

**Questions from the High School Principals Meeting  
Course-Related Fees  
February 4, 2009**

1. Can we assume that if a textbook is approved, then the related workbook is approved?

*Response:* Yes. The workbook will be approved and will have gone through the same evaluation and selection process as the textbook.

2. If we are using a vocabulary book, we understand that we have to provide the first book. What if a student loses the vocabulary book? Is this an obligation?

*Response:* Yes. When a student has lost, destroyed, or damaged a book that the school has assigned to him/her, the appropriate obligation will be assigned.

3. The SAT class uses a workbook. What if a student wants to purchase a workbook so he/she can write in it?

*Response:* There are various scenarios. One scenario is that the school provides a workbook to each student in the SAT class and students may write in the workbook. The second scenario is that each student is provided a workbook but may not write in the workbook, and students use their own paper for responding to questions. In this instance, if a student prefers to purchase the workbook so he/she may write in it, the student may be given this option to purchase the workbook at cost (if the workbooks are available). Teachers must emphasize that purchasing the workbook is an option, not an expectation or requirement.

4. Career and Technology Education—certification/assessments? If a student is paying an outside entity, can we still collect the money?

*Response:* Yes. The school may collect the funds, but it must be placed in a specific sub-account designated for a particular entity/company, e.g., Cisco. The check may be made to the outside entity.

5. Will fees be the same throughout the county?

*Response:* Designated courses will have a maximum fee amount that may be charged (not to exceed the actual cost of the item). Schools will have the option of not charging any fee or charging up to the maximum fee amount allowed for a designated course. This enables school administrators and school leadership the autonomy to align their resources based on individual instructional programs and needs of each school.

6. When will we get the fees associated with courses?

*Response:* You will receive the final list of fees associated with courses prior to spring break.

7. AP courses—What if teachers still want to provide the workbooks?

*Response:* If the workbook is used for classwork or homework and is part of the student's grade, then it needs to be provided, or a classroom's set can be provided with the option for students to purchase their own copies.

8. Do "Post Its," scissors, rulers, and index cards (for research papers) all need to be provided by the school?

*Response:* These items are considered to be commonly found at home and do not need to be provided. If a student is unable to obtain any of these items, arrangements should be made between the teacher and student. If the item is to be used solely for an in-class instructional activity, such as modeling how to use an index card as an organizational tool for preparing a research report, the school should provide these materials as they would be considered materials of instruction for that lesson.

9. Agenda books? Can schools charge for agenda books?

*Response:* Yes, as long as the agenda book is not part of a student's grade, and it is not used as a hall pass. Fees may be charged if the item is not required. For example, all ninth graders are **encouraged** to obtain agenda books as an organizational tool, but are not required to obtain the agenda book. Please note that the basis for not charging a fee for a required agenda book has nothing to do with course-related fee guidelines.

10. Can a school request that students provide their own locks for PE?

*Response:* Students may provide their own lock (this is a local school decision), or you may assign and dispense a lock and require a \$5 deposit. This deposit would be returned when the lock is returned at the end of the semester or school year. As an alternative, schools may loan the locks without charge, but assess an obligation (for the cost of the lock only) if the lock is lost or damaged.

11. How will we know that the student is eligible for a waiver? Can we follow up with parents?

*Response:* We are not requesting any verification of hardship for a waiver request. Generally speaking, once a parent, student, or staff member requests a waiver for a student, you should not question the request. However, if a student asks for a waiver and you have reason to believe that this family is not in need of this accommodation, using your judgment and being sensitive, you and/or a designee may call the parent and verify that they are asking for this waiver.

12. Next year's seniors will have accrued obligations under the current course-related fees guidelines. Can we hold these students responsible for these accrued obligations even though the obligations were accrued under guidelines that are no longer applicable?

*Response:* Those obligations that were accrued under the guidelines in place prior to the 2009–2010 school year and not satisfied prior to July 1, 2009, can be carried into the

following year. These obligations were accrued under the governing course-related fees guidelines at the time and are not automatically dismissed solely because MCPS has modified and initiated new course-related fees guidelines.

13. Schools have varying amounts of FARMS students. Will all schools receive the same flat rate or will there be a varying amount based on the poverty level of the school?

*Response:* For FY 2010, allocations will be \$22 per high school student. It is important to use the waiver forms as this information will be reviewed to determine if adjustments to the allocations for individual schools need to be made in the future.

14. What if a student loses multiple textbooks—can a student request a waiver on his obligations for the lost textbooks at the end of the year?

*Response:* No. However, should a situation arise where a student cannot pay for his or her lost textbook, a payment schedule should be considered. As with similar situations, this decision must be made with sensitivity and use of your judgment.