



## **School Meal Debt: Collaborating for Better Outcomes for Schools & Students**

**Presentation Description:** *The return to requiring Free/Reduced Price meal applications forced many school nutrition programs back to managing student meal charge debt so as not to damage the bottom line of the district budget. Learn best practices for developing, implementing and communicating effective meal charge policies, including collaborative efforts on policy enforcement and debt collection processes. School boards and school nutrition programs can work together to effectively assess and implement collections procedures and present a united front in the community. Participants will also gain an understanding of related Minnesota legislation and USDA regulations.*

Presenters:

**Foley Public Schools** Superintendent Paul Neubauer

**Foley Public Schools** Director of Child Nutrition Services Cheryl Pick, President, MSNA

**Tracy Public Schools** Food Service Director Michele Hawkinson, President-elect, MSNA

**School nutrition programs across the state are again managing meal debt since the end of federal universal meals for all students in the fall. This session will share examples from districts with varying profiles of overcoming challenges, successful collaborations and effective communications:**

- 1. Learn best practices for developing, implementing and communicating effective meal charge policies, including collaborative efforts on policy enforcement and debt collection processes to address:**
  - Minimizing school meal charges
  - Current meal balance procedures
  - Collaborative approaches to communication across the school community
    - i. School nutrition programs, district administration, school staff and families
- 2. Avoiding negative headlines**
  - MN rules and regulations to deter "lunch shaming" practices
  - Compassionate communication with students and families
- 4. MSNA's efforts to address school lunch debt**
  - Legislative priorities
  - Meeting with MN legislators - February 21, 2023
  - Testifying needs at Capitol
  - USDA Regulations