

2020 -- H 7313

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LC003304  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION

Introduced By: Representatives Ranglin-Vassell, Lyle, Lombardi, Hull, and McNamara

Date Introduced: January 24, 2020

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Chapter 16-8 of the General Laws entitled "Federal Aid [See Title 16  
2 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended by adding thereto  
3 the following section:

4           **16-8-10.2. Treatment of students receiving school meals assistance.**

5           (a) All public and secondary schools at which pupils are served breakfast and lunch under  
6 §§ 16-8-10 and 16-8-10.1, shall ensure that a pupil whose parent or guardian has unpaid school  
7 meal fees is not denied a reimbursable meal of the pupil's choice because of the fact that the  
8 pupil's parent or guardian has unpaid meal fees and shall ensure that the pupil is not shamed or  
9 treated differently from other pupils. This subsection does not prohibit a school from serving an  
10 alternative reimbursable meal to a pupil who may need one for dietary or religious reasons, or as  
11 a regular menu item.

12           (b) School personnel and volunteers at a school that serves nutritionally adequate meals  
13 to pupils during the instructional day shall not allow any disciplinary action that is taken against a  
14 pupil to result in the denial or delay of a nutritionally adequate meal.

15           (c) A school shall not take any action directed at a pupil to collect an unpaid school meal  
16 fee. A school may attempt to collect unpaid school meal fees from a parent or guardian, but shall  
17 not use a debt collector, as defined in Section 803 of the federal Consumer Credit Protection Act  
18 (15 U.S.C. Sec. 1692a).

19           (d) A school shall notify a parent or guardian of the negative balance of a pupil's school

1 meal account no later than ten (10) days after the pupil's school meal account has reached a  
2 negative balance. Before sending this notification to the parent or guardian, the school shall  
3 exhaust all options and methods to directly certify the pupil for free or reduced price meals. If the  
4 school is not able to directly certify the pupil, the school shall provide the pupil's parent or  
5 guardian with a paper copy or electronic link to an application with the notification and contact  
6 the parent or guardian to encourage application submission.

7 (e) Nothing in this section is intended to allow for the indefinite accrual of unpaid school  
8 meal fees.

9 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO EDUCATION

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1           This act requires schools to ensure that a pupil whose parent or guardian has unpaid  
2 school meal fees is not denied a meal of the pupil's choice because of the fact that the pupil's  
3 parent or guardian has unpaid meal fees and ensure that the pupil is not shamed or treated  
4 differently from other students.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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