

Fee Schedule

Guidance Document on School Fees

Overview:

Any amount requested of a student is considered a fee unless specifically addressed in Utah Code or Board Rule. All fees charged by a Local Education Agency (LEA) must be on an LEA's approved fee schedule. The fee schedule must include specific components and go through a process of notice, public input, and local board approval. After it has been approved, a copy of the fee schedule must be provided to LEA parents.

This method allows a student or the student's parents to be involved in the process and influence what fees will be charged. It also helps them know in advance the fees they can expect to pay during the school year and plan accordingly. The process should also improve accountability for LEAs, by enhancing transparency about how fees are used.

An LEA may set fee schedules at the school or LEA level. Regardless of which method is chosen, all fees at all schools must be included in the fee schedule presented to the LEA's governing board for approval. This requirement does not prohibit a school from charging less than what is on the LEA approved fee schedule, but they cannot charge a fee if it is not listed on the approved fee schedule. (*UCA 53G-7-505, R277-407-6*)

When establishing a fee schedule, an LEA may review and consider the following:

1. The school's cost to provide the activity, class, or program;
2. The school's student enrollment;
3. The median income of families either within the school's boundaries or enrolled in the school;
4. The number and monetary amount of fee waivers, designated by individual fee, annually granted within the prior three years;
5. The historical participation and school interest in certain activities;
6. The prior year fee schedule;
7. The amount of revenue collected from each fee in the prior year;
8. The school's fundraising capacities;
9. Prior year community donors; and
10. Any other resources available, including through donations and fundraising.

Components:

LEA fee schedules must include the following components: (*53G-7-505(3), R277-407-6*)

1. Every fee the LEA or school will charge during the year.
2. A specific dollar amount for each fee and the accompanying spend plan that lists the anticipated types of expenditures. A spend plan provides students, parents, and employees transparency by identifying a fee's funding uses. An LEA or school's spend plan shall identify the needs justifying the fee being charged. These expenditures can be for the current fiscal year or be carryover for use in a future fiscal year.

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Example: Football helmets may only be purchased once every three years, but the fees are collected from students each year. The amount and process need to be listed and explained in the spend plan.

3. For any activity or class with multiple fees, a clear and easy to understand delineation of each fee and the fee total. An example is provided in the Spend Pland Guidance Document for further details.
4. A maximum fee amount per student for each activity.
Example: The LEA sets the volleyball maximum at \$300. This means, even with optional fees and trips, no student in the LEA may be asked to pay and fundraise more than \$300 for volleyball participation.
5. A maximum total fee amount per student per school year. LEAs may establish a reasonable number of activities, courses, or programs that will be covered by the annual maximum fee amount.
Example: The LEA student maximum is \$1500 and has been set to cover 4 extracurricular activities in addition to any class or program costs. This means that for any four extracurricular activities, combined with the costs of any classroom or other program fees, no student can be required to pay more than \$1500.
6. A fee shall be equal to or less than the expense incurred by the LEA or school to provide an activity, course, or program for a student.
 - a. An additional fee may not be charged, or a particular fee may not be increased to supplant or subsidize another fee.
 - b. Students and parents who do not qualify for fee waivers may not be required to pay an increased fee amount to make-up for or cover the costs of students and families who qualify for fee waivers.
 - c. Schools may notify students and families that they may voluntarily pay an increased fee amount or provide a donation to assist in covering the costs of other students and families.
7. Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, an LEA may not charge a fee for a textbook as provided in UCA 53G-7-501, except for a textbook used for a concurrent enrollment, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate course as provided in R277-407-12.

While LEAs are given wide latitude in setting fee maximums, these maximums should be set to **protect students and families from unreasonable expenditures** in order to participate in classes, activities, or programs. Fee waivers cannot be funded by school fees. Waivers must be funded through unrestricted State revenues or other unrestricted local revenues.

Required Notice & Approval:

In order to charge fees, an LEA's governing board must adopt a fee schedule every year and encourage public participation in the development of the fee schedule. (53G-7-505(2), R277-407-6)

The required steps in this process include:

1. The LEA must provide a minimum of two opportunities for the public to provide input at public LEA governing board meetings before the fee schedule is adopted.

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2. The fee schedule must be adopted in a regularly scheduled public meeting.
3. LEAs must inform students and parents about the meetings using whatever method they typically use to communicate with parents and in accordance with the Utah Open and Public Meetings Act.
4. The fee schedule must be approved on or before the April 1st before the school year to which the fee schedule applies.
5. An LEA may amend the LEA's fee schedule after it is adopted if the LEA follows the process described in items 1 through 3 above, before approving the amended fee schedule.
6. Minutes of the Board meeting during which the fee and fee policies are adopted together with copies of the approved fee policies and fee schedule shall be kept on file and made available upon request as required by UCA 52-4-203.

Publishing the Fee Schedule:

LEAs must annually provide written notice to the parents or guardians of each student attending their schools, informing them about the current fee schedule and fee waiver policies. The fee schedule must be published on each of the LEA's school's websites after being approved by the local board. Additionally, the LEA is required to include a copy of the fee schedule with student registration materials. This means there should be two instances of the LEA providing the actual fee schedule and fee policies to a student and parents, in addition to a ready source for them to go and find it online when needed. (*UCA 53G-7-505, R277-407-6*)

When an LEA's student or parent population in a single language other than English exceeds 20%, the LEA shall also publish the fee schedule and fee waiver policies in the language of those families. An LEA representative shall meet personally with each student's parent or family and make available an interpreter for the parent to understand the LEA's fee waiver schedules and policies if:

1. the student or parent's first language is a language other than English; and
2. the LEA hasn't published the LEA's fee schedule and fee waiver policies in the parent's first language.

LEAs may choose to have the materials provided in other languages even if those languages do not pass the 20% threshold in order to better assist families within their LEA.

Questions, Comments, or Concerns? Contact the state School Fees team at schoolfees@schools.utah.gov.