

To: Board of Education

From: Nick Valderas, Business Manager

Board Date: April 8, 2026

Re: APPROVAL OF STUDENT FEES

Background:

Each year student fees must be approved by the school board. This money is used to offset expenses and be used as an additional source of local revenue.

Registration fee

The registration fee shall be waived for students who qualify for free lunch and/or are directly certified by the State of Illinois. In FY25, total revenue for registration fees were \$304,726.43 with 7,572 students enrolled for that year. If all enrolled students paid the full amount without being waived, the district would have accrued \$1,287,240.00 in revenue from registration fees. Administration is recommending a decrease in the registration fee for the 26-27 school year bringing the total to \$160 to offset the increase in the technology fee.

To qualify for free meals, a household income must fall between a certain amount dependent on how many individuals live within a household. A student's family has the option of filling out a paper form of the lunch application or completing the application through Skyward. Once submitted, if entered in skyward, the designation of free, reduced, or paid will be assigned. If a paper copy is submitted, then the information is manually entered into Skyward by our staff for the designation. If qualified for reduced, the fees are not eliminated. In addition, the district cannot verify the eligibility to receive a school fee waiver of a student who is receiving free meals outside of the verification requirements established for the federal meals program

(<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/School-Fee-Waivers.aspx>).

The verification process of the lunch applications starts on October 1st. Skyward randomly chooses 3% of all applications for review. Those 3% of the applications are pulled and a letter is sent to those families for verification of income. If families do not respond, a second letter is sent. If a response is not returned by November 15th, their application is changed to paid and no longer free or reduced.

Terms:

- Direct Certification. Students are "directly certified" for school fee waivers if they participate in any of the following federal programs: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Medicaid

- Categorical Eligibility. Students are “categorically eligible” for school fee waivers if, under state or federal law, they are: homeless, migrant, in foster care, runaway or participating in Head Start.
- Income/Free Meal Eligibility. Students whose family income is at or below the federal income eligibility guidelines qualify for free meals and school fee waivers
- Extenuating Circumstances. District school fee waiver policies “must also include a description of other extenuating circumstances under which the district will grant a waiver of school fees. Examples include students who are eligible to receive reduced price lunch or breakfast; very significant loss of income due to severe illness or injury in the family or unusual expenses such as fire, flood, or storm damage; or similar emergency situations that the district determines.

References

- School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook School Year 2023-24
 - <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/admin-handbook.pdf#search=HANDBOOK>
- Verification of Eligibility for School Meals
 - <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/verification-presentation.pdf#search=verification%20process>

Technology fee

In 2025, the district collected \$575,748.67 in technology fees.

These fees are not to be waived unless a student is categorized as McKinney-Vento (Homeless). In 2024, the technology fee was increased from \$80 to \$95. This fee is used for all technology including salary, benefits, purchase services, supplies, large assets, and all technology related expenses that is not grant funded. For FY26, the district budgeted for \$4,905,383.71 in total technology non-grant related expenses. This increase is to support our IT infrastructure, due to this, administration is recommending an increase to the technology fee of \$10 making the technology fee for the 2026-2027 School year \$105.

Night School Tuition

Night school tuition is not allowed to be waived and has generated \$118,362 in 2025.

Late Fee

Per ISBE, a district may not charge a late registration fee for a pupil enrolling in the district after specified dates?

A. No. A district may request, but not require, that pupils enroll and/or register during a certain window, but it may not institute a fine or additional fee for those pupils who register outside of a designated registration and/or enrollment period.

Uniform Prices

Uniform prices vary depending on estimated results of bid results. As of the Spring 2026 bid result, the uniform polos fall below cost with the exception of the Women’s Polos. The cost of these is being offset by the regular polos. The pricing for PE Uniforms remains similar to the

previous years levels and the prices do not need to be increased. The only uniform price administration is looking to increase is the ¼ zip sweatshirt. The cost for the sweatshirt has risen to \$22/unit. The district would like to keep offering these for the students but wishes to breakeven on the purchase of them. The district looking to increase the cost to \$22 for the sweatshirts to match this.