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**Note:** For further information, the Texas Department of Agriculture provides guidance related to these topics in the [Administrator's Reference Manual \(ARM\)](#)<sup>1</sup>: Section 15, Meal Pricing; Section 19; Other Operational Issues; and Section 21, USDA Foods.

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## Food Donations

When an official of a nonprofit organization is directly affiliated with the campus, including a teacher, school counselor, or parent of a student enrolled at the campus, the campus may elect to donate food to the nonprofit organization to benefit the district's student population. Permission to donate food will be granted through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the nonprofit organization.

The food donated by the campus to the nonprofit organization may include:

- Surplus of food that may not be served.
- Food from the sharing table at each school.

The food that will be donated may include the following:

- Packaged or unpackaged unserved food;
- Packaged served food if the packaging is in good condition;
- Whole, uncut produce;
- Wrapped raw produce; and
- Unpeeled fruit that is required to be peeled before consumption.

The MOU will address procedures regarding notification to students about the program and distribution of food to students. The nonprofit will work with the campus principal to establish where food may be stored on the campus and the times and locations when food may be distributed on the campus.

The District will follow all applicable local, state, and federal food safety regulations for handling and storing donated food. Temporary storage of food in school nutrition program equipment or facilities will be in accordance with school nutrition program guidelines.

A campus employee may volunteer to assist the nonprofit organization in preparing and/or distributing the food. The employee must obtain permission from the employee's supervisor if these activities occur during the employee's regularly scheduled working hours.

The employee will be able to charge time to the school nutrition program when identifying and organizing food items to be donated. The employee may not charge time to the school nutrition program when performing operational tasks for the food donation program. In addition, the employee volunteer may not take food for personal use.

**Distribution of  
Funds Donated to  
Cover Student Meal  
Accounts in Arrears**

Donations to cover student meal accounts that are in arrears shall be accepted in accordance with CDC(LOCAL). Donations will be accepted to help bring a student's meal account current. A donation receipt will be offered to the individual providing funds for the student meal donation account.

When a donation is accepted, the money will be entered in a foodservice account and then distributed by level of priority, as long as funds are available.

Levels of priority have been arranged for proper transfer of funds during the school year. Priority will be followed when funds are in the account. Documentation must be kept for each transfer and must be approved by the director of the student nutrition department.

**First Priority Group**

The first priority group includes the McKinney-Vento accounts, foster students, and migrant student meal accounts. Donations will be transferred into student meal accounts as funds become available. Data is collected on members of the first priority group via the district student liaison and the ESC Region 11.

The district student liaison notifies the student nutrition department of new McKinney-Vento accounts and foster students throughout the school year. Once the student nutrition department has been notified of these new accounts, students are automatically eligible for free meals. If the student meal account has a negative balance prior to the change of eligibility, then the account qualifies for a donation fund transfer to bring the student meal account current.

Migrant student information is provided by Region 11. Once the proper documentation is available, migrant students will be automatically eligible for free meals.

**Second Priority  
Group**

The second priority group is the direct certification and free and reduced-price meal program student accounts with negative balances. Each school year a new free and reduced-price meal program application must be submitted for all students. An application status will roll over for the first 30 operating days of school to allow parents or guardians enough time to complete the renewal application. Letters and parent call outs are sent out to parents or guardi-

ans to advise them of the status change to “paid” after the 30 operating days. Negative balances of students eligible for free meal status are cleared with approval of the director of the student nutrition department. Documentation of approval is given after the nutrition administrative assistant or nutrition accounting assistant addresses the negative balance with the parent or guardian and the school principal or counselor.

**Third Priority Group** Third, and final, priority goes to students with a negative balance of \$30.00 or more. Students are selected on the 18th of the month (or the Friday before if the 18th lands on a weekend) for a random selection process to fund student meal accounts through the donation account. The first five students on the randomized list receive funds from the donation account. The amount of funding transferred covers 10 school meals (five breakfast and five lunch meals); funding is based on their eligibility status. Reduced status student meal accounts receive a smaller transfer, when compared to paid status student meal accounts. Donation transfer for 10 school meals requires the approval of the director of the student nutrition department. Documentation of approval is given after the nutrition administrative assistant or nutrition accounting assistant address the negative balance with the parent or guardian and the school principal or counselor.

The parent or guardian is responsible for paying the negative balance leftover in the student account after the donation. Applications will be sent home if no application is on file.

**Disclaimer** Funds will be provided if available. If funds are not available to cover the 10 school meals for the third priority group, the student nutrition department will not apply any donation funds to student accounts as meals regardless of the negative balance. Each month a new set of students will be selected for funding if funding is available.

Students with a high negative balance and paid status, due to denied free or reduced application, will be contacted by the nutrition department and school principals to collect the funds. If there are any changes in income that may affect the application status, then a new free and reduced-price school meals application must be submitted to reflect the change in income.

Donations received at the end of the school year will be directly applied to the student nutrition negative account balance.

**Free or Reduced-  
Price School Meals**

A parent or guardian may contact the child nutrition secretary and administrative assistant at 817-444-5115 to obtain information for applying for free or reduced-price school meals.

A student who qualifies for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if the student has a negative balance from other purchases, such as a la carte items.

**Insufficient Meal Account Balance**

Balances are to stay at zero dollars or above for student accounts. If the student account goes below zero dollars, parents or guardians will receive calls, emails, and letters from the District to collect payments.

Parents or guardians will be expected to submit payments to student accounts through the online payment system (School Café) or by bringing cash or check to the cafeteria. School administrators (counselor or principal) will be notified and will contact the parents or guardians to privately discuss a child's outstanding balance if the negative balance is not resolved. Parents or guardians are responsible for paying the debt of their student. The District accepts free and reduced-price school meal program applications year-round; and completion of the application annually is encouraged. Any changes in income may affect the current application status. Therefore, any change in income requires the completion of a new free and reduced-price school meal program application. Each school year a new application must be submitted for all students.

**Withdrawing Students**

Students that withdraw from the District are responsible for the negative balance in their student meal account. All schools will communicate with the parent or guardian about the student meal account debt as a step in the withdraw process. Debt can be paid through the online payment system (School Café) or by cash or check at the school cafeteria.

**Negative Balance Restrictions**

A student who uses a meal account to purchase his or her school meals, including reduced-price meals, will be allowed to receive a reimbursed meal regardless of the balance.

The student will not be allowed to charge a la carte items or extra items if there is a negative balance in the account.

A student who has a negative meal account balance will be allowed to purchase a meal if the student brings cash to purchase the meal.

Announcing or publicizing the names of students who have insufficient funds or unpaid meal charges is prohibited.

**Notification**

The District will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low and will communicate privately with families to resolve unpaid charges. Notification methods that overtly identify a student with unpaid meal charges, such as announcing or publicizing the names of students, are prohibited. A

student who has a low or negative account balance will not be notified in front of other students.

The parent or guardian will be notified in writing, over the phone through call outs, and through email by the Student Nutrition Department.

**Employee Meal Charges**

An employee may create an account for meals, a la carte and extra items. Balances are to stay at zero dollars or above. Employee accounts with negative balances will not be allowed to charge meals and extra items. Employees can deposit money through the online payment system (School Café) or by bringing cash or check to a cafeteria. Employees may contact the student nutrition department to obtain their account balance.

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<sup>1</sup> Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM):  
[http://www.squaremeals.org/Portals/8/files/ARM/ARM\\_CompleteARM\\_V101\\_170628.pdf](http://www.squaremeals.org/Portals/8/files/ARM/ARM_CompleteARM_V101_170628.pdf)