



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.
Superintendent

March 9, 2018

To: School Committee
Re: Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2019 Fees & Tuitions

At your last meeting on February 28, Mr. Collins presented a variety of options for potential changes to fees and tuitions that families pay for various services, programs, or activities that are optional in some manner. At that time, I indicated that I would be making my recommendations for adjustments in advance of your March 14 meeting, and this memorandum contains these recommendations. Please refer to the materials from your February 28 meeting, as well as the report and slides regarding the Extended School Care program included in your meeting packet for March 14, for detailed information regarding these tuitions and fees.

Bus Fee

Due to significantly rising costs connected to a newly bid contract (17% increase), I recommend that the bus fee rate increase from \$275 per student to \$300 per student. This is estimated to generate approximately \$62,000 in additional revenue and represents a 9% increase in the fee.

Athletic Fee

I recommend that the athletic fee rate be increased from \$300 to \$310 per sport per season. This is expected to generate approximately \$11,000 in additional revenue.

Activity Fee

I recommend that there be no change to the Sherwood Middle School activity fee (remaining at \$50) and the Shrewsbury High School activity fee (remaining at \$100). I do recommend that the activity fee for Oak Middle School be increased from \$50 to \$75. This increase will subsidize a more robust set of activities for 7th and 8th graders, including the addition of more athletic opportunities, which has been a longstanding goal of the school and the Athletics Department. The activity fee will continue to allow access to as many co-curricular opportunities as desired for one fee (with the exception of the separate athletic fee at the high school). This is estimated to generate an additional \$11,000 from the Oak activity fees.

Preschool Tuition

In order to keep up with rising costs, I recommend a 3% increase in the tuition rate for all preschool programs, which is expected to generate approximately \$16,000 in additional revenue.

Full Day Kindergarten Tuition

The School Committee has established a goal of providing universal access to full day, tuition free kindergarten if and when space becomes available as a result of the Beal building project. In order for the district to responsibly wean itself from the tuition funding coming out of families' pockets, Mr. Collins advises, and I concur, that we should step down the tuition rate over time so that the district does not have to absorb a shift in cost to the appropriated budget all at once when the shift is eventually made to providing full day kindergarten. I recommend a 10% reduction in full day kindergarten tuition, from \$4,000 to \$3,600, as the beginning of this step down plan. This is expected to result in \$63,000 decrease in tuition collections; however, due to the fact that our current full day kindergarten tuition fund will end the year with a projected surplus of at least that much, which means that no additional funds will need to be added to the FY19 appropriated budget to offset this expected tuition loss. Please note that the new \$3,600 rate is still above the average tuition charged by Massachusetts districts who still require tuition for full day kindergarten (\$3,461 in the current year).

Extended School Care

In order to address rising costs of staffing, food, and materials in the Extended School Care program, as well as address the additional staffing time, lunch, and field trip costs associated with providing care on early release days, I concur with Ms. Isaacson's recommendation for a 3% increase in tuition rates, the elimination of the sibling discount (which also adds consistency with our other fee and tuition programs), and the addition of a \$25 per student fee charged for each early release day. Please see the report and slides from Ms. Isaacson that are included in your meeting packet. Additionally, Ms. Isaacson will also present this information and answer questions at the March 14 meeting.

While I would much prefer not to be requiring any additional fees or tuition from Shrewsbury families, these are critical funding sources for our school district. I believe the recommendations above are reasonable given the costs that the associated programs face, while the additional revenue will contribute to closing the substantial budget gap that exists for the next school year.

I look forward to answering any questions you have at the March 14 meeting.