



Barrington Public Schools

Empowering All Students to Excel

Good afternoon,

As you may be aware, last April 2019, the [Commissioner of Education released guidance on field trip policies](#), specifically the ability for the school or district to charge students to attend trips that connect to the core curriculum, electives, or courses, including the performance arts.

The significant changes to the Barrington Public Schools' policy are:

Funding

The district's annual budget shall contain an allocation of Field Trip funds for each school. Students and schools may participate in fundraising and accept voluntary contributions to support a school's Field Trip allocation, as outlined in [the BPS Gifts, Donations, and Memorials Policy](#).

No student shall be ineligible to participate in a Field Trip based on their family's ability or willingness to pay, or on their level of participation in fund-raising activities. Administration may limit field trip participation based on eligibility requirements such as safety expectations or membership in courses, athletics, or extracurricular. Administration may also limit field trips to a first-come-first-serve basis based on capacity requirements.

Special Events and Club Activities

"Social events such as prom, and club activities not defined as an instructional activity and/or learning experience provided outside of the regular classroom environment, off school premises, and generally during at least some portion of the instructional day for the purpose of clarifying, reinforcing, and/or enriching a particular skill and/or concept embedded within the district's educational offerings, and designed to improve education results, consistent with the purpose of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Basic Education Program ("BEP") are excluded from the prohibition of fees described in this policy." See *RICR 200-10-1.1.1. and (Opinion Letter of the Commissioner to Supt. Sheehan, December 22, 2008)*.

We are aware that you may have questions related to the enforcement of the regulation. We outlined frequently asked questions below.

Can we suggest a donation amount for a specific field trip? No. You may indicate that donations are welcome, but not a particular amount. If you are accepting donations, you **may not** track the donations by student or parent name. For example, you may indicate that you are attempting to raise \$10, 000 for field trips.

Can we send out updates on how much we have raised? Yes. You can track donations toward a goal and update families and students on how close you are to that goal.



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Can we request school, department, cluster, or grade donations in a specific amount? You may not indicate a per-pupil amount. You may suggest, something similar to - "Grade 4 will be attending three field trips this year to extend the curriculum. The trips will be to X, Y, and Z. To help pay for the trips, the 4th-grade team is welcoming donations. We will also engage in the X fundraiser, where 50% of the proceeds will be used to offset the cost of the trips. We hope to reach \$5,000 by April 3rd! We will post a chart of our progress in achieving our goal at the front of the school." Again, you may not track donations by student or parent name.

What will happen to our large-scale trips, such as Band Trips, Athletic Trips, D.C. Trips, and Academic Competition Trips? We will have to collaborate on long-term fundraising solutions to provide students the opportunities to continue to attend these trips. The solutions may be multi-year approaches that involve the broader school community — for example, a District-Wide festival where the proceeds are divided per student and provided to the schools. We will also need to continue our partnerships with parent organizations, who have been a tremendous source of support.

What will happen if a group does not meet its fundraising goal? If a group does not meet its goal, and the school or District budget does not include sufficient funds to cover the trip, the trip cannot occur. The group should decide on potential back-up strategies in case this occurs. Some options include a) planning for a less expensive alternative in case the goal is not met or b) rolling the money over in the activities account to the next year.

If a group exceeds its fundraising goal, what happens to the funds? The school should determine this with the teacher leadership team in advance. Options include a) maintaining the funds in the activities account for the following year or b) adding an additional experience. If the fundraising occurred by grade, the funds can also move to the next grade with the students. If the fundraising occurred in a looping cluster that will include the same students in the following year, the funds can stay within the cluster. **Each school will work with its leadership team to develop a written protocol that is published in the handbook annually.** For example, BMS has decided on the following: Grade level field trip fund: Money not used will roll up to the next grade level, following the students, and will be equally divided among the clusters (6th to 7). Looping clusters that maintain the same students the following year, will have the opportunity to roll over the money into their cluster, but only on the looping year with the same students. Grade 7 to 8 will be used to offset the cost of the Washington DC trip.

In lieu of rolling over excess money or going on an alternative field trip, can donors receive a refund? No. The donations are donations to the field trip account and are not tracked by student name. As they are donations, the District will begin to provide a receipt of **donation letters for tax purposes** in January of each calendar year.



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Will the District begin to budget for field trips? Unfortunately, this year's budget was passed before the announcement clarifying this regulation. The District and Building Administration will review potential budgeting strategies for future years. As with any addition to the budget, funds will remain within a fiscally responsible level. This change in practice and policy will require concerted and thoughtful collaboration between the schools and the community.

What are the fundraising options? Fundraisers must be approved by the building principal. They can include asking for donations, sales, and events. The sale of food items is discouraged, but if it does occur, it must adhere to the guidelines in the [health and wellness policy](#). No food items may be sold on school grounds during the school day.

Can businesses donate? Yes, but not as a form of advertisement. Donations must follow the BPS Donations policy referenced above.

The full policy can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WeSWAip1COSAFX3O4KutTH1zAudoqvJrw07-ayjBdRY/edit?usp=sharing>

Please send us any additional questions or ideas that you may have, as we begin the implementation of these state requirements.

Overnight Field Trip Guidelines to Support the Policy

Overnight Field Trip Steps:

Establish a non-negotiable declaration date where families would need to commit to participating in the overnight field trip. Any student who declares after that non-negotiable date would be placed on a waiting list.

Communicate with families that their commitment would guarantee a spot on the trip and help the school/cluster establish an overall cost of the trip and move forward with planning logistics with tour companies.

Once an overall price has been established, communicate with families that donations will be welcomed and all donations will go to the total cost of the trip. Donations would not go to a specific child. Families will also be notified that once donations are collected, they can not be returned to the families.

At this time, families will also be notified that if clusters/school does not get the total cost of the trip, then the clusters/school would need to seek an alternative field trip experience with the donations collected.



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Once the total number of students attending the trip has been established, clusters/school will establish another “drop dead” date to receive donations that will go to the total cost of the trip. If the total cost of the trip has not been reached, the cluster/school will communicate with the families that the cluster/school will participate in the alternative field trip experience.

Points of Emphasis:

Students cannot be excluded from participating in the trip based on income/donations/contributions.

Donations collected cannot go to a specific child. They have to go to the total cost of the trip.

Cluster/school cannot disclose the “cost per child,” but can communicate the total overall cost of the trip.

Clusters/school cannot communicate “suggested donations.”

Families must commit to participating by the “drop dead” date.

If donations for the trip does not cover the total cost of the trip, clusters/school will need to seek an alternative field trip experience.

Cluster/schools may run fundraising campaigns that fit within our fundraising policy established by the school committee. Funds raised cannot go to a specific child but will go to the total cost of the trip.

If you have any question please contact me.

Thank you.

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