

## Shelby County Board of Education

6047

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10/28/14, 03/28/17

# SCHOOL FEES AND DEBTS

## I. PURPOSE

To establish general guidelines on student school fees and debts.

## II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Shelby County Schools (SCS) students.

## III. POLICY STATEMENT

SCS is able to offer many programs due to the generous financial commitments of our parents and guardians. Without those financial commitments, SCS would not be able to offer many programs. It is therefore the responsibility of the District to engage in responsible and legally sound fiscal management practices and to ensure that the financial demands made on students and parents/guardians are reasonable, equitable and consistent with state law.

In accordance with state law, all school fees must be authorized by the Board.<sup>1</sup> School fees, as authorized by the Board, shall be categorized as 1) requested fees; and 2) required fees/fines/debts.<sup>2</sup>

### A. Requested Fees (may only be requested)

The following fees may be requested from but not required of any student, regardless of financial status:

1. Fees for activities that occur during regular school hours (the required one hundred eighty (180) instructional days), including field trips, any portion of which fall within the school day; or for activities outside regular school hours if required for credit or grade;

2. Fees for activities and supplies required to participate in all courses offered for credit or grade, including interscholastic athletics and marching band if taken for credit in accordance with local board policies;
3. Refundable security deposits collected by a school for use of school property for courses offered for credit or grade, including interscholastic athletics and marching band if taken for credit.

### **Parent/Legal Guardian Option to Pay Authorized Requested Fees**

The parent/legal guardian of a student shall be given opportunity to pay all or any portion of the authorized fee if they desire. However, if the parent chooses not to pay a fee, the child may not be prevented from participating in the activity or course for which the fee is requested.

### **B. Required Fees/Fines (may be required)**

The District may require and collect the following fees/fines from students:

1. Fines imposed on all students for late-returned library books; parking or other traffic fines imposed for abuse of parking privileges on school property; or reasonable charges for lost or destroyed textbooks, library books, workbooks or any other property of the school;
2. Debts incurred to a school;
3. Refundable security deposits collected by a school for use of school property for participating in extracurricular activities;
4. Costs for extracurricular activities occurring outside the regular school day including sports, optional trips, clubs or social events; and
5. Non-resident tuition charged of all students attending a school system other than the one serving their place of residence.

### **Fee Waivers for Economically Disadvantaged Students**

Economically Disadvantaged includes students identified through the following categories: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP – for students who would be otherwise eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch); Direct Certification; Homeless; Migrant; Runaway; Pre-K Economically Disadvantaged; and Headstart Fund.

A process to waive the following school fees for economically disadvantaged students shall be established by the District:

1. Fees or tuition applicable to courses taken for credit or grade during the summer by a student; except that non-resident students regularly enrolled in another school system may be required to pay fees or tuition for such summer courses; and
2. Fees required for graduation ceremonies.

*Withholding of Student Grades for Debts Owed to the School*

1. Report cards, diplomas, and transcripts of students who take SCS property or students who have incurred a debt to a school, shall be withheld until the student makes restitution in full. The following exceptions shall apply:
  - a. Student transfer to another school within the District  
The District shall be required to forward copies of the student's records, including the student's disciplinary records, to the school to which the student transfers.
  - b. Student transfer to another school outside of the District  
The District shall be required to forward copies of the student's records, including the student's disciplinary records, to the district to which the student transfers. This provision shall not apply to individuals who
    - 1) received a diploma or other certificate of graduation from a secondary high school of this state or any other state;
    - 2) is enrolled and making satisfactory progress in a course leading to a general educational development certificate (GED(R)) from a state-approved institution or organization or who has obtained a GED(R) unless the student is under eighteen (18) years of age and is not making satisfactory progress in the program;
    - 3) is six (6) years of age or younger and whose parent or guardian has filed a notice of intent to conduct a home school with the Superintendent or the director of a church-related school; or
    - 4) is a student enrolled in a home school who has reached seventeen (17) years of age.

Student records shall be made available to parents' schools and/or school districts pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

2. SCS shall permit the student and/or the student's parent to direct any dispute of a debt, the amount of the debt, or the application of sanctions to the Asst. Superintendent of Student Services. The decision of the Asst. Superintendent of Student Services shall be final.
- C. Written Notice of Requested Fees and Fee Waiver Process for Required Fees**  
Written notice shall be provided by the District to all students and their parents/legal guardians of authorized fees that may be requested, and notice of the fee waiver process.

1. The parent or legal guardian of a student shall be given the opportunity to pay all or any portion of the school fee if they desire. However, if the parent chooses not to pay a fee, the child may not be prevented from participating in the activity or course for which the fee is being requested.
2. Written notice shall be provided by the District to parents/legal guardians of approval or denial of requests for fee waivers. Any denial shall contain the specific reasons for denial and shall provide the parent/legal guardian the opportunity for a personal meeting with the appropriate school.
3. The District shall keep copies of any forms, notices and/or instructions used by schools in the waiver of fees and shall keep records of any denials, appeals of denials, and resolution of such appeals.

#### **IV. RESPONSIBILITY**

- A. The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed.

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**Legal References:**

1. TCA 49-2-110(c)
2. TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.03
3. TCA 49-2-114
4. TCA 49-6-3001(c)(1)(2)(3)

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**Cross References:**