

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
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H.B. 3562  
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Education  
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Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Interested parties note that some public school students in Texas are required to pay a portion of lunch costs if their parent's or guardian's income exceeds the income eligibility guidelines for a student's participation in a free or reduced price lunch program. In some districts, students who are required to pay for lunch have a lunch card or lunch account with funds provided by their parents to pay for their lunch. When the funds on the account are depleted, the students are no longer able to receive a hot lunch until the lunch card is reloaded with funds. H.B. 3562 seeks to address this issue by ensuring that all students can receive a hot lunch.

H.B. 3562 amends the Education Code to require a school district that allows students to use a prepaid meal card or account to purchase meals served at the school to adopt a grace period policy regarding the use of the cards or accounts. The bill requires the policy to allow a student whose meal card or account balance is exhausted or insufficient to continue, for a period determined by the district, to purchase meals by accumulating a negative balance on the student's card or account or otherwise receiving an extension of credit from the district. The bill requires the policy to require the district to notify the parent of or person standing in parental relation to the student that the student's meal card or account balance is exhausted and prohibits the policy from permitting the district to charge a fee or interest in connection with meals purchased after a meal card or account balance is exhausted or insufficient.

H.B. 3562 amends current law to require certain school districts to adopt a policy allowing a grace period after the exhaustion of the balance of a meal card or account used by students to purchase meals in public schools.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 33, Education Code, by adding Section 33.908, as follows:

Sec. 33.908. GRACE PERIOD POLICY FOR EXHAUSTED OR INSUFFICIENT MEAL CARD OR ACCOUNT BALANCE. Requires a school district that allows students to use a prepaid meal card or account to purchase meals served at the school to adopt a grace period policy regarding the use of the cards or accounts. Provides that the policy:

(1) must allow a student whose meal card or account balance is exhausted or insufficient to continue, for a period determined by the district, to purchase meals by:

- (A) accumulating a negative balance on the student's card or account; or
- (B) otherwise receiving an extension of credit from the district;

(2) must require the district to notify the parent of or person standing in parental relation to the student that the student's meal card or account balance is exhausted; and

(3) may not permit the district to charge a fee or interest in connection with meals purchased under Subdivision (1).

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2015-2016 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.