



## PROSPECT HEIGHTS DISTRICT 23 FINANCE COMMITTEE INFORMATION ITEM

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**Date:** April 14, 2021

**Title:** 2021-22 Student Fee Reduction & Waiver of Fees for Directly Certified Students

**Contact:** Amy McPartlin, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

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The Board of Education and Administration are cognizant that the pandemic continues to create significant financial challenges for many families in our school community. There are two items for consideration by the Finance Committee regarding the assessment of Student Fees for the 2021-22 school year.

Student Registration Fees are approved by the Board of Education and assessed on an annual basis. These fees have remained constant for the past several years. Approved fees for the 2021-22 school year are as follows:

### **Student Registration Fees**

<b>GRADE(S)</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Kindergarten	\$ 75
Grades 1 - 3	\$150
Grades 4 - 5	\$195
Grades 6 - 8	\$250

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION (REGISTRATION FEE REDUCTION):**

The District realizes that our families are under increasing financial pressures due to the pandemic and we continue to look for ways to provide additional support. Our FY21 expenditures are tracking considerably under budget and we continue to receive increased revenues from the Federal Government (CARES, FEMA, ESSERS) to offset some of our operational costs. We find ourselves under a bit of local pressure to “share” Federal dollars with impacted families.

We have looked at options for providing some financial relief to our families and have considered the following options:

- Parent option to pay fees and discretionary amount
- Full elimination of Registration Fees for the 2021-22 school year
- 50% reduction of Registration Fees for the 2021-22 school year

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION (REGISTRATION FEE REDUCTION):**

Administration believes that a one-time, 50% adjustment to the fee amount to be the most financially responsible and beneficial to our families and larger community.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION (DIRECT CERTIFICATION):**

On a monthly basis, the Business Office receives updates from the State of Illinois via the Illinois State Board of Education regarding students that have been automatically approved for free school meals based on their participation in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Income Eligible Medicaid or Foster Child status. These certifications are valid for one year and then may be extended 30 days into the following school year.

The current number of Directly Certified District 23 students is 378. We have another 23 students that have applied for and qualify for free/reduced meals. In summary, these families are considered low income by the State and we already receive funding for them through the Federal Title funding. As a District, we have been adding a layer of “Application for Waiver” that can add confusion and frustration for families that believe they should receive a waiver based on their certification status. This has also led to additional time being spent by the Business Office staff on status verifications and corrections.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION (DIRECT CERTIFICATION):**

The Business Office will continue to offer a payment plan for all families. They will also maintain the available fee waiver process, but create an automatic waiver of school fees for those students who have been directly certified through the State.

We welcome the Committee’s discussion and are asking for their support in bringing both recommendations to the full Board in April.