

# FAQ

## SCHOOL FEES IN UTAH: What Secondary Educators Need to Know

This document outlines key aspects of Utah's law regarding school fees, as they apply to secondary education in [53G-7.Part 5](#).

### 1. What is a “school fee” in Utah?

A “fee” is broadly defined as a charge, expense, deposit, rental, or payment that is assessed to a family attending a public school. This applies regardless of how a Local Education Agency (LEA) terms, describes, requests, or requires it, whether directly or indirectly, and can be in the form of money, goods, or services. Crucially, it is a fee if it is a condition to a student's full participation in or admission to an activity, course, or program that an LEA provides, sponsors, or supports.

The definition of “fee” includes payments made to a third party that provides part of a school activity, class, or program, as well as certain fines.

### 2. What kinds of courses can and cannot charge school fees in secondary schools?

In secondary schools, courses are categorized as either “fee courses” or “non-fee courses”. Beginning with the 2025–2026 school year, an LEA may not charge a secondary student a fee for an expense related to a non-fee course.

- A “non-fee course” is a course that results in course credit or a course grade within the core standards established by the state board for:
  - English Language Arts
  - Health Education
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Social studies

- A “fee course” is any course that is not a non-fee course. This means that courses offered in secondary schools that fall outside the mandated core subjects listed above may be designated as fee courses and have associated charges.

The full listing of the courses that award the different credits listed as a “non-fee course” above can be found in the [Current Core Courses Meeting the Criteria for Graduation Requirements](#) document found on [USBE's Graduation Requirements webpage](#).

Some courses may be classified as either a non-fee course or a fee course, depending on how the course credit is used towards graduation. However, ANY course that can award credit for the subjects listed above are categorized as a non-fee course. For example, Biotechnology could award a student either Science credit (making it a non-fee course) or Career and Technical Education credit (making it a fee course). Since Biotechnology can award science credit, it is classified as a non-fee course.

### 3. What items cannot be charged as school fees for secondary students?

Beginning with the 2025–2026 school year, an LEA may not charge a secondary student a fee for the following (except as provided in the next question):

- Any expense related to a non-fee course
- A textbook: Instructional material necessary for participation in an activity, course, or program, regardless of format, including hardcopy books, printed pages (like consumable workbooks), computer hardware, software, or digital content. Textbooks do not include school equipment, instructional equipment, or instructional supplies. LEAs are responsible for purchasing necessary textbooks.
- School equipment: Durable and reusable equipment, facilities, or tools owned by a secondary school and used by a student.
- A common education expense: an expense an LEA incurs related to instruction for all courses, unrelated to a specific course, program, or activity, and includes employment of educators/staff, capital facilities, and operation/maintenance costs.



#### 4. What items can be charged as school fees for secondary students?

Beginning with the 2025–2026 school year, an LEA may charge a secondary student a fee for the following items, subject to certain conditions:

##### ■ In non-fee courses:

- Instructional equipment: A tool required for an activity, course, or program in a secondary school that becomes the student's property upon exiting the program.
- A school field trip or activity trip or performance, including related transportation, food, lodging, and admission charges or participation fees.
- School activity clothing: Special shoes or clothing that a school requires a student to provide and wear for an activity, course, or program, meeting specific requirements (e.g., brand, fabric, imprint), which can be rented or become the student's property upon exiting. This does not include school uniforms or clothing commonly found in homes.
- A discretionary project: A project a student completes in lieu of or in addition to a required classroom project. An LEA may require materials or an additional fee for a discretionary project.
- A competency remediation program.

##### ■ In fee courses:

- Items allowed for a non-fee course (see above).
- Instructional supplies: Non-reusable or consumable materials necessary to use, expend, or deplete as part of an activity, course, or program in a secondary school.
- School equipment: (Durable and reusable equipment, facilities, or tools owned by a secondary school and used by a student.) As long as the fee supplements the life-cycle replacement costs for school equipment directly related to the fee course.
- Musical instrument rental.
- Licensing fees for fine arts intellectual property.
- Participation in a driver education course.

##### ■ Expenses for post-secondary courses, including tuition, college credit, an exam, or a textbook. These courses include:

- An Advanced Placement course.
- An International Baccalaureate course.
- A Concurrent Enrollment course.

##### ■ An extracurricular activity, including the life-cycle replacement costs for school equipment directly related to the extracurricular activity.

## 5. What charges are not considered school fees?

The following charges are explicitly excluded from the definition of a “fee”:

- Student fines that an LEA approves for:
  - Failing to return school property.
  - Losing, wasting, or damaging private or school property through intentional, careless, or irresponsible behavior (including defacing or damaging school property).
  - Improper use of school property, such as a parking violation.
- Payments for school breakfast or lunch.
- Refundable deposits that are a pledge securing the return of school property, which the LEA or school refunds upon the property’s return.
- Charges for insurance, unless the insurance is specifically required for a student to participate in an activity, course, or program.
- Money or other items of monetary value that a student or the student’s family raises through fundraising.

### **Additional items that are generally expected to be provided by students and families which are not considered school fees:**

- Personal student supplies: For a secondary student, these are objects, tools, materials, or supplies that are the student’s personal property, commonly purchased and used by individuals not enrolled in the course or activity, and have a high probability of regular use in activities other than school-sponsored ones. Examples include pencils, papers, notebooks, crayons, scissors, and basic clothing. These are explicitly not instructional equipment or instructional supplies.
- School uniforms: Special shoes or items of clothing that meet specific requirements (e.g., color, style, fabric, imprint) that a school requires a student to provide and wear during school attendance, and which are the property of the student. School uniforms are distinct from school activity clothing.

## 6. What are funding options to replace school fees?

LEA’s are expected to use their operating budgets to replace the funds they previously collected from school fees which were previously used for textbooks, school equipment, and instructional supplies. Administrators are invited to meet with teachers who have courses experiencing disruptions to discuss solutions to the challenge presented by the potential loss of these funds.

To help LEA’s transition from school fees to operating budgets, the legislature allocated \$35.5 million dollars to be distributed over three years from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028. LEAs will automatically receive these allocations.





## **7. How do LEAs provide transparency around what fees they are charging?**

Any student fees charged to students must be approved by an LEA's governing board annually and be included in the published fee schedule. The fee schedule needs to include a clear delineation of individual fees and the total cost for each course offered by the LEA. The LEA must also publish the fee schedule on each of its school websites and, starting from the 2026–2027 school year, clearly identify any fee alongside the activity, course, or program description in registration materials.

## **8. Whom do I contact with further questions?**

Questions about school fees can be addressed by emailing [schoolfees@schools.utah.gov](mailto:schoolfees@schools.utah.gov) or [Scott Crapo](#), or by calling (801) 538-7762.



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