



State of Hawaii
Department of Education

Annual Report on School Meals

December 27, 2017

Act 194, SB423, 2017 prohibits a student to be denied a meal solely for failure to pay within the first 21 days of the first semester of a school year while the student's application for free or reduced lunch is being processed or within seven (7) days following a student's meal fund account reaching a zero or negative balance. It requires the Department of Education (Department) to submit a report to the legislature on the prevalence of students being denied a school meal solely for failure to pay and any actions taken by the Department or individual schools to address this issue.

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The School Food Services Branch conducted an online survey which consisted of six (6) questions that focused on students being denied meals based on the availability of funds in their account. The survey was sent to 293 schools with 87 schools responding resulting in a 29.31% response rate. Of those who responded, 76% stated that zero students were denied meals based on the availability of funds. The number of students that were denied meals were approximately 100 to 125 students due to negative balances. Most schools allow students to incur a negative balance; the school and community often work together to repay it.

All schools reported that households are notified of the student's low balances. Schools reported that negative meal account balances were due to the parent/guardian's failure to keep a positive meal account balance due to financial hardship, delay of payment due to other non-financial factors, and/or parents' inability to complete the free and reduced meal applications.



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