

Student Fee Assessment

Presented to:

Westlake City Schools Board of Education

By:

Westlake City Schools
Citizens Advisory Committee

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Background

Many schools in northeast Ohio now routinely assess fees either on a per-student or per activity basis. Some of the challenges associated with instituting fee-based systems are implementation costs, tracking, collection, delinquency and enforcement. All districts surveyed (below) assess some form of fees for materials/labs/AP classes.

Below are the results of an informal survey of area school systems' general student or activity based fees. Several districts noted they would be raising their fees next year to help offset the increased costs associated with transportation and inflation in general.

Generally, report cards are withheld until fees have been paid for the respective reporting period. Most schools exempt children from payment of fees who are enrolled in the school lunch program.

One of the advantages of a student or activity based fee system is that it can be changed much more easily/rapidly than traditional property tax based levies which require voter approval. A fee based system is often viewed by taxpayers without children in the school system as a more appropriate means of paying for education and extra-curricular activities because it is born directly by those using it.

Methodology

Literature Review

Review of Westlake School District

Review of Comparison School Districts

Nationally Recognized Best Practice

Findings

Student Fee Policy within the Westlake School District

Student Fees in Comparison Districts

	Lab Fees	General Annual Fee	Activity Fees	Sport	Cap
Westlake	Yes				
Avon	Yes	\$40 - \$80			
Avon Lake	Yes			HS- \$200 (2 nd sport \$100) MS - \$100 (2 nd sport = \$50)	
Bay	Yes	\$35 - \$65			
Brecksville	Yes		\$20 / club	\$50 / sport	\$100
Lakewood	Yes	\$20 / year	\$75 / year		
Rocky River	Yes		\$20 / activity		
North Olmsted	Yes	\$35 / yr (K-6) \$50 / yr (7-8) Varies at HS			
Solon	Yes		Field Trip fees (vary)		

Recommendations

Budgetary challenges continue to be a primary concern to the voters of the school district. It is incumbent upon the administration of the WCSD to remain vigilant in the application of taxpayer dollars to provide the best education experience possible for the community's youth. At this time, it may be prudent to consider implementing a fee based system. WCSD is the only district other than Solon that does not have such a fee based system in place. This could be a combination of student fees and activity based fees. Further study would need to be completed in order to consider appropriate fees and cost structures particular to WCS.

Supporting Information