

OPERATIONAL SERVICES

REVENUE AND INVESTMENTS – FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE FOOD SERVICES AND WAIVER OF SCHOOL FEES

The Superintendent shall be responsible for implementing the District's free and reduced-price food services policy and all applicable programs.

Eligibility Criteria and Selection of Children for Free and Reduced-Price Food Service

A student's eligibility for free and reduced-price food service shall be determined by the income eligibility guidelines, family-size income standards, set annually by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and distributed by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Notification

At the beginning of each school year, the District shall notify students and their parents/guardians of: (1) eligibility requirements for free and reduced-price food service; (2) the application process; (3) the name and telephone number of a contact person for the program; and (4) other information required by federal law. The Superintendent shall provide the same information on the District's website, school newsletters or students' registration materials. Parents/guardians enrolling a child in the District for the first time, any time during the school year, shall receive the eligibility information.

Nondiscrimination Assurance

The District shall avoid publicly identifying students receiving free or reduced-price meals and shall use methods for collecting meal payments that prevent identification of children receiving assistance.

Determination and Appeal

If the request for free or reduced-price food services is denied, the Business Manager shall mail a copy of his or her decision to the requesting parents or guardians within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the request. The decision shall state the reason for the denial and shall inform the parents of their right to appeal, including the process and timelines for that action. The denial notice shall also include a statement informing the parents that they may reapply for a waiver any time during the school year, if circumstances change.

A family may appeal the District's decision to deny an application for free and reduced-price food services or to terminate such services as outlined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 7 C.F.R. §245.7, *Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price Meals and Free Milk in Schools*. The Superintendent shall establish a hearing procedure for adverse eligibility decisions and provide by mail a copy of them to the family. The District may also use these procedures to challenge a child's continued eligibility for free and reduced-price meals or milk.

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During an appeal, students previously receiving food service benefits shall not have their benefits terminated. Students who were denied benefits shall not receive benefits during the appeal.

The Superintendent shall keep on file for a period of three years a record of any appeals made and the hearing record. The District shall also maintain accurate and complete records showing the data and method used to determine the number of eligible students served free and reduced-price food services. These records shall be maintained for three years.

Waiver Of School Fees

All school fees assessed by School District 93 may be waived for children eligible for free lunches or breakfasts under the School Breakfast and Lunch Program Act (105 ILCS 125/4) and children whose parents or guardians are able to establish to the reasonable satisfaction of the District that, because of other extenuating circumstances (i.e. students who are eligible to receive reduced-price lunch or breakfast; very significant loss of income due to severe illness or injury in the family or unusual expenses such as fire, flood, or storm damage), are unable to afford such fees. Every child shall, however, be required to provide his or her own ordinary supplies or materials (e.g. pencil, paper, notebooks) that are necessary to participate in any curricular or extracurricular program.

For purposes of this Policy, the term "School Fees" shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A) All charges for required textbooks and instructional materials;
- B) All charges and deposits collected by the District for use of school property (e.g. locks, towels, laboratory equipment);
- C) Charges for field trips made during school hours, or made after school hours if the field trip is a required or customary part of a class or extracurricular activity (e.g. annually scheduled trips to museums, concerts, places of business and industry or field trips related to instruction in social studies, the fine arts, career/vocational education or the sciences);
- D) Charges or deposits for uniforms or equipment related to varsity and intramural sports, or to fine arts programs;
- E) Charges to participate in extracurricular activities;
- F) Charges for supplies required for a particular class (e.g. laboratory or art supplies, recorders, gym uniforms, heart rate monitor straps);
- G) Graduation fees (e.g. gowns);

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- H) School records fees; and
- I) School health services fees.

For purposes of this Policy, the term "School Fees" shall not include:

- A) Library fines and other charges made for the loss, misuse, or destruction of school property (e.g. musical instruments, personal computer devices);
- B) Charges for the purchase of yearbooks, pictures, diploma covers, or similar items;
- C) Charges for optional travel undertaken by a school club or group of students outside of school hours (e.g. an eighth grade class trip);
- D) Charges for admission to school dances, athletic events, or other social events; and
- E) Optional community service programs for which fees are charged (e.g. preschool, before- and after-school child care recreation programs).

This policy providing for the waiver of school fees shall be communicated in writing to the parents or guardians of all students enrolled in the District at the start of each school year and to the parents or guardians of all students enrolling in the District for the first time. It should also be found on the school and District websites.

The first bill or notice sent to parents or guardians who owe fees shall state:

- A) That the District waives fees for persons unable to afford them in accordance with this policy; and
- B) The procedure for applying for a fee waiver.

Application for waiver of school fees shall be submitted, in writing, to the Business Manager, accompanied by sufficient documentation to establish that the child is eligible for free and reduced-price food services as determined by the income eligibility guidelines, family-size income standards, set annually by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and distributed by the Illinois State Board of Education.

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If the request for a fee waiver is denied, the Business Manager shall mail a copy of his or her decision to the requesting parents or guardians within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the request. The decision shall state the reason for the denial and shall inform the parents of their right to appeal, including the process and timelines for that action. The denial notice shall also include a statement informing the parents that they may reapply for a waiver any time during the school year if circumstances change.

An adverse decision of the Business Manager may be appealed to the District Superintendent by written letter delivered within seven (7) days of receipt of the Business Manager's decision. The Superintendent shall provide a response to the parent or guardian's letter within thirty (30) days of the District's receipt of that letter.

Parents or guardians shall have the right to meet with the District Superintendent in order to explain why the fee waiver should be granted. If the appeal is denied, then the District shall mail a copy of its decision to the parents or guardians. The decision shall state the reason for the denial.

No fee shall be collected from any parent or guardian who is seeking a fee waiver in accordance with this policy until the District has acted on the initial request or appeal (if any is made), and the parents or guardians have been notified of its decision.

If this policy or the fee waiver procedure is substantively amended, parents or guardians of students enrolled in the District shall be notified in writing within thirty (30) calendar days following the adoption of the amendments.

School records that identify individual students as applicants for or recipients of fee waivers are subject to the Illinois School Student Records Act (105 ILCS 10/1 et seq.). Information from such records is confidential and may be disclosed only as provided in that Act.

NO DISCRIMINATION OR PUNISHMENT OF ANY KIND, INCLUDING THE LOWERING OF GRADES OR EXCLUSION FROM CLASSES, SHALL BE EXERCISED AGAINST A STUDENT WHOSE PARENTS OR GUARDIANS ARE UNABLE TO PURCHASE REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS OR TO PAY REQUIRED FEES.

LEGAL REF: Illinois School Code, Sec. 10-20.13 and 10-22.25 (105 ILCS 5/10-20.13 and 5/10-22.25);
23 Ill. Admin. Code §1.245 and § 305.10 et seq.
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, National School Lunch Program, 7 C.F.R. Part 210.
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price Meals and Free Milk in Schools, 7 C.F.R. Part 245.
105 ILCS 125/ and 126/

Adopted: June 10, 1999
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