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GUIDELINES FOR MEAL ACCOUNT BALANCE AND CHARGE PROCEDURES

Oregon HB 3454 was signed into law on August 8, 2017. This law outlines practices and communication not to be allowed in Oregon school cafeterias. The law is intended to remove practices or communication deemed as “shaming” to students regarding the collection of funds for school meals or the identification of balances for unpaid meals.

Key provisions of the bill are that districts or schools may not:

- 1) Publicly identify a student who is unable to pay for a meal or owes money.
- 2) Communicate to students about monies owed.
- 3) Serve an alternate meal to a student who is unable to pay.
- 4) Assess fees related to collection agencies to parents or guardians.

The bill further provides the district or schools shall:

- 1) Communicate only with parents or guardians about unpaid balances
- 2) Contact and recontact households to determine Free or Reduced-price eligibility if their student owes more than the cost of five (5) meals.
- 3) Offer assistance in completing Free or Reduced-price meal applications.

Sheridan School District will observe the above provisions and allow meal charges during established meal times if the student is unable to pay. A meal charge will be documented on the student's account and unpaid meal balances will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

As specified by the current law, the district is unable to establish a debt limit. Parents or guardians only may set charging limits, for their students, in writing or by calling the District Office.

First meals only may be charged. Second meals and a la carte items, including milk, to accompany meals brought from home and a la carte items are exempt from this provision. Parents who have imposed limits on student accounts will limit students from charging meals and or a la carte items.

Account Management and Debt Collection

Prepayment for meals may be made at the school office. Checks and cash will be accepted at the schools. Parents may monitor student activity and balances by calling the school's office and asking for the head secretary.

Unpaid meal charges will be considered debt once a meal has been served. Payment will be considered overdue when funds are not available. Sheridan School District will take action to collect unpaid meal charges or debts by sending negative balance notifications to parents each week. Notices may be sent by mail, email or automated phone call.

Debt collection efforts will consist of the following procedures:

- 1) Send a certified letter notifying parents that the unpaid meal charges will be sent to collections after a debt of \$75.00 or more has accrued.
- 2) Send an email or letter to parents notifying them of an unpaid meal balance weekly.

Repayment plans will be established upon request