

### **Child Nutrition Account Balance**

No adult employees may carry a negative balance in their Nutrition Department account. Adults must pre-pay or pay the cashier at the food service area.

Parents are responsible to ensure their children have food. Parents are not to carry a negative balance in their children's Child Nutrition Department account. Parents may apply for free or reduced meals or work with the Child Nutrition Department to pay off debt.

All families new to BPS will receive applications for Child Nutrition services at the point of Central Registration.

Students will receive a menu reimbursable meal, regardless of account balance. A la carte items may be purchased only when the account has a positive balance; there is no charging of a la carte.

Parents are responsible for monitoring their children's meal accounts and ensuring a credit balance. The district makes efforts to assist parents with their responsibility. The following protocol will be used:

1. Negative Balance (three weeks of indebtedness) Notification: parents will receive a text and email message on Tuesdays and Fridays.
2. Robo-Call (Power Announcement) Negative Balance (-\$30 to -\$75) Notification: an automated message from the Child Nutrition Program Director, will be sent Tuesdays and Fridays. The message will include:
  - a. potential collection agency action.
3. First U.S. Postage Negative Balance (-\$75 or greater) Notification: a regular mail notification will be sent by the school secretary based on a once per week data pull from Child Nutrition Department accounting software. Text, emails, and calls will cease at this point. The letter will state:
  - a. The potential of collection agency action;
  - b. The secretary will then schedule a meeting with parent/guardian, principal and social worker. If unable to reach parent/guardian, or parent/guardian does not attend meeting, proceed to step 6.
4. Staff intervention: parents will attend a meeting with the school principal and a school social worker/school counselor to discuss their children's Child Nutrition Account. The superintendent will be updated.
5. Second US postage Negative Balance (-\$100 or greater) Notification: a letter will be sent by the Child Nutrition Department based on a report pulled by the Child Nutrition Department.

The letter will state:

- a. The debt may be routed to a collection agency for action;
6. As permitted by Child Nutrition guidelines, principals may certify families for free or reduced meals.
  7. Principals will use a standard check-out form indicating that all fees, including Child Nutrition balances are paid prior to families checking out from BPS to attend school elsewhere.
  8. Principals will use a standard pre-graduation ceremony check-out form to ensure all bills owed to BPS are paid prior to the student participating in the prom or graduation ceremony from high school.
  9. Adults will be expected to pay all outstanding bills to BPS prior to BPS fulfilling transfer requests for all graduated students.
  10. Outstanding child nutrition accounts will be reviewed with parents during Spring registration for the following year, prior to final registration for classes.

All notifications will include the following: "Free or reduced meal applications are available at your school or by contacting Child Nutrition at 701-323-4090. BPS wants to work out a payment plan, which necessitates parents contact Child Nutrition at 701-323-4090."

Families of returning students will see positive meal balances rolled forward into their child's/ren's meal account(s) for the next year. Families who have no students returning (last sibling to graduate, family leaves BPS) will receive a refund of the remaining balance in their meal account at checkout unless they wish to donate the funds. Requests for refunds outside the regular checkout form must be received by June 10 of the recently completed school year or within two weeks of checkout, whichever comes first. Any money left in inactive accounts will be donated to help struggling families with negative balances in their meal accounts.