



# Shrewsbury Public Schools

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Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

March 22, 2024

To: School Committee  
Re: Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2025 Fees & Tuitions

At your last meeting, Mr. Girardi 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 27 meeting, and this memorandum contains these recommendations. Please refer to [the materials from your March 13 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 in 2021 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 three budget cycles, nor is it a concern for Fiscal Year 2025, 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 high school athletic fees are comparatively high, my recommendation is to keep these the same for FY25.

Regarding the athletic fee at Oak Middle School, I am recommending an increase from \$100 per season to \$125 per season (with the family cap per year increasing from \$300 to \$375). This will provide an estimated \$6,250 in revenue to offset costs of that program, which has expanded substantially in recent years. As noted in the presentation at your last meeting, the Oak athletic fee is not comparatively high compared with other local districts who charge a fee for middle school sports, and this will help address inflationary pressures with bus costs, etc.

Regarding preschool tuition, I also recommend keeping the rates the same as this year in FY25. Ms. Bridget Nichols, Director of Preschool Programs, has recommended that the district no longer provide a daily snack for students, as many families prefer to send the snack from home due to students' food preferences. By removing this cost while maintaining program tuition at the current levels, about 3% to 4% of the tuition funds collected (depending on how many days in a program) will not be used by the school for snack purchases and will serve as a buffer for other inflationary costs.

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 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 8.0% ("Option B" in [her memo](#) from the last meeting). 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 compared to programs elsewhere. I also commend Ms. Isaacson for pursuing eligibility for our program to participate in the updated state voucher program as a way to assist families with financial need to afford the program.

For the music lesson program, a significant adjustment was made for this current year, and the recommendation is not to increase that fee for FY25.

In summary, my recommendation for Fiscal Year 2025 is to hold the transportation fee, the high school athletic fee, the preschool tuition, and the music lesson fees at the same level as the current fiscal year, but to increase the Extended School Care tuition by 8.0% and Oak athletic fee from \$100 to \$125 per sport with a yearly family cap of \$375 as illustrated above.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.