



Memorandum

Date: January 20, 2025
To: Board of Education
From: Education and Student Services Committee
Action Item: **Constable Neil Bruce Middle School – Outdoor Education Academy Fee Increase**

1.0 ISSUE STATEMENT

A proposal to increase fees for the Outdoor Education Academy at Constable Neil Bruce Middle School has been developed for approval by the Board of Education.

2.0 RELEVANT BOARD MOTION/DIRECTION

Policy 540 – Proposals for Substantive Change states the following:

"Any proposed changes to approved distinct schools, unique programs and specialty academies (e.g. increases in fee structure and/or program delivery) must be brought to the Board's Education and Student Services Committee in November of each calendar year to review and a recommendation to the Board for approval, prior to announcing the continuation of the distinct school, unique program or specialty academy for the upcoming year."

Policy 425R – Student Fees Regulations (Financial Hardship – Section 8.1) states the following:

"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."

3.0 BACKGROUND

On February 27, 2008, the Board of Education approved the Substantive Change Proposal for Constable Neil Bruce Middle School's Outdoor Education Program. At this time, the student fee for the program was established at \$125 per academy student. A substantial amount of money that was needed to operate the academy was acquired through student fundraising and PAC donations. Starting approximately 10 years ago, an additional \$25 per year was provided by parents to support the costs of the field study opportunities, busing, and the rising inflationary costs.

4.0 POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Due to upkeep and increased costs of equipment that is reaching end of life expectancy as well as increased expenditures for Teachers Teaching on Call (TTOC) and transportation, the expenses for the program have increased greatly since 2008. The popularity of this program has also increased since 2008 when 60 students were enrolled and now there are approximately 152 students in the Outdoor Education Academy each year.

Financial Implications: Below is a chart showing the approximate costs for the Outdoor Education Academy prior to 2024/2025 (60 students) along with the projected 2025/2026 costs (average of 152 students).

Academy Expenses (2008 – Present)	Fees (2008 – Present) (60 students)	Proposed Expenses and Rationale (2025/2026)	Proposed Fees (2025/2026) (152 students)
Teacher Release (TTOC) 4 days x \$220	\$750	Teacher Release (TTOC) 12 days x \$480 3 days for each of 4 Manning Park trips	\$5,760
Transportation (inclusive of local and out of region trips)	\$4,750	Transportation (inclusive of local and out of region trips)	\$16,000
T-shirts - \$10 x 60 students	\$600	T-shirts	N/A
Field Study Opportunities (skiing, snowshoeing, sailing, swimming, hiking, rock climbing, scuba diving, boat operator training)	\$10,780	Field Study Opportunities (archery, skiing, snowshoeing, swimming, hiking, rock climbing, disc golfing, fishing)	\$8,500
		Equipment upkeep/ replacement	\$2,500
		Miscellaneous Fees (inclusive of, but not limited to, site bookings, snacks, fuel, fishing supplies and mileage)	\$1,440
Total Expenditures:	\$16,880	Total Proposed Expenditures	\$34,200
Total Revenue: 60 academy students x \$125 = \$7,500 Fundraising/year = \$9,380	\$16,880	Total Proposed Revenue: 152 students x \$225/academy student = \$34,200	\$34,200

As a result, a proposed fee increase of \$100 (from \$125 to \$225/academy student) will make the Outdoor Education Academy financially sustainable moving forward.

The Outdoor Education Academy is an equity-based program and will provide access to students who cannot meet the costs of the program. As per Board Policy 425R – Student Fees (Regulations), "a student will not be excluded from any education program due to financial hardship". Where there are financial challenges, parents will be asked to contact the principal directly to ensure confidentiality.

5.0 PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC) CONSULTATION

The Constable Neil Bruce Middle School PAC supported the Outdoor Education Academy fee increase at their meeting on Monday, November 25, 2024.

6.0 OPTIONS FOR ACTION

- a) Approve the increase in fees for the Outdoor Education Academy at Constable Neil Bruce Middle School.
- b) Amend the increase in fees for the Outdoor Education Academy at Constable Neil Bruce Middle School.
- c) Request additional information on the increase in fees for the Outdoor Education Academy at Constable Neil Bruce Middle School.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

THAT: The Board of Education approve the proposed fee increase of \$100 (from \$125 to \$225/student) for the Outdoor Education Academy (Constable Neil Bruce Middle School), as attached to the Agenda, and as presented at the January 22, 2025 Public Board Meeting.