



# Shrewsbury Public Schools

---

Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

March 12, 2023

To: School Committee  
Re: Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2024 Fees & Tuitions

At your last meeting, Mr. Collins and Ms. Isaacson presented information regarding fees and tuitions that families pay for various services, programs, or activities that are optional in some manner. At that time, I indicated I would be making my recommendations for adjustments for your March 15 meeting, and this memorandum contains these recommendations. Please refer to [the materials from your March 1 meeting](#) for additional information regarding these fees and tuitions.

We have discussed many times in the past how Shrewsbury evolved into a “high fee district” due to decisions over the past 20+ years, where fees have been instituted and raised over time to generate revenue where possible in order to offset costs and to avoid making cuts to personnel and programming that otherwise would have been necessary due to lack of financial resources, especially due to the structural deficit created by Proposition 2 ½.

Thankfully, due to the successful operational override and the agreement between the School Committee and Select Board, the prospect of budget cuts has not been an issue we have needed to contend with over the past two budget cycles, nor is it a concern for Fiscal Year 2024, so there is not pressure to maximize fee revenue the way there was when we had budget crises in the past.

Given that SPS families are already contributing to our better financial health through the increase in property taxes by way of the operational override and the debt exclusion for Beal, and given that comparisons demonstrate that our transportation and athletic fees and preschool tuitions are comparatively high, my recommendation is to keep these the same for FY24.

However, given the need to maintain our Extended School Care program as a fully self-funded program, it is clear from Ms. Isaacson’s report that a significant tuition increase is necessary to generate adequate revenue to do so. The comparative cost of this program will still be very favorable for SPS families. As such, I am recommending that the School Committee raise the tuition by 13.5% and change the discount for families who qualify for fully subsidized lunches (i.e., “free lunch”) from 80% to 60%, and change the discount for families who qualify for partially subsidized lunches (i.e., “reduced lunch”) from 60% to 40%. This is slightly higher than the 13.0% that was recommended by Ms. Isaacson and Mr. Collins in anticipation of higher health insurance costs than were

originally projected. While I am sensitive to the fact that this places greater financial pressure on families utilizing the Extended School Care program, it is still an excellent value and provides a significant discount for families with lower incomes, while generating enough revenue to offset costs.

For the music lesson program, given the need to pay more competitive market rates to instructors and maintain this program as fully self-funded, I agree with the suggested increases and recommend that the rates be changed as follows: increase the 30-minute lesson fee from \$30.49 to \$37.00 per lesson; increase 45-minute lesson fee from \$44.07 to \$55.50; and increase the 60-minute lesson fee from \$57.79 to \$74.00. As illustrated in the presentation from March 1, these increases would place the district within the same price range as others who have this type of lesson program, where we are currently below market.

In summary, given that increases to fees and tuition are not required to maintain educational staff and programming next year, my recommendation for Fiscal Year 2023 is to hold the transportation fee, athletics fees, and preschool tuition at the same level as the current fiscal year, but to increase the Extended School Care tuition and music lesson fees as detailed above in order to maintain those programs' self-sufficiency.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.