



Memorandum

Date: February 14, 2020
To: Finance and Audit Committee
From: Delta Carmichael, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

Information: **School Fees Discussion (Ministry of Education School Fee Guidelines)**

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Finance and Audit Committee requested to review the Ministry of Education School Fee Guidelines as well as a list of District school fees, by school.

2.0 RELEVANT BOARD MOTION/DIRECTION

None.

3.0 INFORMATION STATEMENT

Under section 82(1) of the Ministry of Education School Act (*Appendix A*), Boards of Education must provide, free of charge to school age students resident in British Columbia, instruction in an educational program sufficient to meet the general requirements for graduation and the educational resource materials necessary to participate in the educational program.

There are some exceptions: Boards of Education may charge fees for certain programs, such as specialty academies, international baccalaureate, and trades programs, as well as for musical instruments. Under section 82(3) of the Act (*Appendix A*), boards may also charge fees for “goods and services” (see *Appendix B – School Regulation, section 1 for definition*) such as school supplies (i.e. exercise books, paper, writing tools), and optional field trips or special events.

Any board that charges fees must have a financial hardship policy in place to help students who are in financial need. *Appendix C* outlines this policy.

4.0 ASSISTANT SECRETARY-TREASURER COMMENTS

Currently, fees charged in Central Okanagan Public Schools are divided into four categories:

i. Standard Fees (Optional School Supply, Cultural, Student Activity Fees)

- a. **School Supply Fee (\$35/student)** - all elementary schools offer a supply package that provides for any personal school supplies needed throughout the year.

- b. **Cultural Fee (\$10/student)** - all elementary schools provide optional cultural performance opportunities made available through the schools for the benefit of students.
- c. **Student Activity Fee (\$30/student)** – all middle and secondary schools collect student activity fees to support a variety of opportunities and initiatives including:
 - Cultural performances;
 - Leadership (i.e. partner community support, school wide events);
 - Athletics (i.e. reduce athletic fees to parents, replacement of team uniforms & equipment);
 - Field studies busing costs.
- ii. **Transportation Fees** - to recover a portion of the cost to transport students to and from school as per Policy 470 – Transportation Services Management.
- iii. **Academy Fees** - to support academies at middle and secondary schools that have been approved as part of the substantive change process. These include sport and cultural academies as well as dual credit programs. These fees are outlined in the Standardized Student Fee Summary (*Appendix D*).
- iv. **Goods and Services Fees** - Vary by school depending upon the offerings. These include but are not limited to yearbooks, uniforms, field studies, and musical instrument rental and graduation ceremonies.

5.0 APPENDICES

- A. School Act, section 82 to 82.4
- B. School Regulation, section 1
- C. Regulation 425R - Student Fees, section 8
- D. Standardized Student Fee Summary - DRAFT

Appendix A

SCHOOL ACT

- (3) Despite section 79 (1), if a student is enrolled
- (a) in an independent school, but takes one or more courses through a school or francophone school by means of distributed learning, or
 - (b) in a school or francophone school, but takes one or more courses through an independent school by means of distributed learning,

each board, francophone education authority and authority of an independent school with which the student is enrolled must provide to the other access to information in those student records and permanent student records that is necessary for the other board, francophone education authority or authority of the independent school to satisfactorily perform its obligations under this Act or the *Independent School Act*, as applicable.

[1997-52-12 effective Aug. 1/97, BC Reg. 287/97, 2006-21-13 effective June 30/06, BC Reg 195/06]

Achievement contracts

79.2 REPEALED 2015-11-14, effective July 1, 2015

[2002-3-21 effective May 30/02; 2007-20-16, effective November 1/07, BC Reg 229/07; 2015-11-14, effective July 1/15]

Report on student achievement

79.3 REPEALED 2015-11-14, effective July 1, 2015

[2007-20-17, effective July 1/07, BC Reg 229/07; 2015-11-14, effective July 1/15]

Administrative directives

79.4 REPEALED 2015-11-14, effective July 1, 2015

[2007-20-17, effective July 1/07, BC Reg 229/07; 2015-11-14, effective July 1/15]

Annual reports

80 REPEALED 2002-53-22, effective May 30, 2002

Reports

81 A board must prepare and submit to the minister reports and statements in the form, with the information and at the time required by the minister.

[2002-53-23, effective May 30/02]

District literacy plans

81.1 REPEALED 2015-11-14, effective July 1, 2015

[2007-20-18, effective July 16/07, BC Reg 229/07; 2015-11-14, effective July 1/15]

Fees and deposits

82 (1) A board must provide free of charge to every student of school age resident in British Columbia and enrolled in an educational program in a school operated by the board,

- (a) instruction in an educational program sufficient to meet the general requirements for graduation,
- (b) instruction in an educational program after the student has met the general requirements for graduation, and
- (c) educational resource materials necessary to participate in the educational program.

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(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), a student is resident in British Columbia if the student and the student's guardian are ordinarily resident in British Columbia.

(2.1) Subject to subsection (2.2), if a board permits a student who is older than school age and is ordinarily resident in British Columbia to enrol in an educational program leading to graduation, the board must provide free of charge to that student

- (a) instruction in an educational program sufficient to meet the general requirements for graduation, and
- (b) educational resource materials necessary to participate in the educational program.

(2.2) Subsection (2.1) does not apply to a student who has

- (a) already met the general requirements for graduation, or
- (b) completed the requirements for graduation from a secondary school or high school in another jurisdiction.

(3) Subject to subsections (1) and (2.1), section 82.4 and to the orders of the minister, a board may charge fees for goods and services provided by the board.

(4) A board may require a deposit for educational resource materials provided to students and to children registered under section 13.

(5) If a board requires a deposit under subsection (4), it must refund all or part of the deposit to the student or child on return of the educational resource materials.

(6) A board must publish a schedule of the fees to be charged and deposits required and must make the schedule available to students and to children registered under section 13 and to the parents of those students and children before the beginning of the school year.

(7) Except as provided in an agreement under section 75 (4.1), a board is not responsible to pay for any educational activity undertaken by a student that is not provided by the board.

[1998-27-6 effective Oct. 23/98, BC Reg. 371/98; 2000-9-55, effective July 7, 2000, B.C. Reg. 243/00; 2002-53-24, effective July 1/03, 2006-21-14 effective June 30/06, BC Reg 195/06; 2007-20-219, effective July 1/07, BC Reg 229/07; am 2011-16-443, effective March 18/13]

Specialty academies

82.1 (1) In this section, "**specialty academy**" means an educational program that emphasizes a particular sport, activity or subject area and meets the prescribed criteria set out in the regulations.

(2) A board may offer a specialty academy if

- (a) the board has consulted with the parents' advisory council for the school where the board proposes to offer the specialty academy, and
- (b) the board is of the opinion that there is sufficient demand for the specialty academy.

(3) A board that offers a specialty academy must

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- (a) make available sufficient instruction for students enrolled in the specialty academy to meet the general requirements for graduation, and
- (b) continue to offer a standard educational program in the school district.

(4) Despite section 82, but subject to section 82.4, a board may charge a student enrolled in a specialty academy fees relating to the direct costs incurred by the board in providing the specialty academy that are in addition to the costs of providing a standard educational program.

- (5) On or before July 1 of each school year, a board that offers a specialty academy must
- (a) establish a schedule of fees to be charged under subsection (4), and
 - (b) make the schedule of fees available to the public.

- (6) Before establishing a schedule of fees under subsection (5), a board must
- (a) consult with the parents' advisory council for the school where the specialty academy is offered, and
 - (b) obtain the approval of that parents' advisory council for the schedule of fees.

[2007-20-20, effective July 1/07, BC Reg 229/07; effective January 1, 2009, BC Reg 219/2008; am 2012-36-5, effective July 1/12; 2015-11-15, effective July 1/15]

Trades programs

82.2 (1) In this section, "**trades program**" means an educational activity that is designed to certify a student for a particular occupation, and includes an apprenticeship for students registered with the Industry Training Authority under the *Industry Training Authority Act*.

(2) Despite section 82, but subject to section 82.4, a board may do the following in relation to a student enrolled in an educational program that has a trades program component:

- (a) charge fees for the purchase or rental of tools, equipment and materials necessary for the student's participation in the trades program;
- (b) require the student to provide his or her own tools, equipment and materials necessary for the student's participation in the trades program.

[2007-20-20, effective July 1/07, BC Reg 229/07]

Musical instruments

82.3 (1) Despite section 82, but subject to section 82.4, a board may do the following in relation to a student described in subsection (2) of this section:

- (a) charge fees for the purchase or rental of a musical instrument for the student's personal use;
- (b) require the student to provide his or her own musical instrument.

- (2) Subsection (1) applies to a student participating in, as part of an educational program,
- (a) a music class, course or program, or
 - (b) a fine arts class, course or program with a music component.

[2007-20-20, effective July 1/07, BC Reg 229/07]

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International Baccalaureate

82.31(1) In this section and section 178, "**International Baccalaureate program**" means an educational program based on a curriculum developed and standards set by the International Baccalaureate Organization, a registered extraprovincial non-share corporation as defined in section 167 of the *Societies Act*.

- (2) A board that offers an International Baccalaureate program must
- (a) make available sufficient instruction for students enrolled in the International Baccalaureate program to meet the general requirements for graduation, and
 - (b) continue to offer a standard educational program in the school district.

(3) Despite section 82, but subject to section 82.4, a board may charge a student enrolled in an International Baccalaureate program fees relating to the direct costs incurred by the board in providing the International Baccalaureate program that are in addition to the costs of providing a standard educational program.

- (4) If a board that offers an International Baccalaureate program charges fees under subsection (3), the board must, on or before July 1 of each school year,
- (a) establish a schedule of fees to be charged under subsection (3), and
 - (b) make the schedule of fees available to the public.

[am 2012-36-6, effective July 1/12; am 2015-24-351, effective Nov 28/16]

Requirement for financial hardship policy

82.4 Sections 82 (3), 82.1 (4), 82.2, 82.3 and 82.31 (3) apply only to a board that has established policies and procedures to facilitate participation by students of school age ordinarily resident in British Columbia who would otherwise be excluded from the course, class or program because of financial hardship.

[2007-20-20, effective July 1/07, BC Reg 229/07; am 2012-36-7, effective July 1/12]

Financial assistance

- 83** (1) A board may
- (a) assist in paying the cost of transportation, board or lodging of a student, or
 - (b) subject to the orders of the minister, assist in paying the cost of transportation, board, lodging or tuition fees of a person attending an educational institution outside of British Columbia.

(2) If a student is enrolled in an educational program that is delivered, in whole or in part, through distributed learning, the board may provide any financial assistance to the student that is authorized under an agreement under section 75 (4.1).

[2002-53-24, effective May 30/02, 2006-21-15 effective June 30/06, BC Reg 195/06]

Insurance

- 84** (1) A board must maintain insurance in accordance with this Act and the regulations.

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(2) A board may maintain insurance, other than insurance referred to in subsection (1), that the board considers necessary.

(3) Subject to the regulations, if the board maintains insurance, the board must be the named beneficiary of the insurance.

Power and capacity

85 (1) For the purposes of carrying out its powers, functions and duties under this Act, a board has the power and capacity of a natural person of full capacity.

(1.1) Without limiting subsection (1), a board must, subject to this Act and the regulations, and in accordance with Provincial standards established by the minister, establish a code of conduct for students enrolled in educational programs provided by the board.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), a board may, subject to this Act and the regulations, do all or any of the following:

- (a) determine local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the school district;
- (b) subject to the orders of the minister, approve educational resource materials and other supplies and services for use by students;
- (c) make rules
 - (i) *REPEALED 2007-22-4, effective September 4, 2007*
 - (ii) respecting suspension of students and the provision of educational programs for suspended students,
 - (iii) respecting attendance of students in educational programs provided by the board,
 - (iv) respecting the establishment, operation, administration and management of
 - (A) schools operated by the board and educational programs provided by the board, and
 - (B) transportation equipment used for the purposes of the board,
 - (v) respecting the provision of volunteer services,
 - (vi) respecting the management of student housing facilities and the supervision of students accommodated in them, and
 - (vii) respecting any other matter under the jurisdiction of the board;
- (d) suspend students, in accordance with the rules under paragraph (c) (ii), so long as the board continues to make available to those students an educational program;
- (e) if approved by the council of the municipality in which the school is located, provide a system of traffic patrols to assist in the control of motor vehicle traffic on highways or elsewhere in that municipality so far as the traffic may affect students going to or from school;
- (f) provide housing accommodation for students;
- (g) subject to the orders of the minister, permit persons other than students to utilize board facilities, equipment and personnel;

Appendix B

SCHOOL REGULATION

13. General interest course
14. Indian language instruction
15. Referendum
16. Deemed residence
17. Deemed number of hours of instruction

Appendix:

Form of Oath of Non-Disclosure

[en BC Reg. 266/13 effective Dec 19/13]

Interpretation

- 1 (1) In this regulation:

"Act" means the *School Act*;

"**Required Graduation Program Examination**" means a Required Graduation Program Examination as defined in the Graduation Program Order, M302/04.

- (2) The following expressions are defined for the purposes of the Act:

"**educational resource materials**" means

- (a) information, represented or stored in a variety of media and formats, that is used for instruction in an educational program including, without limitation, the materials referred to in section 3 of Ministerial Order 333/99, the Educational Program Guide Order, and
- (b) materials and equipment necessary to meet the learning outcomes or assessment requirements of an educational program provided by a board

but does not include

- (c) paper, writing tools, calculators other than graphical calculators, student planners, exercise books, computers used for distributed learning, computer storage media and other school supplies and equipment for a student's personal use,
- (d) appropriate personal clothing for school activities such as gym strip, footwear, outerwear and personal safety equipment;

"**goods and services**" includes, but is not limited to,

- (a) materials and equipment of a nature, or of a quality or quantity, beyond that which is necessary to meet the required learning outcomes or assessment requirements of an educational program provided by a board,
- (b) paper, writing tools, calculators other than graphical calculators, student planners, exercise books, computer storage media and other school supplies and equipment for a student's personal use,
- (c) *REPEALED am BC Reg. 264/07, effective July 19, 2007*
- (d) the payment of expenses, including expenses for transportation, accommodation, meals, entrance fees and equipment rentals, in respect of optional field trips or special events that are not necessary to meet the required learning outcomes or assessment requirements of an educational program provided by a board.

"**hour of instruction**" means, in respect of any school, an hour in which students of the school receive instruction in an educational program, and does not include recesses, lunch periods and other scheduled breaks between classes;

Appendix C



School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan)

Policies And Procedures

Section Four: Students

“Together We Learn”

425R – STUDENT FEES

Schools may assess and collect the goods and services fees, distinct schools, unique programs and specialty academy fees, rentals, deposits, and charges described below, providing that the ability to pay is not a prerequisite to taking an educational program and that the charge is not for an activity that directly relates to achieving the prescribed learning outcomes of a course or program except where permitted by legislation. All goods, services, distinct schools, unique programs and specialty academy fees and supplies referred to in these Regulations shall be optional to students. The financial hardship policy (section 8) applies to all student fees.

The Board may assess and collect a Student Transportation Charge for students requesting access to the District transportation system.

Interpretation

For the purpose of these Regulations:

Goods and Services

Include but are not limited to:

- Materials and equipment of a nature, or of a quality or quantity, beyond that which is necessary to meet the required outcomes or assessment requirements of an educational program,
- Paper, writing tools, calculators other than graphical calculators, student planners, exercise books, computer storage media and other school supplies and equipment for a student's individual use,
- The provision of a musical instrument for a student's individual use, and
- The payment of expenses in respect of field trips or special events including expenses for transportation, accommodation, meals, entrance fees and equipment rentals.
- Student bus passes or replacement bus passes.

Student Transportation Charge

Representing a portion of the cost to transport the student to and from school as per Policy 470.

Supplies

Items which are purchased and used personally by the student; (examples: school supplies available through the bulk purchase plan, gym strip, exercise books, binders, loose-leaf refills, blank computer diskettes, home economics and technology education projects)



Section Four: Students

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<i>Educational Resource Materials</i>	Information, represented or stored in a variety of media and formats, that is used for instruction in an educational program and materials and equipment necessary to meet the learning outcomes or assessment requirements of an educational program provided by the Board of Education.
<i>Musical Instruments</i>	School District owned musical instruments used in the curricular and extracurricular school-based music programs.
<i>Merchandise</i>	Merchandise of a non-educational nature available through the schools for the benefit of its students (examples: personal foods and beverages, T-shirts and book fairs).
<i>Activities</i>	Optional activities of a non-educational or supplemental nature that are made available through the schools for the benefit of students (example: co-curricular programs).
<i>Distinct School</i>	A school that provides a curriculum with a specific school-wide educational focus (e.g. traditional or fine arts), or creates a unique school identity (e.g. mandatory uniforms).
<i>Unique Program</i>	A program that fulfills a recognized educational need separate from existing programs and services, but within the parameters of provincially prescribed and/or Board authorized curriculum, and provides educational options for students, parents and staff (e.g. International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement or Elementary/Middle School Okanagan Language).
<i>Specialty Academy</i>	An educational program that emphasizes a particular sport, activity or subject area, and meets the prescribed criteria set out in the regulations (BC Ministry of Education Specialty Academy Criteria Regulation 219/08 dated October 15, 2009).

1. Goods and Services and Supplies

The Superintendent of Schools may approve the charging of specific fees and levies to students for goods and services and supplies not normally provided free-of-charge by the district's schools.

2. Student Transportation Charge

The Board may approve the charging of a portion of the cost to transport the student to and from school as per policy 470.



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“Together We Learn”

3. Educational Resource Materials

Secondary and middle schools may require a deposit (caution fee) for equipment or materials on the following basis:

- 3.1 individual fee
- 3.2 family fee

Upon the return of such equipment or materials in working order and good condition, all of the deposit shall be refunded to the student.

4. Activity Charges

Schools may collect an activity charge (student council/supplemental field trips/extra-curricular activities/cultural performance) providing the charge for the activity or resources does not relate directly to a prescribed outcome. Also, alternative activity must be provided to non-participating students. Activity charges should be on a cost-recovery basis or, where common among schools, shall be applied consistently and shall reflect reasonable cost recovery.

5. Approval and Publication

- 5.1 Applications for the charging of goods and services fees activity charges, and the requiring of deposits referred to in subsections 1 to 3 above, shall be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools or his designate for approval.
- 5.2 Upon receiving approval of the applicable goods and services fees, student transportation charge, charges, and deposits, each school shall publish a schedule of such fees, charges and deposits, and shall make the schedule available to students and children registered under Section 13 of the School Act, and to the parents of those students before the beginning of the school year.

6. Merchandise and Activities

6.1 Merchandise:

Schools will be free to sell a wide range of merchandise beyond the Goods and Services and supplies, a general list of such known merchandise must be approved by the principal and filed with the office of the Superintendent of Schools or his designate for information purposes.

6.2 Band instruments:

Schools may charge a nominal fee (below market rate) for the rental of School District owned band instruments. The rental fee will be established by the school principal.

6.3 Activities:

Although schools will be free to undertake a number of activities beyond those required in the educational program, a list of such known activities with estimated



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charges is to be approved by the principal and filed with the office of the Superintendent of Schools or his designate for information purposes.

6.4 **Specialty Academy Fees:**

A school may charge a fee for an authorized academy to recover supplementary instruction and resource costs (e.g. professional coaches, facility rentals) provided that Academy and associated fees are approved by the school’s School Planning Council on a yearly basis. Authorized Secondary School Apprenticeship specialty academies and Dual Credit Program specialty academies may charge for tools, equipment and materials directly related to the academy.

7. **Accounting**

All monies collected and distributed by a school are public funds and are subject to an audit by the office of the Secretary-Treasurer.

7.1 Proper accounting procedures shall be maintained at each school.

7.2 The principal shall be responsible for authorizing all expenditures.

7.3 Separate accounts shall be maintained for each approved specialty academy.

8. **Financial Hardship**

8.1 Principals shall annually notify parents through newsletters, notices to parents, and at the time of registration, that a student will not be excluded from any educational program due to financial hardship.

8.2 Principals shall facilitate participation in courses by fully or partially waiving the schedule for payment of goods, services, supplies, project fees, distinct schools, unique programs, specialty academies and charges for students unable to pay because of financial hardship. Where fees are fully or partially waived, the principal may explore with the student options to recover the fees through school-sponsored fundraising, other school funds or community sources. Parents of other participating students are not expected to fund financial hardship.

8.3 Principals shall facilitate exemption requests for the student transportation charge by meeting with the parents seeking the exemption and completing the student transportation fee Subsidy Request form. The form must be submitted confidentially to the Secretary-Treasurer for final approval.

8.4 Principals are directed to establish a procedure in each school which will allow for the private and confidential consideration of financial circumstances of individual students and families. Such procedures will preserve the dignity of families who may be unable to pay.

Date Agreed: April 23, 1980

Date Amended: February 11, 1981; April 21, 1992; April 22, 1998;

Date Reviewed/Amended: November 13, 2002

Date Amended: June 27, 2007; June 30, 2008; May 27, 2009; October 13, 2010

Date Reviewed: June 11, 2014

Related Document: School Board Fees Order

