

JAN 17 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the board of
2 education has proposed an increase to meal costs paid by
3 students. Presently, students are required to pay for half of
4 the meal program costs. However, an increase to a student's
5 payment obligation may create barriers for students accessing
6 school meals, particularly for families facing financial
7 hardship.

8 The legislature further finds that while existing law
9 prohibits schools from denying meals to students under certain
10 circumstances, students do not have complete protection against
11 meal denial or stigmatizing practices if the student's meal fund
12 account balance is zero or negative. Ensuring adequate
13 nutrition for students is vital for physical health, well-being,
14 and academic performance.

15 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:



- 1 (1) Prohibit denial of a school meal solely for a
2 student's inability to pay for the meal due to a zero
3 or negative meal fund account balance;
- 4 (2) Require the department of education and department
5 schools to utilize existing data to certify that all
6 eligible students who qualify for free or reduced-
7 price meals receive assistance;
- 8 (3) Prohibit the public identification or stigmatization
9 of a student who is unable to pay for a school meal,
10 including certain identification practices; and
- 11 (4) Require the department of education to directly
12 communicate with a student's parent or guardian
13 regarding an unpaid balance.

14 SECTION 2. Section 302A-404, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
15 amended to read as follows:

16 **"§302A-404 School meals.** (a) School meals shall be made
17 available under the school meals program in every school where
18 the students are required to eat meals at school.

19 (b) No student shall be denied a meal solely for failure
20 to pay[+]



- 1 ~~(1) Within the first twenty-one days of the first semester~~
2 ~~of a school year while the student's application for~~
3 ~~free or reduced lunch is being processed; or~~
4 ~~(2) Within seven days after a student's meal fund account~~
5 ~~reaches]~~

6 for the meal due to a zero or negative meal fund account
7 balance.

8 (c) ~~[The department may adopt rules or policies governing~~
9 ~~the collection of funds for student meal accounts with a~~
10 ~~negative fund balance; provided that no rule or policy shall~~
11 ~~prohibit feeding a student as required pursuant to subsection~~

12 ~~(b)-.] The department and each school shall exhaust all options~~
13 ~~to directly certify students for free or reduced-price meals~~
14 ~~using exiting data sources including but not limited to:~~

- 15 (1) Participation in federal assistance programs;
16 (2) Medicaid or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
17 eligibility; or
18 (3) Other government or agency records that establish
19 eligibility.



1 (d) No school shall publicly identify or stigmatize a
2 student for the student's inability to pay for school meals,
3 including but not limited to:

4 (1) Requiring the student to wear a wristband, hand stamp,
5 or any other identifying marker;

6 (2) Assigning the student chores or other tasks to pay for
7 a meal; or


8 (3) Requiring the student to dispose of a meal once it has
9 been served, regardless of the student's ability to
10 pay.

11 (e) All communications regarding unpaid meal fees or
12 negative meal fund account balances shall be directed to the
13 student's parent or guardian. If a student's meal fund account
14 balance is unpaid, the school shall attempt to directly contact
15 the student's parent or guardian to inform the parent or
16 guardian of the unpaid balance."

17 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
18 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY 



S.B. NO. 1192

Report Title:

DOE; School Meals; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Unpaid Account Balances; Zero or Negative Account Balances; Stigmatization; Public Identification; Prohibited; Notification

Description:

Prohibits the denial of a school meal to a student based on the student's ability to pay. Requires the Department of Education and department schools to certify that all students eligible for certain programs receive free or reduced-price meals. Prohibits a department school from publicly identifying or stigmatizing a student. Requires the school to directly inform a parent or guardian regarding a student's unpaid meal fund account balance.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

