School Fees FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

Table of Contents

To find the question that you may have, click on a section heading, in which your question pertains to.

General
Fee Schedules
Waivers
Allowable Cost
Fundraisers
Administration and Procedures Donations
Other

Resource Links

USBE School Fees Website
School Fees Forms
Permanent Injunction
Summary of Allowable and Unallowable Cost

Utah Administrative Code

R277-407 School Fees
R277-113 LEA Fiscal and Auditing Policies
R277-494 Charter, Online, Home, and Private School Student Participation in Extracurricular or Co-curricular School Activities

Utah Code

53G-7 part 5 School Fees
53G-7 part 6 Textbook Fees
53G-7 part 7 Student Clubs
53G-7 part 8 School Uniforms
53G-8 part 2 School Discipline and Conduct Plans

To ensure compliance with recent legislative updates, including H.B. 415, LEAs must adhere to the following structural changes to secondary school fees starting in the 2025-2026 school year:

- Non-Fee vs. Fee Courses: Courses are now strictly categorized. LEAs may not charge a secondary student any expense related to a "non-fee course," which includes any course that results in credit for English Language Arts, Health Education, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Any course falling outside these mandated core subjects is a "fee course" and may have associated charges.

- Textbooks and Digital Content: LEAs are prohibited from charging secondary students for textbooks. This definition includes hardcopy books, printed consumable workbooks, computer hardware, software, and digital content necessary for course participation.

- General Fees and Common Education Expenses: LEAs may not charge a general fee. Furthermore, LEAs cannot charge for "common education expenses," which encompass costs related to instruction for all courses, such as educator and staff employment, capital facilities, and operation or maintenance costs.

- School Equipment: LEAs may no longer charge secondary students for "school equipment," defined as durable and reusable equipment, facilities, or tools owned by a secondary school and used by a student.

- 6th Grade Remediation: LEAs are expressly prohibited from charging a student in grade 6 a fee for a remediation program.

- Registration Disclosures (Effective 2026-2027): Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, LEAs must clearly identify any fee for each activity, course, or program alongside the description of that activity or course directly within the LEA's registration materials.

General

1. What is the definition of a fee?
Fees are something of monetary value requested or required by an LEA as a condition to a student's participation in an activity, class, or program that is provided, sponsored, or supported by a school. Payments made to a third party that provides a part of a school sponsored activity are also fees .i.e., admission fees, hotel or transportation expenses.

2. Why do students have to pay school fees?
Schools are allowed to charge fees to students as specified in the requirement set forth in Utah Code 53G-7. An LEA may only charge a fee if the fee is authorized by the LEA governing board in accordance with UCA
53G-7-505.

3. Are charges related to the school lunch program considered fees?
No. Under the definition in the Utah State Board of Education administrative rules, school lunch charges are not considered fees.

4. Can students be charged for lost or damaged supplies, items, equipment, or property?
Yes. If they are lost or damaged under Utah Code Section 53G-8-212(2).

Fee Schedules

1. When does a fee schedule need to be approved?
The fee schedule must be annually adopted on or before June 1st in a regularly scheduled public meeting. The LEA shall provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed fee schedule during 2 public meetings prior to approval. The fee schedule can be discussed and approved at the 2nd public meeting.

2. Is there a limit to the cost of fees that may be charged for students to participate in school-sponsored activities, clubs, or programs?
Yes. LEAs are required to establish a maximum fee amount per student for each activity and a maximum total aggregate fee amount per student per school year. Revenue raised through required group fundraising or optional individual fundraising must be included as part of the maximum per student and the total aggregate fee amount.

3. Can a teacher charge an additional fee to a class in a secondary school level without school board approval if it is determined mid-year that the approved fee was not adequate?
No. All fees charged must be approved by the school board and listed on the fee schedule. R277-407-6(3) allows the LEA to amend the fee schedule, but the LEA must follow all processes described in R277-407-6(2) before approving the amended fee schedule.

Fee Schedules continued

4. Can a new fee be approved mid-year and added to the fee schedule?
Yes, fees may be added to a fee schedule after the initial approval of the fee schedule. These new fees must still be approved by the Board, and they must also have two chances for public comment before approval.

5. Can a fee be charged in connection to a school club? Would the club fee be subject to fee waivers even though the club is not a required fee, it's simply an optional fee?
Depends on the type of club, curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular vs a non-curricular club. Non-curricular clubs are not considered a school sponsored activity and therefore are not subject to school fee requirements. Curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular clubs are considered school sponsored activities and are subject to the requirements of R277-407 and 53G-7.

Waivers

1. If a student is required to have tools that are necessary to complete class assignments, should the cost of the tools be waived for students on fee waivers?
Yes. The school must provide the necessary tools to complete the assignment or waive the fee for the cost of the required tools.

2. Can fees for students on fee waivers be waived for activities that are either required by a class or a voluntary activity/trip?
Yes, all school sponsored activities either required or voluntary are subject to fee waivers, regardless of the time of day, year or season.

3. If a bus stops on an activity/trip to allow students to get something to eat, is the meal a student fee? If yes, then does the meal qualify for a fee waiver and must it be included on the fee schedule?
Yes, meals of a school sponsored activity are needful for the student's participation in the activity and are therefore waivable and should be included on the fee schedule.

4. If students are injured while working to pay for fees, what is the school's liability?
Students would be protected as employees or students of the district for any activity reasonably within the scope of the student's assignment. In assigning work to students, schools/districts should consider age-appropriateness and student ability.

5. If a team has the opportunity to attend an out of state performance/competition and team members are paying their own expenses, would a team member on fee waivers be allowed to go if the trip is voluntary and not a part of the grade?
Yes. Fee waivers apply to any course or activity sponsored "by or through the public schools." This type of a trip is subject to fee waivers. If the team decides to raise money for the trip by fundraising, all participants of the trip, not just the students participating in the fundraiser, share equally in whatever money is raised. If additional money is needed for fee waiver eligible students, that money must be provided by the school or LEA.

6. Should the names and other information about those who qualify for fee waivers be kept confidential?
Yes. That information should be used and discussed only by those who have a need and a right to know, such as the personnel who process paperwork, etc. Other students should never be involved in processing fee waiver information.

Waivers Continued.

7. What are the requirements to be eligible for fee waivers?

A student is eligible for fee waiver as follows:
•Income levels as established by the Utah State Board of Education.
•The student receives (SSI) Supplemental Security Income (Only the student who receives the SSI benefit qualifies for fee waivers).
•The family receives TANF or SNAP (currently qualified for financial assistance or food stamps).
•The student is in foster care (under Utah or local government supervision).
•The student is in state custody.
•The student qualifies for McKinney-Vento.
•The school has authority to grant a fee waiver to a student, on a case by case basis, who does not qualify under the above criteria, but because of extenuating circumstances is not reasonably capable of paying the fee.

8. To whom do the fee waivers apply?

•All students who meet criteria (see above).

Fee waivers do not apply to:

»Pre-K students
»Adult students outside of the K-12 program.
»Foreign exchange students.
»Non-resident students who are specifically exempt.

9. Can a local school board establish policies for those students who cannot pay the entire fee?

Yes, but fee waiver eligible students cannot be required to complete alternatives in place of receiving full fee waivers.

10. Are fees for school clubs subject to fee waivers?

Yes, fee waivers may apply if the club is a curricular club. However, if the club is non-curricular as defined in Section 53G-7-701 then it is not subject to the fee waivers.

11. Are schools required to ask for verification or documentation of fee waiver eligibility?

Yes, consistent with Section 53G-7-504(4), a school or district shall require documentation and certification verifying the student's eligibility See Fee Waiver Application for list of acceptable documentation of eligibility. A school or school district shall destroy or return to applicant, all supporting documents after the approval process is complete. However, the LEA should keep a record or log of applications, approvals, and denied applications with a brief explanation of denial.

12. Why are local school boards required to provide a waiver of fees to qualifying students?

To ensure that no student is denied the opportunity to participate in programs, courses, or activities because of an inability to pay the required fee, deposit, or charge based on a 1994 Utah state court case and current state law.

13. How long do LEAs need to store fee waivers for? If LEAs are storing them digitally, do LEAs still need to store the hard copies of the fee waivers?

That is up to LEA discretion and should be stated in the policies and procedures. UCA 53G-7-504(5) states that you are not required to keep documentation on file after the verification is complete. However, for reporting purposes, you should be keeping a record of how many applications were approved or denied, and the type and amount of fees waived.

14. If a charter or on-line school student wishes to participate in extracurricular activities at a qualifying school, does the $75 per student participation fee cover all activities for that student? Who covers the cost of students on fee waiver?

Yes, the school of enrollment pays a one-time annual school participation fee of $75 per student to the qualifying school. The school of enrollment shall pay the qualifying school the$75 and any fees related to the specific activities for students on fee waiver. Students not on fee waiver shall pay the qualifying school all required student activity specific fees.

Waivers Continued

15. Are fines for missing books or damage to property subject to fee waivers?
No, intentional damage would be considered a fine and not subject to fee waiver.

16. Is there a form for a partial fee waiver, if a parent would like to pay a portion of their fees?
R277-407-2(29) defines a waiver as a full release from the requirement of payment of a fee and from any provision in lieu of fee payment. The school should create a form that the parent can sign stating they understand they are eligible for a full release from the requirement of the payment of fees, however they are voluntarily choosing to pay a portion of the fee.

17. Can an installment/payment plan be set up for a student's family to pay fees?
Yes, but an installment/payment plan may not be required in lieu of a fee waiver.

18. Are extended day kindergarten fees subject to fee waiver?
LEAs receive a full WPU for students attending full day kindergarten. LEAs cannot charge a fee for full day kindergarten.

19. Can fees be charged for activities outside of the regular school day?
Yes, fees may be charged in connection with school-sponsored activities that do not take place during the regular school day, regardless of the age or grade level of the student. Fee waivers always apply, even for these "optional" activities.

20. If school lets out early for a game/event in the state championship tournament, and a bus is provided for students who want to attend the game for a fee, should the fee be waived for those who qualify for waivers?
Yes. Even if the game is after school hours, especially if other transportation is not readily available to students or the distance is significant.

21. Is the rental cost of cap and gown for graduation a fee waiver eligible expense?
Yes. The graduation exercise, including the public acknowledgment, is considered integral to the public education experience. Therefore, the cost of cap and gown should be borne by the school. Schools can negotiate with rental companies for reduced rates or waiver of rental fees for fee waiver eligible students.

22. Can a student be required to pay a fee to go to an out of state event to perform/compete?
Yes, if the school sponsors the trip or is involved with planning and scheduling and/or provides resources (e.g. buses, chaperone's, director, etc.). If a student has been granted a fee waiver, costs essential to the trip/experience must be waived.

23. Should early college class fees be waived for high school students on fee waivers?
Treatment of fees for AP and concurrent enrollment courses and exams is dependent on the entity that recognizes the revenue and costs, regardless of whom the student pays. Local Education Agency (LEA)/School fees are subject to Utah Administrative Code (UAC) R277-407 school fee and fee waiver rules. Higher Education fees are not subject to UAC R277-407. The treatment of the fees depends on what costs the fees will be used to pay and what entity incurs those costs.

24. What kind of work activities are available for grade 9-12 students in lieu of fee waivers that are not demeaning and enhance self-esteem?
Janitorial work should not be the only option for students working to pay for fees. Office responsibilities, activity help, teacher aide assistance, charitable causes for the school, service, and help with athletic clinics should be considered.

Allowable Cost

1. What cost/fees are allowable?
See guidance document Summary of Allowable and Unallowable Cost.

2. While in possession of a Chromebook, it is "broken" by the parent/student, may LEAs charge the replacement cost of a new Chromebook without considering the replacement cost a fee?
Yes, a student fine for failing to return school property, losing, wasting or damaging private or school property through intentional, careless, or irresponsible behavior is not considered a fee. The fine does have to be approved by the LEA board and the school must have procedures in place to ensure the rights of the student are considered. In addition, the school must ensure that the damage cannot be claimed as normal wear and tear and if the student or parent cannot pay for the damages then the school would work with the student to have them work off the amount owed for the damage.

3. Can yearbooks be subject to fee waiver if they are being signed during school hours?
It depends if the yearbook signing is a school sponsored activity, then yes the yearbook would be subject to fee waiver. However, generally yearbooks are considered a personal discretionary charge aka a nonwaivable charge.

4. Is a t-shirt or polo with a school logo/imprint considered a school uniform?
Yes, a school uniform includes an item of clothing that meet specific requirements, including a specific color, style, fabric or imprint. A school uniform is not considered a school fee and therefore would not be subject to fee waiver. Exception to this rule is a uniform policy that requires clothing that is expensive or prescriptive would be considered a school fee and subject to fee waiver.

5. Can a PE class charge a fee for the replacement of equipment? For example, basketballs need to be replaced frequently due to use by PE students. Or does this fall under the definition of school equipment?
Yes, replacement of school equipment is listed as an allowable cost. USBE has made the determination that replacement of school equipment, i.e., life cycle replacement, is different from maintenance of school equipment. The spend plan must have full disclosure for the use and the formula used to determine the individual student amount for replacement of school equipment, e.g., Wrestling mats need to be replaced every 5 years, replacement cost is $10,000, estimate 100 students using the mats per year: $10,000 / 5 / 100 = $20 per student

The maintenance cost of school equipment is included in the definition of textbook, which effective SY23 are no longer allowable to be assessed a school fee. Maintenance of equipment means costs related to storing, repairing, or keeping school equipment in good working condition.

6. Can students in K-6 school be required to provide their own supplies?
No. Supplies (paper, pencils, etc.) needed in the regular classroom must be provided by the schools.

Fundraisers

1. A fee waiver student on a team wants to participate in the fundraiser. If they raise any money, can that money be evenly divided amongst the rest of the team to help with their fees?

Yes, money raised through a group fundraiser is used for the benefit of the group, or team. Revenue from the fundraiser shall be equally shared to reduce the fees required for all students participating in the group not just the students who participated in the fundraiser.

2. If a student doesn't participate in required group fund raising, do the funds raised still go towards that's students fees?

Yes. All funds raised in group fundraisers goes to help pay fees for the group. If a student did not want to participate in a required group fundraising, LEAs are allowed to limit participation in activity but may not deny a student membership on a team or group, based on a student's non-participation in a fundraiser.

3. Is a group fundraiser a fee, and subject to the provisions of R277-407"?

No. Money raised through fundraising is not a fee. However, required charges that can be paid through fundraising are fees subject to R277-407. e.g., approved fee schedule, fee/waiver policies, fundraiser policies, parent notifications, etc.

Administration and Procedures

1. Can a school withhold a student's diploma if fees are not paid before the end of the school year?

No, a school can not withhold official student records, including written or electronic grade reports, diplomas or transcripts as a result of unpaid fees.

2. What policies are required for school fees?

School fee rules require LEAs to establish the following policies:

- School Fees Policy- Fee Schedule & Spend Plan Policies
- Fundraising Policy
- Donation Policy
- Fee Waiver and Appeal Policy
- Service In-Lieu (if applicable)

The policies must be written to comply with UCA 53G-7, UAC R277-407 & R277-113. The LEA governing board shall annually review the LEAs policies on school fees, fee waivers, fundraising, and donations. The fee schedule and fee policies must be adopted annually in a regularly scheduled public meeting.

3. Can students be denied participating in the graduation ceremony if they have school fines or fees owed?

Yes, but they cannot be denied a diploma or credit for coursework completed. Also, a school should give advance notice to parents that administrative penalties may be imposed for failure to pay fees, including denial of graduation activities. These kinds of penalties should be used sparingly and reluctantly as a last resort because courts see graduation exercises and activities as integral to the public education experience.

4. Can an LEA withhold class schedules from a student until the school fees are paid?

No. LEAs may not, as a result of unpaid fees, withhold any official student records, or exclude a student from an activity, class, or program that is provided,sponsored, or supported by a school during the regular school day.

Administration and Procedures Continued.

5. Can a student be denied enrollment because of outstanding fees from a school attended previously?
No. Students cannot be denied enrollment because of outstanding fees from a prior school. The previous school/district could pursue reasonable means to collect fees, e.g. small claims court, collection agency,but the new school/district may not deny enrollment due to fees owed.

6. Can yearbooks be held at the end of the school year until all fees are paid?
Yes, yearbook deposits may be diverted to pay for outstanding fees if stated in district policy. If a student purchases a yearbook outright, the school would have to provide it. If holding a yearbook is designated as a possible administrative consequence for non- payment of fees, the yearbook could be held because the yearbook cost is greatly subsidized by the school. Also keep in mind, if the student participates in instructional time for the yearbook production or signing, then the yearbook may be subject to fee waivers.

7. Does an LEA have to meet personally with each student's parent or family with an interpreter if their first language is not English?
If an LEA's student or parent population in a single written language other than English exceeds 20%, the LEA shall also publish the fee schedule and fee waiver policies in the language of those families. Otherwise an LEA representative shall meet personally with each student's parent and make available an interpreter.

8. When a charter student participates in a district class or extra-curricular activity, will the charter school be required to administer and pay the fee waiver when the student is eligible?
R277-494 explicitly requires the charter school to pay for the fee waiver.

Donations

1. Can Leas ask for donations? For example, if a class is going on a field trip can a teacher ask for a donation if the parent would like to contribute? Same for renting a recorder, can LEAs ask for donations but make it clear it will be provided no matter what?
Yes, you can solicit for donations, but you must be very clear in stating that the donation is completely voluntary. You must also have a donation policy in place if you are going to solicit donations.

2. What wording can LEAs use to encourage donations from those who wish to donate?
A student or parent is not required to make the donation as a condition to the student's participation in an activity, class, or program. The request must clearly state that donations and contributions by a student or parent are voluntary.

Other

1. If a waiver student at a charter school wants to attend a dance at another school (same district as boundary school, but a different high school), would costs related to the dance be covered?
No, the charter would not pay any fee for the dance at the other high school. There can only be one, singular "qualifying school" per student. And the dance at the second high school, typically, would not be provided, supported or sponsored by the student's "qualifying school", and therefore, not a waiverable school fee.

2. Can LEAs charge fees for Drivers Ed, including programs offered after school or over the summer?
Yes, driver education is a school sponsored curricular course. After school or summer driver education programs which are school-sponsored are fee waiver eligible. Fees paid to the Department of Motor Vehicle and programs offered by a private driver education provider are NOT eligible for waiver.

3. Can a fee be charged for an after-school club in a title 1 school?
Yes, Title 1 schools can charge a fee as long as it has been Board approved. All fees are subject to fee waiver.

4. Can 6th graders attending a middle school with 7th and 8th graders be charged fees?
Yes. Board-approved fees may be charged to students in 6th grade only if they are attending a school that also includes students in grade 7 or above and they follow a secondary model of delivering instruction.

5. May an elementary school or elementary teacher provide a suggested list of school supplies to be requested from parents?
Yes. However, the information to the parents must be clear and explicit that providing supplies for the student or class is voluntary. The list, if provided, must include the exact language from Board Rule R277-407-3(6) , as follows:
"NOTICE: THE ITEMS ON THIS LIST WILL BE USED DURING THE REGULAR SCHOOL DAY. THEY MAY BE BROUGHT FROM HOME ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS, OTHERWISE, THEY WILL BE FURNISHED BY THE SCHOOL."

6. Are LEAs required to refund fees to a student who transfers schools?
No, there is no entitlement to a refund. Refunds are governed by school/district policy.

USBE School Fees Team
Phone: (801) 538-7762
Email: schoolfees@schools.utah.gov
Website: www.schools.utah.gov/schoolfees