AN ACT

AMENDING TITLE 15, CHAPTER 1, ARTICLE 1, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, BY ADDING SECTION 15-118; RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)
Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

Section 1. Title 15, chapter 1, article 1, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended by adding section 15-118, to read:

15-118. School meals; unpaid fees; fund

A. A local education agency shall ensure that a pupil whose parent or guardian has not paid the pupil's school meal fees is not shamed, treated differently or served a meal that differs from what a pupil who does not have unpaid school meal fees would receive under that local education agency's policy. This subsection does not prohibit a school from serving an alternative meal to a pupil who may need a special meal for a dietary or religious reason.

B. School personnel and volunteers at a local education agency that serves meals that meet the nutrition standards prescribed in section 15-242 to pupils during the instructional day may not allow disciplinary action to be taken against a pupil that results in the denial or delay of a meal that meets the nutrition standards prescribed in section 15-242.

C. A school may not require a pupil who cannot pay for a meal or who owes unpaid meal fees to do chores or other work to pay for meals.

D. A local education agency shall notify a parent or guardian of the pupil's negative school meal account balance not later than ten days after the meal account reaches a negative balance. Before sending this notification to the parent or guardian, the local education agency shall exhaust all options and methods to directly certify the pupil for free or reduced-price meals. If the local education agency is not able to directly certify the pupil, the local education agency shall provide the parent or guardian with a paper copy of or an electronic link to an application with the notification and contact the parent or guardian to encourage application submission.

E. A local education agency may attempt to collect unpaid school meal fees from a parent or guardian but may not use a debt collector, as defined in the consumer credit protection act (P.L. 90-321; 82 Stat. 146; 15 United States Code section 1692a), for this purpose.

F. This section does not allow for the indefinite accrual of unpaid school meal fees.

G. A school district governing board or a charter school governing body may establish a meal fee debt fund consisting of donations or gifts to be used to pay pupils' outstanding unpaid meal fees.