

WASATCH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Statement of ...

Policy and Responsibility

Policy Orig. Date: 08/1983

Effective Date: 08/1983

Revision Date: None

Approval Date: 08/1983

Subject: **SCHOOL FEES POLICY**

I. Board Policy

It is the policy of the Board to comply with Utah law and to permit the orderly establishment of a reasonable system of fees, while prohibiting practices that would exclude those unable to pay from participation in school-supported activities.

Philosophy Statement

Utah has a strong tradition of supporting free public education for all of its children. A commitment to free elementary and secondary schools was included in the state's first constitution, and has continued to be recognized in the constitution and statutes to this day.

Despite the commitment to free education, funding shortfalls have, over the years, led to the emergence of a confusing system of official and unofficial fees, charges, and deposits in Utah's schools, some of which appear to have been excessive or arbitrarily set and administered.

Utah law requires parents to enroll and ensure the attendance of their children in school, and sets criminal penalties for those who fail to do so. It seems inconsistent to establish such laws and penalties if the ability of parents and children to comply is compromised by a system of fees that may exclude some of the needy from school-sponsored programs and activities. Since fees rarely pay the full cost of school-sponsored programs, the result of a system of mandatory fees is that those most able to pay are enrolled and subsidized, while those least able to pay may be excluded.

II. Administration Policy

It is the responsibility of each school principal to implement this school fees policy according to the following guidelines.

Guidelines

A. Classes and activities during the regular school day.

1. No fee may be charged for any class or activity in Kindergarten through eighth grade, including assemblies and field trips.
2. Textbook, lab, and other course-related fees may only be charged in grades nine through twelve.
3. Students must be able to enroll and participate in any class, and have the opportunity to acquire all skills and knowledge required for full credit and highest grades, without paying a fee.
4. Students of all grade levels may be required to provide materials for their optional projects. Student supplies must be provided for elementary students. A student may, however, be required to replace supplies provided by the school which are lost, wasted, or damaged by the student due to careless or irresponsible behavior.

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6. Secondary students may be required to provide their own student supplies, subject to the provisions of Subsection C5.
- B. School Activities Outside of the Regular School Day
1. Fees may be charged, subject to the provisions of Subsection C5, in connection with any school-sponsored activity, regardless of the age or grade level of the student, if participation is voluntary and does not affect a student's grade or ability to participate fully in any course taught during the regular school day.
 2. Fees related to extracurricular activities sponsored by the Utah High School Activities Association may not exceed limits established by the Association.
- C. General Provisions
1. No fee may be charged or assessed in connection with any class or school-sponsored or supported activity, including extracurricular activities, unless the fee has been set and approved by the local board of education in accordance with this policy.
 2. Fee schedules and policies for the entire district shall be adopted at least once each year by the local board of education in a regularly scheduled public meeting of the board. Provision shall be made for public hearings or other procedures designed to ensure broad public notice and participation.
 3. Preliminary fee schedules for the upcoming school year shall be given to parents no later than June 1 each year. Final fee schedules shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the district at least two weeks before fees are due. Each district shall adopt additional procedures to reasonably ensure that the parent or guardian of each child who attends school within the district receives written notice of final fee schedules and fee waiver policies, including easily understandable procedures for obtaining waivers, as soon as possible prior to the time when fees become due. Copies of the schedules and waiver policies shall be included with all registration materials to potential or continuing students.
 4. No present or former student may be denied receipt of transcripts or a diploma for failure to pay school fees other than a reasonable charge made to cover the cost of duplicating or mailing. No charge may be made for duplicating or mailing copies of school records to an elementary or secondary school in which the student is enrolled or intends to enroll.
 5. A board of education shall provide, as part of any fee policy or schedule, for adequate waivers or other provisions to ensure that no student is denied the opportunity to participate in a class or school-sponsored or supported activity because of an inability to pay a fee.

The waiver policy shall include procedures to ensure that:

- a. A person is designated in each school to administer the policy and grant waivers;

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- b. The process for obtaining waivers or pursuing alternatives is administered fairly, objectively, and without delay, and avoids stigma and unreasonable burdens on students and parents;
 - c. Students who have been granted waivers or provisions in lieu of fee waivers are not treated differently from other students or identified to persons who do not need to know;
 - d. Fee waivers or other provisions in lieu of fee waivers are available to all students in state custody, those receiving public assistance, and others whose parents or guardians are financially unable to pay.
 - e. Textbook fees are waived for all eligible students in accordance with Section 53-13a-4 of the Utah Code;
 - f. Parents are given the opportunity to review proposed alternatives to fee waivers;
 - g. An appeal process is available, including the opportunity to appeal to the local board of education; and
 - h. The local board provides for balancing of financial inequities among district schools if the granting of waivers and alternatives to waivers produces significant inequities through unequal impact on individual schools.
6. To preserve equal opportunity for all students and to limit diversion of money and school and staff resources from the basic school program, each district's fee policies shall be designed to limit student expenditures for school sponsored activities, including expenditures for activities, uniforms, clubs, clinics, travel, and subject area and vocational leadership organizations whether local, state, or national.
7. Uniforms, costumes, clothing, and accessories required for participants in choirs, pep clubs, drill teams, athletic teams, bands, orchestras, and other student groups, are fees requiring approval of the local board of education, and are subject to the provision of Subsection C5.
8. Each district shall adopt policies relating to donations, to ensure that donations do not create significant inequities among schools in the district or unfairly bestow special privileges or benefits upon certain students.
9. The requirements of fee waiver and availability of other provisions in lieu of fee waiver do not apply to charges assessed pursuant to a student's damaging or losing school property. Schools may pursue reasonable methods for obtaining payment for such charges, but may not exclude students from school or withhold transcripts or diplomas to obtain payment of those charges.
10. Charges for class rings, letter jackets, and similar articles not required for participation in a class or activity are not fees and are not subject to the waiver requirements of this policy. Yearbook charges are not fees unless time is set aside during the regular school day for signing of yearbooks, in which case yearbook charges must be approved by the local board and the provision of Subsection C5 will apply.
11. Charges for school lunches, school milk, etc., are covered by separate policy.