SYNOPSIS
Requires certain school meal information be provided to public school students’ parents and requires school districts to request that families apply for school meals under certain circumstances.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As reported by the Senate Education Committee on January 12, 2023, with amendments.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

'1. a. At the beginning of each school year, and upon initial enrollment in the case of a student enrolling during the school year, a school district shall provide to the parent or guardian of each student:
   (1) a hardcopy of information on the National School Lunch Program and the federal School Breakfast Program; and
   (2) a hardcopy application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast programs and instructions for completing the application.
   The school district may also provide the information and application electronically, through the usual means by which the district communicates with parents electronically. The information and application shall be in a language that the parent or guardian understands.
   Information provided to the parent or guardian shall include a notice that an application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast programs may be submitted at any time during the school year and is required to be submitted annually.
   b. The school district shall require the parent or guardian to either submit an application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast programs or submit a signed card provided by the school district indicating that the parent or guardian has received the application and information and is not interested in participating in the school lunch and school breakfast programs. The card shall include a notice stating that a parent or guardian may submit an application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast programs at any time during the school year.
   If a school district does not receive an application or a signed card, the school district shall make at least one attempt to contact the student’s parent or guardian and request that the parent or guardian submit either an application or signed card.
   c. A school district shall provide assistance to a parent or guardian in filling out an application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast programs, upon the request of the parent or guardian.
   d. If a student owes money for the equivalent of five or more school meals, a school district shall make at least two attempts to contact the student’s parent or guardian and request that the parent

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.
Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
Senate SED committee amendments adopted January 12, 2023.
or guardian fill out an application for the school lunch and school
breakfast programs.

e. The provisions of this section shall not apply in the case of a
school which participates in the Community Eligibility Provision.11

11. Section 16 of P.L.2022, c.104 (C.18A:33-21b1) is amended
to read as follows:

16. a. At the beginning of each school year, or upon initial
enrollment, in the case of a student who enrolls during the school
year, a school district shall provide each student's parent or
guardian with:

(1) a hard copy of information on the National School Lunch
Program and the federal School Breakfast Program, including, but
not limited to, information on the availability of free or reduced
price meals for eligible students, information on the application and
determination processes that are used to certify eligible students for
subsidized school meals, and information on the rights that are
available to students and their families under this section and
section 1 of P.L.2015, c.15 (C.18A:33-21); and

(2) a hard copy of a school meals application form, as well as
instructions for completing the application, and, as necessary,
assistance in completing the application.

b. The school meals information and application provided to
parents and guardians, pursuant to subsection a. of this section,
shall:

(1) be communicated in a language that the parent or guardian
understands;

(2) specify the limited purposes for which collected personal data
may be used, as provided by subsection c. of this section; [and]

(3) be submitted to the parent or guardian either in writing or
electronically. In the latter case, the school district shall use the
usual means by which it communicates with parents and guardians
electronically] (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c. ) (pending
before the Legislature as this bill); and

(4) include a notice that an application to apply for the school
lunch and school breakfast programs may be submitted at any time
during the school year and is required to be submitted annually.

The school district may also provide the information and
application electronically, through the usual means by which the
district electronically communicates with parents.

c. A school meals application that is completed by a parent or
guardian shall be confidential, and shall not be used or shared by
the student's school or school district, except as may be necessary
to:

(1) determine whether a student identified in the application is
eligible for free or reduced price school meals;
(2) determine whether the school or school district is required, by section 2 of P.L.2018, c.25 (C.18A:33-11.3) or by section 1 of P.L.2018, c.28 (C.18A:33-24), to establish a breakfast after the bell program, or to participate as a sponsor or site in the federal Summer Meals Service Program;

(3) ensure that the school receives appropriate reimbursement, from the State and federal governments, for meals provided to eligible students, free of charge, through a school lunch program, a school breakfast program, a breakfast after the bell program, a summer meals program, or an emergency meals distribution program; and


d. The school district shall require the parent or guardian to either submit an application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast programs or submit a signed card provided by the school district indicating that the parent or guardian has received the application and information and is not interested in participating in the school lunch and school breakfast programs. The card shall include a notice stating that a parent or guardian may submit an application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast programs at any time during the school year.

If a school district does not receive an application or a signed card, the school district shall make at least one attempt to contact the student’s parent or guardian and request that the parent or guardian submit either an application or signed card.

e. The provisions of this section shall not apply in the case of a school which participates in the Community Eligibility Provision. (cf: P.L.2022, c.104, s.16)

2. This act shall take effect in the first full school year following the date of enactment.