

Mariemont HS/JH – Pay to Participate DAC Project

February, 2010 (Final)

Background

- The Mariemont Board of Education (BOE) will implement an extracurricular activity pay to participate system starting in the 2010/11 school year. They wish to reduce the amount of taxpayer dollars used for expenses associated with extracurricular activities.
- The Superintendent was asked to commission a District Advisory Committee (DAC) to recommend a HS & JH fee structure for students participating in these activities.
- The DAC was asked to consider: 1) a system that maximizes participation, 2) inclusion of co-curricular activities, and 3) use of supplemental salaries and transportation as a guide for establishing criteria.
- The BOE will not require students on the “free/reduced lunch” program to participate in the fee program.

Recommendation:

Initiate a Pay to Participate system in 2010/11 for the following extracurricular activities:

- All High School & Junior High Sports
- High School Play (Fall) & Junior High Play
- High School Musical (Spring)
- High School Show Stoppers (Fall)
- Drum Line (Winter)

Fee Structure	Fee per Season(1)	Per Yr. Family Cap(2)	(1) 3 rd season discount: HS - \$40, JH - \$25
High School	\$65	\$260	(2) Cap includes combined HS & JH activities
Junior High	\$40	\$260	

Note: Fee per season example - if a student participates in two activities in the same season (e.g. Baseball & HS Musical); they are responsible for only one fee payment (\$65 or \$40.)

Basis of Recommendation:

The committee evaluated several pay to participate programs in nearby school districts and community fee norms and established criteria based on: fee benchmarks, participation levels and program options.

1. Co-curriculum – We believe activities for which course credit is given should not be part of the program. This includes all Band co-curricular activities.
2. Extra Curriculum Criteria:
 - a. All High School and Junior High sports,
 - b. All other HS & JH extracurricular activities that require level 1-4 supplemental salaries or combinations that exceed the level 4 amount.
3. Fee Structure:
 - a. *Activity Fee* – Using local Recreation fees as a guide, we believe \$65/\$40 is reasonable - the predominant local Recreation fee is \$65. The separate HS & JH fees are driven by cost differences. A third season discount is offered to encourage year-round participation
 - b. *Family Cap* – This cap represents a per activity high school ratio (4:1) consistent with other school districts. We believe it’s a suitable concession for a family of 2+ students. The cap includes all HS and JH students in a family.
 - c. *Per Season* – The per season payment approach (vs. per activity) is recommended to encourage participation and simplify the administration process.

Other Considerations

- Transportation/Competition Expenses – We considered transportation and competition expenses as potential criteria, but determined there weren’t necessary. The supplemental salary criterion for non-athletic activities was sufficient for meeting our task objectives.
- Clubs – Clubs and other extracurricular activities require level 5, 6 or 7 supplemental salaries so they are not included in the recommended system.
- Band – Several band activities like Marching Band and Pep Band are listed in the Handbook as extracurricular activities, however, co-curricular Band students are expected to participate in these activities.

Q & A:

1. What is today's participation level for HS Athletics?

A: 300 of the ~515 HS students (58%) participate in at least one athletic activity, and about 130 of the ~250 JH students participate in at least one sport. The HS breakdown is outlined below.

Season	# of Participants	% Total	Students participating in:	# of Students	% Total	% of All Students
Fall	236	45%	One Sport	167	56%	32%
Winter	118	22%	Two Sports	78	26%	15%
Spring	176	33%	Three Sports	55	18%	11%
Total	530		Total	300		58%

2. What is today's participation level for the HS Fine Arts extracurricular activities recommended in the pay to participate program?

A: Combined, the four High School Fine Arts activities recommended involve about 100 participants – ~10 students in the Fall Play, ~20 each for Show Stoppers and Drum Line and ~50 in Spring Musical. Like athletics, there is a great deal of overlap – we estimate ~20 net incremental students in these programs. These numbers do not include the ~10 participating crew members in the Musical and Play. Crew participants are volunteers and not considered part of the “pay” program.

3. How many total students will be impacted by the new pay to participate program?

A: About 470 of the total 765 HS/JH students will be impacted by the program, representing ~60% of the total. The student breakdown by school – High School: 320 of 515; Junior High: 150 of 250. While ~60% of all students will be in the “pay” program, we estimate that 90% participate in at least one extracurricular activity. (*Special Note: These numbers exclude participants in the “reduced/free lunch” program – as noted above, these students will be excluded from the “pay” system.*)

4. At a later date, if needed, what options do we have to generate additional revenue to off-set increased costs associated with extracurricular activities?

A: There are a number of options:

- Increase the participation fee – This is the most viable option across all program elements. The recommended activities represent almost 90% of extracurricular supplemental salaries and ~97% of fully loaded (all) expenses.
- Include supplemental salary levels 5-8 for non-athletic activities – This choice would impact all clubs and remaining extra curricular activities. These are low cost activities, most of which require a fee today. It would likely eliminate many of these activities, and many of these participants do not participate in athletics. Total costs represent about 3% of all extracurricular activities.
- Institute a flat extracurricular fee for all HS & JH students (and do not initiate a pay-to-participate system) – This is a viable option due to the 90% participation rate, but it's outside the scope of the DAC task since the group was charged with recommending a “participation” program. Key points to consider: 1) while a “pay” system could reduce participation, a flat fee to all students may encourage multiple activity participation, 2) it's simple to understand and easy to administer, 3) students not participating (~50) would fund the balance of the students, and those participating in one activity would disproportionately fund students who participate in multiple activities, 4) a \$65/\$40 flat fee for all students would generate about the same funds as the DAC “pay” recommendation, and 5) you would avoid the “value of the activity” assessment by the participant with a single fee.
- Separate “after school” Band activities from the Band Co-Curricular Program – This would include Marching Band, Pep Band and Color Guard, making them truly “extracurricular”. This decision would put these programs at risk - a decision that requires further discussion.
- Increase the participation fee to account for transportation: This would require a two tier fee structure since many of the Fine Arts programs do not require transportation.