

## **OPERATIONAL SERVICES**

### **Unpaid Meal Charges**

Students in Edwards County Schools are expected to pay for breakfast and lunch on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. However, it is realized that students sometimes forget their money or run out of money in their account and will need to charge. The maximum amount a student can charge to their account is \$15.00, at which time the student will be denied the privilege of charging regular, reimbursable meals, and a la carte items until the debt has been paid. Parents/guardians will need to make other provisions for meals until the charges are paid such as sending a sack breakfast and/or lunch with the child. In situations where the student did not bring a sack breakfast and/or lunch and are requesting a meal, an alternate meal may be served for a period not to exceed 5 days. At the end of the 5 day duration, no more alternate meals will be served. The alternate meal will meet federal nutritional guidelines and the cost of the meal will be charged to the student's account.

If a student has money to purchase a reduced price meal, if they receive reduced price meals, or a paid meal at the time of the meal service, the child must be provided a meal. The School Food Authority (SFA) may not use the child's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the child intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.

In order to establish communications between the school and the parent/guardian of the student who has charged meals, a notice of meal charges will be sent home periodically with the student to keep the parent/guardian informed. Notices may also be mailed home to the parent/guardian as well. It is expected that all charges be paid in full by the end of the school year in order to limit carry over to the next year.

When payment is overdue, the debt is classified as "delinquent" as long as it is considered collectable and efforts are being made by the SFA or designee to collect it. When debt is owed to the SFA, notices will be sent home in an effort to collect the debt. Debt can be carried over from year to year if not paid by end of the school calendar. Families needing assistance to pay off delinquent debt have the option of setting up a payment plan with their child's school. In cases where considerable debt is owed to the school district, it may be turned over to a debt collection agency for collection purposes if collection attempts are unsuccessful. When it is determined further collection efforts for delinquent debt are useless or too costly, the debt will be classified as "bad" debt and will be written off as an operating loss. In these cases, when debt is written off and considered "bad", families will be denied the privilege of charging meals in the future. Food service funds may not be used to cover the costs related to bad debt, the loss must be restored using non-federal funds such as the school district's general fund. The District will make a transfer into the Nonprofit School Service Account to cover the loss.

Parents/guardians who feel their family qualifies for the federally funded free and reduced breakfast and lunch program are encouraged to apply at any time during the school year. If a family feels they are eligible to receive free or reduced breakfast and lunches, they may contact their child's school office. Any debt incurred prior to qualifying for the federal meals program is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.