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September 7, 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In keeping with Madison values, Dr. Ruberto made a recommendation to the Board of Education to forgive balances on Pay Schools Central accounts that were outstanding as of June 30, 2023. Dr. Ruberto made this recommendation because she wholeheartedly believes that the 2023-2024 school year will be a year of renewal and fresh beginnings. The Board of Education approved her recommendation. The debt from unpaid and uncollectible meals totalled over \$16,000.

Please note: \$16,000 that was budgeted towards students' education is now being diverted to covering parent debt. I call your attention to the legislation below regarding unpaid meals balances. This legislation was amended on June 12, 2023. It is not a Madison BOE policy. It is NJ State law.

Please take the time to review the following:

*Section 1 of P.L.2015, c.15 (C.18A:33-21) is amended to read as follows:*

*(1) In the event that a school district determines that a student's unsubsidized (ineligible for free or reduced meals) school lunch bill is in arrears, the district shall contact the student's parent or guardian to provide notice of the arrearage, and shall provide 10 days for the parent/guardian to pay the amount due. If the parent or guardian fails to make payment in full by the end of the designated 10-day period, then the district shall again contact the parent/guardian to provide notice of any action to be taken by the school district in response to the arrearage.*

*(2) If a student who is not receiving free or reduced lunch owes money for 5 days or more, a school district shall determine if the student is income eligible for free or reduced meals by conducting a review of all available records related to the student, and by making at least 2 attempts, not including the initial attempt made pursuant to section P.L.2022, c.104 (C.18A:33-21b1), to contact the student's parent or guardian to have the parent or guardian complete a subsidized school meals application; It further states that the district will require a principal, or a person designated by the principal, to contact the student's parent or guardian to offer assistance with respect to the completion of the*

*subsidized school meals application, determine if there are other issues in the household that have caused the student to have insufficient funds to purchase an unsubsidized lunch, and/or offer any other appropriate assistance. Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit a school district from sending a student home with a letter addressed to a parent or guardian.*

The entire Madison Board of Education kindly asks you to keep your students' Pay Schools Central account current. Together, as we support each child, we can support our educational community and the citizens of Madison.

Thank you for your cooperation. Wishing you a successful 2023-2024 school year.

Respectfully,

***Carrie Grapstein***

Carrie Grapstein  
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary  
Madison Board of Education.