

Additional Guidance on District Textbook Fees for Concurrent Enrollment Courses

For concurrently enrolled students, textbooks must be provided to students in the same way as districts provide books for other courses pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 301. By district policy, a school may rent a textbook, require a student to buy a book, or provide books at no cost.

District textbook fees may be specific to a course or level. Please note the following:

- The school board must adopt a policy that includes provisions for a waiver of the textbook fee (full waiver, partial waiver, or temporary waiver). The waiver process may help to reduce the impact of textbook fees on students and families with limited ability to pay. See below.
- The contractual agreement between the college and the district should delineate who is responsible for providing textbooks to students. It may be possible for the agreement to expressly prohibit students from being charged or to set a standard policy for book rental or purchase fees.
- Students cannot be charged a fee for tools or equipment. Who buys these items is determined by the contractual agreement between the district and community college. Neither the district nor the college may require that students provide their own tools or equipment.
- The requirements for PSEO regarding textbooks are different than for concurrent enrollment (e.g., books and materials must be provided to students at no cost but students may be charged for equipment the student retains).

The following is a modified excerpt from the department's website regarding textbook fees: http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=970&Itemid=1

“Where there are fees charged, of course, there must be waivers. Chapter 18 of the DE’s rules requires that all students be afforded equal access to course offerings and related activities to meet their needs and interests. Accordingly, the rules in that chapter govern fee waivers. There must be a board policy that shall include provisions for granting a waiver (also called a full waiver), partial waiver, or temporary waiver of student fees upon application by the student.

- a. Full Waiver. A student shall be granted a full waiver of all fees if:
 1. The student or the student’s family meets the financial eligibility criteria for free meals offered under the Child Nutrition Program;
 2. The student or the student’s family meets financial eligibility criteria for participation in the Family Investment Program (FIP);
 3. The student or the student’s family is eligible for transportation assistance under open enrollment provided under 281—IAC 17.9(3); or

- Note: Have all required board policies in place. These policies must address the charging and collecting of fees for course offerings and related activities (the seven allowable fees); discretionary transportation (if a district provides discretionary transportation, say so in policy and address the fees in policy); and provisions for full, partial, and temporary waivers (with income guidelines). These policies must be given to students or families at the time of registration or enrollment. For students whose primary language is other than English, the school shall provide a copy of the materials in the student's native language or arrange for translation of the materials within a reasonable time.

4. The student is in foster care. Period. This is an automatic qualifier and is not contingent on the financial health of the student or student's family.

Note: SSI eligibility is no longer a qualifier because a student may qualify for SSI without regard to financial circumstances.

- b. Partial Waiver. A school district shall grant a student either a partial waiver of all student fees if the student or the student's family meets the financial eligibility criteria for reduce price meals under the Child Nutrition Program. A partial waiver shall be based on a sliding scale related to an ability to pay.
- c. Temporary Waiver. At the discretion of the school district, a student may be granted a temporary waiver of a fee or fees (note- it does not have to be all fees) in the event of a temporary financial difficulty in the student's immediate family. A temporary waiver may be applied for and granted at any time during a school year. The maximum length of a temporary waiver shall be one year. Discretion means just that, this is not a mandatory waiver."