

HB 618 -- Student Meals

SPONSOR: Proudie

This bill requires schools to provide any student who requests a reimbursable meal which has been approved by the United States Department of Agriculture regardless of whether the student cannot pay for a meal or owes money for earlier meals, unless the student's parent or guardian has provided written permission to withhold a meal.

As specified in the bill, schools may not:

- (1) Require a student to throw a meal away because of inability to pay for the meal or because of a meal debt;
- (2) Publicly identify or stigmatize a student who cannot pay for a meal or owes a meal debt; or
- (3) Require a student who cannot pay for a meal or owes a meal debt to do chores or additional work not required of other students.

The bill specifies that if a student owes money for five or more meals, the school must determine if the student is eligible for free meals, attempt to have the student's parent or guardian fill out a meal application, and contact the student's parent or guardian to offer assistance with a meal application.

The bill also requires schools to direct communication about a student's meal debt to a parent or guardian, not the student. Schools may not require a parent or guardian to pay fees or costs from collection agencies hired to collect meal debts.

This bill is the same as HB 1939 (2018).