 understands.

21 Information provided to the parent or guardian shall include a
22 notice that an application to apply for the school lunch and school
23 breakfast programs may be submitted at any time during the school
24 year and is required to be submitted annually.

25 b. The school district shall require the parent or guardian to
26 either submit an application to apply for the school lunch and
27 school breakfast programs or submit a signed card provided by the
28 school district indicating that the parent or guardian has received
29 the application and information and is not interested in participating
30 in the school lunch and school breakfast programs. The card shall
31 include a notice stating that a parent or guardian may submit an
32 application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast
33 programs at any time during the school year.

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

38 c. A school district shall provide assistance to a parent or
39 guardian in filling out an application to apply for the school lunch
40 and school breakfast programs, upon the request of the parent or
41 guardian.

42 d. If a student owes money for the equivalent of five or more
43 school meals, a school district shall make at least two attempts to
44 contact the student's parent or guardian and request that the parent
45 or guardian fill out an application for the school lunch and school
46 breakfast programs.

1 e. The provisions of this section shall not apply in the case of a
2 school which participates in the Community Eligibility Provision.

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4 2. This act shall take effect in the first full school year
5 following the date of enactment.

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STATEMENT

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10 Under the provisions of the bill, at the beginning of each school
11 year, and upon initial enrollment in the case of a student enrolling
12 during the school year, a school district must provide to the parent
13 or guardian of each student:

- 14 • a hardcopy of information on the National School Lunch
15 Program and the federal School Breakfast Program; and
- 16 • a hardcopy application to apply for the school lunch and
17 school breakfast programs and instructions for completing
18 the application.

19 The school district may also provide the information and
20 application electronically, through the usual means by which the
21 district communicates with parents electronically. The application
22 and information must be in a language that the parent or guardian
23 understands. The district must provide assistance to a parent or
24 guardian in filling out an application for school meal programs, if
25 the parent or guardian requests this assistance.

26 The bill includes a provision that would require the parent or
27 guardian to either submit an application to apply for the school
28 lunch and school breakfast programs or submit a signed card
29 provided by the school district indicating that the parent or guardian
30 has received the application and information and is not interested in
31 participating in the school lunch and school breakfast programs. If
32 the school district does not receive an application or a signed card,
33 the school district is required to make at least one attempt to contact
34 the student's parent or guardian and request that the parent submit
35 either an application or signed card.

36 The bill provides that when a student owes money for the
37 equivalent of five or more school meals, the school district must
38 make at least two attempts to contact the student's parent or
39 guardian and request that the parent or guardian fill out an
40 application for the school lunch and school breakfast programs.

41 The provisions of the bill will not apply to schools which
42 participate in the Community Eligibility Provision. The
43 Community Eligibility Provision is a federal reimbursement
44 alternative for eligible, high-poverty local educational agencies and
45 schools participating in both the National School Lunch Program
46 and School Breakfast Program. Under the Community Eligibility
47 Provision, schools that serve a high proportion of low-income

S1031 RUIZ

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1 students through direct certification are permitted to offer free
2 breakfast and lunch to all students rather than collecting individual
3 applications and limiting the meals to only income-eligible
4 students.