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COMMITTEE STATEMENT: **ASSEMBLY:** Yes

SENATE: No

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, *may possibly* be found at www.njleg.state.nj.us)

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT: No

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: No

VETO MESSAGE: No

GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING: Yes

LEGISLATOR STATEMENT: Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

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REPORTS: No

HEARINGS: Yes

Committee Meeting of Senate Education Committee "The Committee will meet to receive testimony from invited guests regarding chronic absenteeism in New Jersey Schools. The Committee will also accept written testimony from members of the Public" January 30, 2025 <https://hdl.handle.net/10929/146694>

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: No

CL/MMcB

P.L. 2025, CHAPTER 94, *approved July 8, 2025*
Senate, No. 3961 (*Second Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning the fees of payment processing platforms used
2 by ¹**["school districts"] schools**¹ and supplementing chapter 6 of
3 Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

- 7
8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:
9 a. School food authorities participating in the National School
10 Lunch Program administered by the United States Department of
11 Agriculture (USDA) are required to provide fee-free avenues to pay
12 for school lunch and inform families about all available payment
13 methods, including associated fees.
14 b. However, these fee-free options are not always well
15 advertised or accessible. Despite requirements from the USDA,
16 families may be paying more in fees than they would choose to if
17 they had access to comparably convenient payment options with
18 lower or no fees.
19 c. School districts are able to negotiate fees while contracting
20 with payment platforms.

21
22 2. As used in this act ¹**[""]** ¹;
23 ¹**["payment"] Payment**¹ processing platform” means a payment
24 system that enables parents or guardians of students to make
25 electronic payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or
26 other goods or services provided by or distributed through the
27 ¹public or nonpublic¹ school ¹**["district"]**¹, or any school, group, or
28 club thereof.

29 ¹“Public school” means a school located in New Jersey, under
30 collegiate grade, which is operated by a school district, a charter
31 school established pursuant to P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-1 et
32 seq.), or a renaissance school project established pursuant to
33 P.L.2011, c.176 (C.18A:36C-1 et seq.).¹

34
35 3. Any contract entered into on or after the effective date of this
36 act by a board of education ¹, a board of trustees, or the lead
37 administrator of a nonpublic school¹ with a third party vendor for

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:
¹Senate SED committee amendments adopted January 30, 2025.
²Assembly AED committee amendments adopted May 8, 2025.

1 the development or use of a payment processing platform shall
2 require the payment processing platform to provide users with clear
3 information on:

- 4 a. all fees charged for use of the platform;
5 b. the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and
6 c. the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct
7 payments through the board of education¹, board of trustees, or
8 nonpublic school¹.

9
10 4. a. A ¹~~board of education~~ public ²~~or nonpublic~~² school¹
11 shall offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making
12 direct payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other
13 goods or services provided by or distributed through the ¹~~school~~
14 ~~district~~ public ²~~or nonpublic~~² school¹, or any school, group, or club
15 thereof. The option shall be provided at a time and place that is
16 convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

17 b. Any communication from the board ¹~~of education~~ ²~~or~~²
18 ~~board of trustees,~~ ²~~or lead administrator of a nonpublic school~~¹,² or
19 any school, group, or club thereof, requesting payment for school
20 meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services shall include
21 information on:

22 (1) the direct payment option required pursuant to subsection a. of
23 this section; and

24 (2) the fees associated with use of any payment processing platform
25 that may be used to make the payment.

26
27 ¹~~5.~~ The provisions of this act shall apply to the board of
28 trustees of a charter school that is established pursuant to P.L.1995,
29 c.426 (C.18A:36A-1 et seq.).¹

30
31 ²~~5.~~ a. A nonpublic school participating in a federally assisted
32 meal program that provides low-cost or free meals to students shall
33 offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making
34 direct payments for school meals. The option shall be provided at a
35 time and place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian
36 use.

37 b. Any communication from the lead administrator of a
38 nonpublic school requesting payment for school meals shall include
39 information on:

40 (1) the direct payment option required pursuant to subsection a.
41 of this section; and

42 (2) the fees associated with use of any payment processing
43 platform that may be used to make the payment.²

44
45 ²~~6.~~ Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit the payment
46 of tuition and tuition-related fees to a nonpublic school.²

1 ¹~~6.~~²~~5.~~¹ 7.² This act shall take effect immediately ¹and shall
2 first apply to the first full school year following the date of
3 enactment¹.

4

5

6

7

8 Requires public and certain nonpublic schools to offer no-fee
9 option to parents for making school lunch and other payments;
10 requires payment processing platforms used by certain schools to
11 provide users with information on user fees.

CHAPTER 94

AN ACT concerning the fees of payment processing platforms used by schools and supplementing chapter 6 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

C.18A:6-110.2 Findings, declarations.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

a. School food authorities participating in the National School Lunch Program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are required to provide fee-free avenues to pay for school lunch and inform families about all available payment methods, including associated fees.

b. However, these fee-free options are not always well advertised or accessible. Despite requirements from the USDA, families may be paying more in fees than they would choose to if they had access to comparably convenient payment options with lower or no fees.

c. School districts are able to negotiate fees while contracting with payment platforms.

C.18A:6-110.3 Definitions.

2. As used in this act:

“Payment processing platform” means a payment system that enables parents or guardians of students to make electronic payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services provided by or distributed through the public or nonpublic school or any school, group, or club thereof.

“Public school” means a school located in New Jersey, under collegiate grade, which is operated by a school district, a charter school established pursuant to P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-1 et seq.), or a renaissance school project established pursuant to P.L.2011, c.176 (C.18A:36C-1 et seq.).

C.18A:6-110.4 Payment processing platforms, public schools, provide users information on fees, payments.

3. Any contract entered into on or after the effective date of this act by a board of education, a board of trustees, or the lead administrator of a nonpublic school with a third-party vendor for the development or use of a payment processing platform shall require the payment processing platform to provide users with clear information on:

- a. all fees charged for use of the platform;
- b. the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and
- c. the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct payments through the board of education, board of trustees, or nonpublic school.

C.18A:6-110.5 Public schools, no-fee option for making direct payments for services.

4. a. A public school shall offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services provided by or distributed through the public school, or any school, group, or club thereof. The option shall be provided at a time and place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

b. Any communication from the board of education or board of trustees, or any school, group, or club thereof, requesting payment for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services shall include information on:

- (1) the direct payment option required pursuant to subsection a. of this section; and
- (2) the fees associated with use of any payment processing platform that may be used to make the payment.

C.18A:6-110.6 Nonpublic schools participating in federally assisted meal programs, no-fee option for direct payments.

5. a. A nonpublic school participating in a federally assisted meal program that provides low-cost or free meals to students shall offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for school meals. The option shall be provided at a time and place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

b. Any communication from the lead administrator of a nonpublic school requesting payment for school meals shall include information on:

- (1) the direct payment option required pursuant to subsection a. of this section; and
- (2) the fees associated with use of any payment processing platform that may be used to make the payment.

C.18A:6-110.7 Construction of act.

6. Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit the payment of tuition and tuition-related fees to a nonpublic school.

7. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the first full school year following the date of enactment.

Approved July 8, 2025.

SENATE, No. 3961

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 12, 2024

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex and Hudson)

Senator NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI

District 22 (Somerset and Union)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator McKnight

SYNOPSIS

Requires boards of education to offer no-fee option to parents for making school lunch and other payments; requires payment processing platforms used by school districts to provide users with information on user fees.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/30/2025)

1 **AN ACT** concerning the fees of payment processing platforms used
2 by school districts and supplementing chapter 6 of Title 18A of
3 the New Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 a. School food authorities participating in the National School
10 Lunch Program administered by the United States Department of
11 Agriculture (USDA) are required to provide fee-free avenues to pay
12 for school lunch and inform families about all available payment
13 methods, including associated fees.

14 b. However, these fee-free options are not always well
15 advertised or accessible. Despite requirements from the USDA,
16 families may be paying more in fees than they would choose to if
17 they had access to comparably convenient payment options with
18 lower or no fees.

19 c. School districts are able to negotiate fees while contracting
20 with payment platforms.

21
22 2. As used in this act, “payment processing platform” means a
23 payment system that enables parents or guardians of students to
24 make electronic payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees,
25 or other goods or services provided by or distributed through the
26 school district, or any school, group, or club thereof.

27
28 3. Any contract entered into on or after the effective date of this
29 act by a board of education with a third party vendor for the
30 development or use of a payment processing platform shall require the
31 payment processing platform to provide users with clear information
32 on:

33 a. all fees charged for use of the platform;

34 b. the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and

35 c. the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct
36 payments through the board of education.

37
38 4. a. A board of education shall offer students, parents, and
39 guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for school
40 meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services provided
41 by or distributed through the school district, or any school, group,
42 or club thereof. The option shall be provided at a time and place
43 that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

44 b. Any communication from the board, or any school, group, or
45 club thereof, requesting payment for school meals, field trips,
46 activity fees, or other goods or services shall include information
47 on:

1 (1) the direct payment option required pursuant to subsection a.
2 of this section; and

3 (2) the fees associated with use of any payment processing
4 platform that may be used to make the payment.

5

6 5. The provisions of this act shall apply to the board of trustees
7 of a charter school that is established pursuant to P.L.1995, c.426
8 (C.18A:36A-1 et seq.).

9

10 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

11

12

13

STATEMENT

14

15 This bill requires boards of education to offer a no-fee option to
16 parents and guardians for making school lunch and other types of
17 payments. The bill also requires any payment processing platform
18 used by a school district to provide users with certain information
19 on user fees.

20 Under the bill, any contract entered into on or after the bill's
21 effective date by a board of education with a third party vendor for the
22 development or use of a payment processing platform is to require the
23 payment processing platform to provide users with clear information
24 on:

- 25 • all fees charged for use of the platform;
- 26 • the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and
- 27 • the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct
- 28 payments through the board of education.

29 The bill requires a board of education to offer students, parents,
30 and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for
31 school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services
32 provided by or distributed through the school district, or any school,
33 group, or club thereof. The option is to be provided at a time and
34 place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

35 Finally, the bill requires that any communication from the board,
36 or any school, group, or club thereof, requesting payment for school
37 meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services is to
38 include information on:

- 39 • the direct payment option required pursuant to the bill's
- 40 provisions; and
- 41 • the fees associated with use of any payment processing
- 42 platform that may be used to make the payment.

43 The bill clarifies that its provisions apply to the boards of
44 trustees of charter schools.

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3961

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 12, 2024

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex and Hudson)

Senator NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI

District 22 (Somerset and Union)

Assemblywoman SHAMA A. HAIDER

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblywoman CARMEN THERESA MORALES

District 34 (Essex)

Assemblyman ROBERT J. KARABINCHAK

District 18 (Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators McKnight, Wimberly, Burgess and Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson

SYNOPSIS

Requires public and nonpublic schools to offer no-fee option to parents for making school lunch and other payments; requires payment processing platforms used by these schools to provide users with information on user fees.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Education Committee on January 30, 2025, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/22/2025)

1 AN ACT concerning the fees of payment processing platforms used
2 by ¹**["school districts"] schools**¹ and supplementing chapter 6 of
3 Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 a. School food authorities participating in the National School
10 Lunch Program administered by the United States Department of
11 Agriculture (USDA) are required to provide fee-free avenues to pay
12 for school lunch and inform families about all available payment
13 methods, including associated fees.

14 b. However, these fee-free options are not always well
15 advertised or accessible. Despite requirements from the USDA,
16 families may be paying more in fees than they would choose to if
17 they had access to comparably convenient payment options with
18 lower or no fees.

19 c. School districts are able to negotiate fees while contracting
20 with payment platforms.

21
22 2. As used in this act ¹**[""]** ¹:

23 ¹**["payment"] Payment**¹ processing platform” means a payment
24 system that enables parents or guardians of students to make
25 electronic payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or
26 other goods or services provided by or distributed through the
27 ¹**["public or nonpublic"]** school ¹**["district"]**¹, or any school, group, or
28 club thereof.

29 ¹**["Public school"]** means a school located in New Jersey, under
30 collegiate grade, which is operated by a school district, a charter
31 school established pursuant to P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-1 et
32 seq.), or a renaissance school project established pursuant to
33 P.L.2011, c.176 (C.18A:36C-1 et seq.).¹

34
35 3. Any contract entered into on or after the effective date of this
36 act by a board of education ¹, a board of trustees, or the lead
37 administrator of a nonpublic school¹ with a third party vendor for
38 the development or use of a payment processing platform shall
39 require the payment processing platform to provide users with clear
40 information on:

41 a. all fees charged for use of the platform;

42 b. the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and

43 c. the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct
44 payments through the board of education¹, board of trustees, or
45 nonpublic school¹.

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:

¹Senate SED committee amendments adopted January 30, 2025.

1 4. a. A ¹~~board of education~~ public or nonpublic school¹ shall
2 offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making
3 direct payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other
4 goods or services provided by or distributed through the ¹~~school~~
5 ~~district~~ public or nonpublic school¹, or any school, group, or club
6 thereof. The option shall be provided at a time and place that is
7 convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

8 b. Any communication from the board ¹~~of education, board of~~
9 ~~trustees, or lead administrator of a nonpublic school~~¹, or any school,
10 group, or club thereof, requesting payment for school meals, field
11 trips, activity fees, or other goods or services shall include
12 information on:

13 (1) the direct payment option required pursuant to subsection a.
14 of this section; and

15 (2) the fees associated with use of any payment processing
16 platform that may be used to make the payment.

17

18 ¹~~5.~~ The provisions of this act shall apply to the board of
19 trustees of a charter school that is established pursuant to P.L.1995,
20 c.426 (C.18A:36A-1 et seq.).¹

21

22 ¹~~6.~~ 5.¹ This act shall take effect immediately ¹~~and shall first~~
23 apply to the first full school year following the date of enactment¹.

[Second Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3961

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 12, 2024

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex and Hudson)

Senator NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI

District 22 (Somerset and Union)

Assemblywoman SHAMA A. HAIDER

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblywoman CARMEN THERESA MORALES

District 34 (Essex)

Assemblyman ROBERT J. KARABINCHAK

District 18 (Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators McKnight, Wimberly, Burgess and Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson

SYNOPSIS

Requires public and certain nonpublic schools to offer no-fee option to parents for making school lunch and other payments; requires payment processing platforms used by certain schools to provide users with information on user fees.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Education Committee on May 8, 2025, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/22/2025)

1 AN ACT concerning the fees of payment processing platforms used
 2 by ¹**["school districts"] schools**¹ and supplementing chapter 6 of
 3 Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

4
 5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
 6 of New Jersey:

7
 8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 a. School food authorities participating in the National School
 10 Lunch Program administered by the United States Department of
 11 Agriculture (USDA) are required to provide fee-free avenues to pay
 12 for school lunch and inform families about all available payment
 13 methods, including associated fees.

14 b. However, these fee-free options are not always well
 15 advertised or accessible. Despite requirements from the USDA,
 16 families may be paying more in fees than they would choose to if
 17 they had access to comparably convenient payment options with
 18 lower or no fees.

19 c. School districts are able to negotiate fees while contracting
 20 with payment platforms.

21
 22 2. As used in this act ¹**[""]** ¹:

23 ¹**["payment"] Payment**¹ processing platform” means a payment
 24 system that enables parents or guardians of students to make
 25 electronic payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or
 26 other goods or services provided by or distributed through the
 27 ¹**public or nonpublic**¹ school ¹**["district"]**¹, or any school, group, or
 28 club thereof.

29 ¹**“Public school”** means a school located in New Jersey, under
 30 collegiate grade, which is operated by a school district, a charter
 31 school established pursuant to P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-1 et
 32 seq.), or a renaissance school project established pursuant to
 33 P.L.2011, c.176 (C.18A:36C-1 et seq.).¹

34
 35 3. Any contract entered into on or after the effective date of this
 36 act by a board of education ¹, a board of trustees, or the lead
 37 administrator of a nonpublic school¹ with a third party vendor for
 38 the development or use of a payment processing platform shall
 39 require the payment processing platform to provide users with clear
 40 information on:

41 a. all fees charged for use of the platform;

42 b. the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and

43 c. the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct
 44 payments through the board of education¹, board of trustees, or
 45 nonpublic school¹.

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:

¹Senate SED committee amendments adopted January 30, 2025.

²Assembly AED committee amendments adopted May 8, 2025.

1 4. a. A ¹~~board of education~~ public ²~~or nonpublic~~² school¹
2 shall offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making
3 direct payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other
4 goods or services provided by or distributed through the ¹~~school~~
5 ~~district~~ public ²~~or nonpublic~~² school¹, or any school, group, or club
6 thereof. The option shall be provided at a time and place that is
7 convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

8 b. Any communication from the board ¹~~of education~~ ²~~or~~²
9 ~~board of trustees,~~ ²~~or lead administrator of a nonpublic school~~¹,² or
10 any school, group, or club thereof, requesting payment for school
11 meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services shall include
12 information on:

13 (1) the direct payment option required pursuant to subsection a. of
14 this section; and

15 (2) the fees associated with use of any payment processing platform
16 that may be used to make the payment.

17
18 ¹~~5.~~ The provisions of this act shall apply to the board of
19 trustees of a charter school that is established pursuant to P.L.1995,
20 c.426 (C.18A:36A-1 et seq.).¹

21
22 ²~~5. a. A nonpublic school participating in a federally assisted~~
23 ~~meal program that provides low-cost or free meals to students shall~~
24 ~~offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making~~
25 ~~direct payments for school meals. The option shall be provided at a~~
26 ~~time and place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian~~
27 ~~use.~~

28 b. Any communication from the lead administrator of a
29 nonpublic school requesting payment for school meals shall include
30 information on:

31 (1) the direct payment option required pursuant to subsection a.
32 of this section; and

33 (2) the fees associated with use of any payment processing
34 platform that may be used to make the payment.²

35
36 ²~~6.~~ Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit the payment
37 of tuition and tuition-related fees to a nonpublic school.²

38
39 ¹~~6.~~ ²~~5.~~¹ ~~7.~~² This act shall take effect immediately ¹~~and shall~~
40 first apply to the first full school year following the date of
41 enactment¹.

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3961

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 8, 2025

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 3961 (1R).

As amended, this bill requires public and certain nonpublic schools to offer a no-fee option to parents for making school lunch payments and requires payment processing platforms used by certain schools to provide users with information on user fees.

Under the amended bill, any contract entered into on or after the bill's effective date by a board of education, board of trustees, or a nonpublic school with a third party vendor for the development or use of a payment processing platform is to require the payment processing platform to provide users with clear information on:

- all fees charged for use of the platform;
- the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and
- the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct payments through the board of education, board of trustees, or the nonpublic school.

The amended bill requires a public school to offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services provided by or distributed through the public school, or any school, group, or club thereof. The option is to be provided at a time and place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

Under the amended bill, a nonpublic school participating in a federally assisted meal program that provides low-cost or free meals to students is required to offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for school meals. The option is to be provided at a time and place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

Under the amended bill, any communication from the lead administrator of a nonpublic school requesting payment for school meals is to include information on:

- the direct payment option required under the bill; and
- the fees associated with use of any payment processing platform that may be used to make the payment.

Finally, the amended bill provides that nothing in the bill is to be construed to prohibit the payment of tuition and tuition-related fees to a nonpublic school.

As amended and reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 3961 (1R) is identical to Assembly Bill No. 5263, which also was amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- modify when a nonpublic school is required to offer a no-fee option for making direct payments under the provisions of the bill to require that nonpublic schools participating in a federally assisted meal program that provides low-cost or free meals to students are to offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for the school meals;
- require that this option be provided at a time and place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use;
- require any communication from the lead administrator of a public school requesting payment for school meals to include certain information; and
- provide that nothing in the bill is to be construed to prohibit the payment of tuition and tuition-related fees to nonpublic schools.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3961

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 30, 2025

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 3961 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill requires public and nonpublic schools to offer a no-fee option to parents and guardians for making school lunch and other types of payments. The amended bill also requires any payment processing platform used by a school to provide users with certain information on user fees.

Under the bill, any contract entered into on or after the bill's effective date by a board of education, board of trustees, or a nonpublic school with a third party vendor for the development or use of a payment processing platform is to require the payment processing platform to provide users with clear information on:

- all fees charged for use of the platform;
- the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and
- the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct payments through the board of education, board of trustees, or the nonpublic school.

The bill requires a public or nonpublic school to offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services provided by or distributed through the public or nonpublic school, or any school, group, or club thereof. The option is to be provided at a time and place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

Finally, the bill requires that any communication from the board of education, board of trustees, or the nonpublic school, or any school, group, or club thereof, requesting payment for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services is to include information on:

- the direct payment option required pursuant to the bill's provisions; and
- the fees associated with use of any payment processing platform that may be used to make the payment.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to stipulate that the provisions of the bill:

- apply to renaissance school projects and nonpublic schools in addition to school districts and charter schools; and
- are to take effect in the first full school year following the date of enactment.

ASSEMBLY, No. 5263

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 10, 2025

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman SHAMA A. HAIDER

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblywoman CARMEN THERESA MORALES

District 34 (Essex)

Assemblyman ROBERT J. KARABINCHAK

District 18 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires boards of education to offer no-fee option to parents for making school lunch and other payments; requires payment processing platforms used by school districts to provide users with information on user fees.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/10/2025)

1 **AN ACT** concerning the fees of payment processing platforms used
2 by school districts and supplementing chapter 6 of Title 18A of
3 the New Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 a. School food authorities participating in the National School
10 Lunch Program administered by the United States Department of
11 Agriculture (USDA) are required to provide fee-free avenues to pay
12 for school lunch and inform families about all available payment
13 methods, including associated fees.

14 b. However, these fee-free options are not always well
15 advertised or accessible. Despite requirements from the USDA,
16 families may be paying more in fees than they would choose to if
17 they had access to comparably convenient payment options with
18 lower or no fees.

19 c. School districts are able to negotiate fees while contracting
20 with payment platforms.

21
22 2. As used in this act, “payment processing platform” means a
23 payment system that enables parents or guardians of students to
24 make electronic payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees,
25 or other goods or services provided by or distributed through the
26 school district, or any school, group, or club thereof.

27
28 3. Any contract entered into on or after the effective date of this
29 act by a board of education with a third party vendor for the
30 development or use of a payment processing platform shall require the
31 payment processing platform to provide users with clear information
32 on:

- 33 a. all fees charged for use of the platform;
34 b. the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and
35 c. the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct
36 payments through the board of education.

37
38 4. a. A board of education shall offer students, parents, and
39 guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for school
40 meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services provided
41 by or distributed through the school district, or any school, group,
42 or club thereof. The option shall be provided at a time and place
43 that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

44 b. Any communication from the board, or any school, group, or
45 club thereof, requesting payment for school meals, field trips,
46 activity fees, or other goods or services shall include information
47 on:

1 (1) the direct payment option required pursuant to subsection a.
2 of this section; and

3 (2) the fees associated with use of any payment processing
4 platform that may be used to make the payment.

5

6 5. The provisions of this act shall apply to the board of trustees
7 of a charter school that is established pursuant to P.L.1995, c.426
8 (C.18A:36A-1 et seq.).

9

10 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

11

12

13

STATEMENT

14

15 This bill requires boards of education to offer a no-fee option to
16 parents and guardians for making school lunch and other types of
17 payments. The bill also requires any payment processing platform
18 used by a school district to provide users with certain information
19 on user fees.

20 Under the bill, any contract entered into on or after the bill's
21 effective date by a board of education with a third party vendor for the
22 development or use of a payment processing platform is to require the
23 payment processing platform to provide users with clear information
24 on:

- 25 • all fees charged for use of the platform;
- 26 • the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and
- 27 • the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct
28 payments through the board of education.

29 The bill requires a board of education to offer students, parents,
30 and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for
31 school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services
32 provided by or distributed through the school district, or any school,
33 group, or club thereof. The option is to be provided at a time and
34 place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

35 Finally, the bill requires that any communication from the board,
36 or any school, group, or club thereof, requesting payment for school
37 meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services is to
38 include information on:

- 39 • the direct payment option required pursuant to the bill's
40 provisions; and
- 41 • the fees associated with use of any payment processing
42 platform that may be used to make the payment.

43 The bill clarifies that its provisions apply to the boards of
44 trustees of charter schools.

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5263

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 10, 2025

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman SHAMA A. HAIDER

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblywoman CARMEN THERESA MORALES

District 34 (Essex)

Assemblyman ROBERT J. KARABINCHAK

District 18 (Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

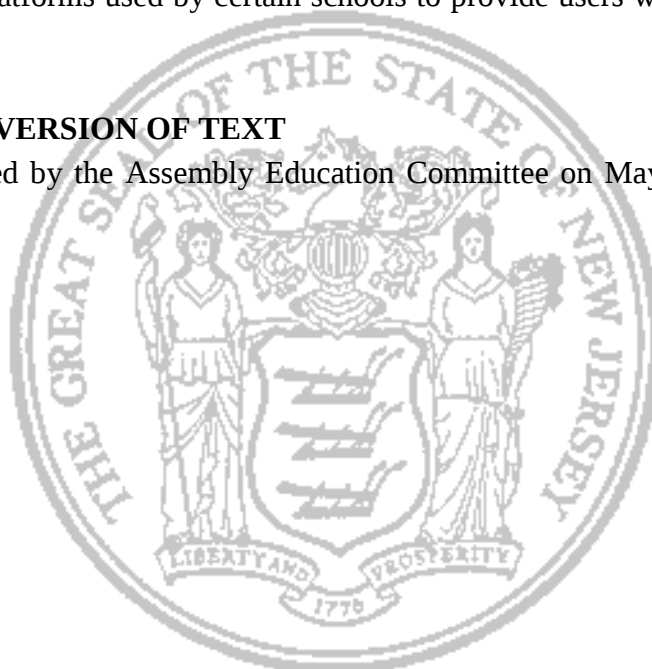
Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson

SYNOPSIS

Requires public and certain nonpublic schools to offer no-fee option to parents for making school lunch and other payments; requires payment processing platforms used by certain schools to provide users with information on user fees.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Education Committee on May 8, 2025, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/22/2025)

1 AN ACT concerning the fees of payment processing platforms used
 2 by ¹**school districts** schools¹ and supplementing chapter 6 of
 3 Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

4
 5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
 6 of New Jersey:

7
 8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 a. School food authorities participating in the National School
 10 Lunch Program administered by the United States Department of
 11 Agriculture (USDA) are required to provide fee-free avenues to pay
 12 for school lunch and inform families about all available payment
 13 methods, including associated fees.

14 b. However, these fee-free options are not always well
 15 advertised or accessible. Despite requirements from the USDA,
 16 families may be paying more in fees than they would choose to if
 17 they had access to comparably convenient payment options with
 18 lower or no fees.

19 c. School districts are able to negotiate fees while contracting
 20 with payment platforms.

21
 22 2. As used in this act ¹**[,]** ¹:

23 “¹**[payment]** Payment¹ processing platform” means a payment
 24 system that enables parents or guardians of students to make electronic
 25 payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or
 26 services provided by or distributed through the ¹public or nonpublic¹
 27 school ¹**district**¹, or any school, group, or club thereof.

28 ¹“Public school” means a school located in New Jersey, under
 29 collegiate grade, which is operated by a school district, a charter
 30 school established pursuant to P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-1 et seq.),
 31 or a renaissance school project established pursuant to P.L.2011, c.176
 32 (C.18A:36C-1 et seq.).¹

33
 34 3. Any contract entered into on or after the effective date of this
 35 act by a board of education¹, a board of trustees, or the lead
 36 administrator of a nonpublic school¹ with a third party vendor for the
 37 development or use of a payment processing platform shall require the
 38 payment processing platform to provide users with clear information
 39 on:

40 a. all fees charged for use of the platform;
 41 b. the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and
 42 c. the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct
 43 payments through the board of education¹, board of trustees, or
 44 nonpublic school¹.

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:

¹Assembly AED committee amendments adopted May 8, 2025.

1 4. a. A ¹board of education public school¹ shall offer students,
2 parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for
3 school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services
4 provided by or distributed through the ¹school district public
5 school¹, or any school, group, or club thereof. The option shall be
6 provided at a time and place that is convenient for student, parent, and
7 guardian use.

8 b. Any communication from the board ¹of education or board of
9 trustees¹, or any school, group, or club thereof, requesting payment for
10 school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services shall
11 include information on:

12 (1) the direct payment option required pursuant to subsection a. of
13 this section; and

14 (2) the fees associated with use of any payment processing
15 platform that may be used to make the payment.

16

17 ¹5. The provisions of this act shall apply to the board of
18 trustees of a charter school that is established pursuant to P.L.1995,
19 c.426 (C.18A:36A-1 et seq.).¹

20

21 ¹5. a. A nonpublic school participating in a federally assisted meal
22 program that provides low-cost or free meals to students shall offer
23 students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making direct
24 payments for school meals. The option shall be provided at a time and
25 place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

26 b. Any communication from the lead administrator of a nonpublic
27 school requesting payment for school meals shall include information
28 on:

29 (1) the direct payment option required pursuant to subsection a. of
30 this section; and

31 (2) the fees associated with use of any payment processing
32 platform that may be used to make the payment.¹

33

34 ¹6. Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit the payment of
35 tuition and tuition-related fees to a nonpublic school.¹

36

37 ¹6.] 7.¹ This act shall take effect immediately ¹and shall first
38 apply to the first full school year following the date of enactment¹.

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5263

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 8, 2025

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 5263.

As amended, this bill requires public and certain nonpublic schools to offer a no-fee option to parents for making school lunch payments and requires payment processing platforms used by certain schools to provide users with information on user fees.

Under the amended bill, any contract entered into on or after the bill's effective date by a board of education, board of trustees, or a nonpublic school with a third party vendor for the development or use of a payment processing platform is to require the payment processing platform to provide users with clear information on:

- all fees charged for use of the platform;
- the average annual fees incurred by a user of the platform; and
- the availability of an alternative no-fee means to make direct payments through the board of education, board of trustees, or the nonpublic school.

The amended bill requires a public school to offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for school meals, field trips, activity fees, or other goods or services provided by or distributed through the public school, or any school, group, or club thereof. The option is to be provided at a time and place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

Under the amended bill, a nonpublic school participating in a federally assisted meal program that provides low-cost or free meals to students is required to offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for school meals. The option is to be provided at a time and place that is convenient for student, parent, and guardian use.

Under the amended bill, any communication from the lead administrator of a nonpublic school requesting payment for school meals is to include information on:

- the direct payment option required under the amended bill; and
- the fees associated with use of any payment processing platform that may be used to make the payment.

Finally, the amended bill provides that nothing in the bill is to be construed to prohibit the payment of tuition and tuition-related fees to a nonpublic school.

As amended and reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 5263 is identical to Senate Bill No. 3961 (1R), which also was amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- clarify that the provisions of the bill concerning public schools apply to renaissance school projects as well as charter schools and school districts;
- clarify that the provisions of the bill requiring a contract with a third party vendor for the development or use of a payment processing platform to provide users with certain information applies to public and nonpublic schools;
- require that nonpublic schools participating in a federally assisted meal program that provides low-cost or free meals to students are to offer students, parents, and guardians a no-fee option for making direct payments for the school meals;
- require that this option be provided at a time and place that is convenient for student, parent and guardian use;
- require any communication from the lead administrator of a nonpublic school requesting payment for school meals to include certain information;
- provide that nothing in the bill is to be construed to prohibit the payment of tuition and tuition-related fees to nonpublic schools; and
- provide that the provisions of the bill are to take effect in the first full school year following the date of enactment.

Governor Murphy Takes Action on Legislation

Posted on - 07/8/2025

TRENTON – Today, Governor Murphy signed the following bills into law:

S-1400/A-5448 (Singleton, Zwicker/Park, Freiman) - “Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act”; provides alternative process for handling partition actions filed in court concerning real property with multiple owners, at least one of whom had acquired title from relative

S-1439/A-3856 (Singleton, A.M. Bucco/Sampson, McClellan, Miller) - Requires health benefits coverage for additional orthotic and prosthetic appliances under certain circumstances; requires coverage for orthotic and prosthetic appliances obtained through podiatrists

S-2886/A-4015 (Greenstein, Turner/McCoy) - Requires pharmacies to provide certain information regarding insulin manufacturer assistance programs

S-3787/A-5613 (Scutari, Ruiz/Pintor Marin, Morales) - Requires municipal tax collectors who obtain payments in lieu of taxes under “Long Term Tax Exemption Law” to transmit county portion directly to county

S-3850/A-5356 (Smith, Scutari/Karabinchak, Reynolds-Jackson) - Permits county boards of elections to extend distance within which electioneering is prohibited

S-3928/A-5322 (Ruiz, Scutari/Greenwald, Sampson) - Limits general application of certain consumer contracts

S-3961/A-5263 (Ruiz, Scutari/Haider, Morales, Karabinchak) - Requires public and certain nonpublic schools to offer no-fee option to parents for making school lunch and other payments; requires payment processing platforms used by certain schools to provide users with information on user fees

S-4162/A-5469 (Turner, Ruiz/Reynolds-Jackson, Carter, Morales) - Limits use or disclosure of certain education records

A-4113/S-2155 (Carter, Atkins/Cryan, McKeon) - Prohibits sports wagering partnerships at public institutions of higher education

A-5141/S-3813 (Peterpaul, Calabrese, Donlon/Gopal, O’Scanlon) - Establishes historic distillery license; allows consumption of licensee’s products on and off licensed premises under certain circumstances

A-5466/S-4318 (Bailey, Freiman, Reynolds-Jackson/Burzichelli, Greenstein) - Requires BPU to study effects of data centers on electricity costs

A-5736/S-4532 (Bailey, Simmons, Miller/Burzichelli, McKnight) - Updates certain notification requirements in "Energy Bill Watch" program

Posted on: July 10, 2025

Bill to Offer No-Fee Option for School-Related Payments Signed into Law

Haider, Morales, Karabinchak legislation will ensure that parents have a free, transparent option for paying school-related fees

(TRENTON) – Legislation introduced and sponsored by Assemblywoman **Shama Haider** to require a no-fee option for school-related payments was signed into law this week. Bill **A5263**, also sponsored by Assemblywoman **Carmen Morales** and Assemblyman **Robert Karabinchak**, marks a significant step towards easing financial burdens on New Jersey families.



Bill A5263 will require public schools and certain nonpublic schools to offer a no-fee option to parents making payments for meals, field trips, activity fees, and other school services. It will also require that any third-party platform used to collect payments disclose all fees up front and clearly notify families of no-fee options.

“No family should have to pay extra just to feed their child or participate in school activities,” **said Assemblywoman Haider (D-Bergen)**. “This bill will ensure that transparency and fairness are built into how schools handle payments, so parents aren’t caught off guard by hidden fees.”

Under A5263, any new contracts between schools and payment vendors must clearly list all user fees, disclose the average annual fees incurred, and include information about the no-fee payment option. All future payment requests from schools must also include a clear explanation of any changes and the no-cost alternative.

“Over my many years of experience in education, I’ve seen how education costs can quickly add up and create unnecessary stress for families,” **said Assemblywoman Morales (D-Essex)**. “We’re proud to help ease that burden with legislation that brings clarity and removes barriers.”

“Our goal is simple: give parents clear, affordable options to support their kids in school without added financial strain,” **said Assemblyman Karabinchak (D-Middlesex)**. “By requiring a free payment option, we’re helping families focus on what really matters, their child’s education.”