



# Student Fees, Fines, and Charges

It is the intention of the City Schools of Decatur to provide equitable access, and prevent a family's financial situation from becoming a barrier, to a student's participation in all available opportunities for which the student is interested in participating. Furthermore, it is important that financial requests made of parents are understood, acknowledged, and monitored by the District. The following rules are intended to move the district toward that goal. Full implementation of this administrative regulation shall commence July 1, 2019.

CSD will use the *Choice Points to Advance Equity* tool (see below) when determining all aspects of adding or maintaining a fee for a school-related activity.

## Financial Assistance and Receiving Funds

It is important to the school district that a student needing financial assistance can request such assistance with dignity and that a family contributing additional funds can do so anonymously. Therefore, to protect student privacy, schools shall designate a single person or office to whom all fees, fines, and charges are submitted. This person shall receive the incoming funds, provide receipts to those requesting them, and generate a list of paid students for the person initiating the request for funds. This list will NOT indicate how a fee was paid, or whether any financial assistance was provided, but rather serve as a master list for the sponsor to know which students have fulfilled their financial obligations.

This person shall also manage the process for financial assistance such that the person initiating the request for funds has no knowledge of who did or did not receive financial assistance, who did or did not donate additional funds, etc. The individual who receives the funds shall code such deposits as designated by the Executive Director of Finance. Schools with sufficiently complex or extensive payment structures, like those of a high school, may designate more than one person to receive payments with the written permission of the Superintendent or his designee. Schools are encouraged to look for ways to improve the efficiency of this process in order to maximize human resources, such as allowing parents to write a single check to cover all of the known expenses for the school year.

## Requesting Funds

All requests to students or families for monetary payment shall include the following, in writing:

- The purpose for which the payment will be used
- The amount of the request and whether that amount is fixed or flexible
- Whether the request is mandatory or voluntary
- When the payment is due



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- The result if payment is not received
- The availability or non-availability of financial assistance
- The name, email address, and phone number of the person making the request
- The name, email address, and phone number of the person who receives the payments
- The name, email address, and phone number of the person who coordinates financial assistance (if different from the person above)
- The date that this monetary payment request was published in the district-wide list referenced below
- (Sample language is provided at the end of this administrative regulation)

All requests to students or families for monetary payment, from school employees or via school communications, shall be approved by the school principal (for school-based requests) or department director (for central office based requests) prior to being communicated to students or families. The principal/director shall ensure the request complies with this regulation and the associated Board policy.

The Executive Director of Equity and Student Support shall maintain a list of all monetary payment requests throughout the district and shall publish such list at least two weeks prior to the start of each school year. Requests not on the list at publication shall not be communicated to students or families without the express written permission of the Superintendent or his designee. The Executive Director of Equity and Student Support shall develop appropriate procedures and timelines to ensure compliance with this paragraph.

Other organizations that operate in relationship with our schools or the school district, such as PTA/O/SA and booster organizations, must consult with the school principal to adopt systems parallel to those described in this administrative regulation.

### Fines

Fines may be charged to a student when s/he does not return textbooks, technology or other equipment that is the property of the City Schools of Decatur. Items must be returned in satisfactory condition and/or in a timely manner. Students will be notified when they receive an item from the school district that could be subject to a fine. Fines can be charged for everything from repair to replacement value depending upon the condition of the item in question when distributed to the student. Schools may develop fine payment options that are similar to the financial assistance provisions elsewhere in this regulation (with approval of the building principal and the Executive Director of Equity and Student Support). Fines must be paid or payment arrangements made before replacement items are provided.



## Choice Points to Advance Equity

CSD uses this *Choice Points to Advance Equity* tool when determining all aspects of adding or maintaining a fee for a school-related activity.

- **Identify a Choice Point**
  - What is one of your points of opportunity to make or influence a decision that may affect equitable outcomes?
- **Assess Impacts**
  - What are the impacts of current decisions and actions that may be unintentionally reinforcing bias, barriers or inequities?
- **Generate Options**
  - What are some alternative action options that could produce different outcomes? (Try to generate several of them.)
- **Decide Action**
  - Which option will generate the most leverage, momentum or gain towards advancing equity and inclusion?
- **Change Habits**
  - What reminders or “equity primes” can be structured into your routine practices and protocols to make equity an ongoing priority and habit? What relationships, supports, incentives or accountability measures could help?

Questions about this regulation should be directed to the Executive Director of Equity and Student Support.

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*Related Board Policy: 2.1(d)(1), 2.4(b)(1)*

*Related Administrative Regulations: 2.4(b)(1)*

*Public Review and Feedback: 11/14/18 - 12/14/18*

*Approved by Cabinet: 5/6/19*



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### **SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR USE IN REQUESTS FOR MONETARY PAYMENT**

This program relies on financial contributions from participating families. Please know that a donation is not required to participate, and families that choose to contribute may do so at any amount. However, a suggested donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ will help sustain our program at its current level. Conversely, insufficient enrollment and/or insufficient funding could result in course or program cancellations.

#### Points you may choose to emphasize; alternative language

- Contributions are voluntary, and all students will be allowed to participate regardless of whether a donation is made.
- You are not required to purchase any of these items.
- A voluntary donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is appreciated.
- A \$\_\_\_\_\_ donation to the \_\_\_\_\_ department is appreciated to help offset costs for this program and to maintain the quality of the program that we have at \_\_\_\_\_ school.
- Students who participate in this extracurricular activity are encouraged to consider a one-time donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help cover the cost of the activity.
- Previous donations supporting this program have allowed us to do \_\_\_\_\_.  
We hope your contribution can help us sustain that record.
- We appreciate any donations made to this program.