

Fee for student parking to increase

Written by MARK JAEGER
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Hike proposed to make up for revenue lost by giving athletes a break

Ozaukee High School students will have to pay more to park on campus next school year, but the hike won't be as great as it could have been.

Principal Kevin Parker recommended boosting the fee for student parking passes to \$40 a trimester or \$120 for the entire school year.

The current fee for a parking pass is \$15 a trimester or \$45 for the year.

Parker explained the increase was being sought in part to make up for the anticipated loss in revenue after adjusting the athletic fee to encourage students to go out for multiple sports.

That adjusted schedule assesses a \$75 fee for the first sport a student participates in, \$25 for a second and no charge for a third.

"There are between 110 and 125 students who drive to school, which is significantly more participation than we have in athletics," Parker said.

When the fee schedule was presented to the Northern Ozaukee School Board last week, it was the proposed parking charge that drew reaction.

Parker said the proposed level was "very competitive" with the parking fees charged at other Ozaukee County high schools, which he said range from \$100 to \$500 a year.

He said a parent advisory group supported the proposed fee.

"The basis for my fee restructuring is that our student athletes seem to be paying a 'high cost' and yet are supporting our school the most," Parker said in a memo on the proposed charges.

"Therefore, I've tried to simply spread the burden, as I understand we cannot just do without the income."

Board member Kendall Thistle worried that setting the parking fee too high might have unintended repercussions.

"There is the risk of the Port Washington syndrome, where students choose to park on city streets instead of in the school parking lot, creating havoc for the neighbors," Thistle said.

The parking fee at Port High is \$100 a year.

Supt. Bill Harbron said raising the parking fee might encourage more students to ride the bus, which he said is currently under-utilized.

Harbron also noted that the parking fee had not been adjusted for five years.

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Still, he was a little agitated that the board was spending so much time on the parking fee question.

“The fact is, we are not going to live or die on the parking fee. Tell us what you want the fee to be. We are not going to lose financial stability without the increase,” Harbron said.

Board member Stephen Burmesch said the cost of car ownership may give students a different perspective on whether the proposed fee is reasonable.

“When they get a car and start having to pay for gas and insurance, I don’t think the fee is going to look like that much,” Burmesch said.

Still, the board voted 8-1 to modify the fee increase — to \$30 a trimester or \$90 a year.

None of the other fees generated any comments from the board, including a \$15 charge to create student identification cards at the high school. The cards will serve as admission passes to home athletic events.

Family passes for home high-school sporting events will continue to cost \$100.

Student fees for the brick-and-mortar and virtual schools remain the same — \$30 at the elementary school level, and \$60 at the middle and high school levels.

Hot lunch and milk prices will remain the same next year at all grade levels.