

Guidance on Student Fees for Scholarship Program (SSEEP) Schools; Instructions on Submitting Student Fee Policy to LDOE for Legislative Reporting

As communicated this summer, [Act 240](#) of the 2019 Regular Legislative Session now requires schools participating in the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program (SSEEP) to adopt fee policies, no later than December 1, 2019, that identify all fees paid with scholarship funds. The policy must contain specified components and be disseminated to parents or legal guardians of scholarship students relative to certain fees and the purpose, amounts, and waivers related thereto. The Department of Education is required to verify that policies have been adopted that reflect the new state law. Please fill out the following [survey](#) to submit your information to the Department.

State law (R.S. 17:4022) outlines the requirements of schools that participate in the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program. The law has specified that the school shall “accept the scholarship amounts provided to scholarship recipients as full payment of all educational costs, including incidental or supplementary fees that are charged to all enrolled students including but not limited to meals, field trips, and before- or after-school care.” BESE regulations (Bulletin 133) further describe the costs that can be included in scholarships provided through the program.

Q: What does the updated law require of a participating school?

A: R.S. 17:4022 now additionally requires that the school identify in writing all such fees that are paid with the scholarship. For any fees not charged to all enrolled students and not paid by the scholarship, the school must adopt and disseminate to parents of scholarship recipients a policy that lists the fee and its purpose and amount. It must also include a process for parents of scholarship recipients to apply for and receive a waiver of the fee due to economic hardship, including objective criteria for granting such waivers. Such policy must include a statement prohibiting the education records of a scholarship recipient from being withheld due to failure to pay any fine, debt, or other outstanding obligation.

Q: When must these new policies be in place? How and when will the LDOE review for compliance?

A: The law states that these policies must be adopted no later than December 1, 2019. The LDOE is required to submit a formal report to the Legislature, which will be a public record, no later than December 31, 2019, on each school’s implementation and compliance.

If your school has already adopted this policy, as required, please complete this [survey](#) at your earliest convenience. If your school has not yet adopted the policy, please complete the survey as quickly as possible, no later than December 2, 2019. Given the number of policies to be collected and reviewed before the legislative reporting deadline of December 31st, LDOE staff would appreciate as many early submissions as possible. Contact david.maestas@la.gov with any questions.