

To: Hanover School Committee  
From: Michael Oates  
Cc: Matthew A. Ferron, Superintendent of Schools  
Date: February 28, 2024  
Re: Athletics User Fees: Data for Consideration

**Current Data and Fee Structure:**

As we have discussed over the past several months, we are currently evaluating the fee structure for high school athletics. As we look at the current state of athletics at Hanover High School, we are encouraged and excited by the participation rates and the overall success of these programs. Presently, we have 14 sports available for male athletes (24 teams) and 15 sports available for female athletes (25 teams). Participation is very balanced between male and female student-athletes: 431 for boys and 446 for girls teams. Any student/family with concerns about the affordability of participation is given the support necessary to participate through a process established by the administration. There are approximately 40 waivers of fees each year.

Our current athletics user fee structure has two tiers: \$260 for the sports with the highest operational costs (hockey, football, and basketball) and \$200 for all remaining sports. User fees are deposited into the Athletics revolving account, and these revenues are used to pay for expenses associated with athletics that are not coaching salaries. Coaching salaries are paid from the operating budget. Unfortunately, the current fee structure is no longer sufficient to cover the rising costs associated with an athletic program of this size and expectations.

Our research has shown that local districts are split between charging a fee per sport or a one-time fee to participate for the entire year (one sport or multiple sports = one total cost). Our current fees generally align with other districts charging a fee for each sport (Duxbury, Whitman-Hanson, Hull, Cohasset, Norwell). Our per-sport fees are generally less than local districts that charge an annual fee (Marshfield, Hingham, Silver Lake, Rockland, East Bridgewater), but many students only participate in one (or two) sports. With few exceptions, most districts charge a user fee for athletics (and transportation), and we are not an outlier with our current fee structure.

**History:**

A decade ago, our athletics user fees were approximately 25% higher than our current fee structure. In 2015, we reduced the athletics user fees in response to community concerns at that time. At that time, the user fees were \$350 for hockey, football, and basketball and \$270 for all remaining sports. Along with reducing the fees, we also implemented a family cap of \$1,000. Over the past nine years, the costs for transportation, tournament fees, game officials, equipment, uniforms, coaches, ice time, and other typical expenses have increased significantly, while user fees have remained flat. The purpose of this analysis is to provide options for the

Committee's consideration that would increase fees to the minimal level required to cover these increased expenses within the revolving account.

**For Consideration:**

The attached draft proposal includes three tiers. Hockey is the first tier, and the draft user fee is \$500. Ice time is the most significant and challenging expense within our athletic programs. Football and basketball are the second tier, and the draft user fee is \$350. All remaining sports would be \$250. The family cap would be increased to \$1,250. The overall impact on a family with multiple student-athletes (already at or near the current family cap) would be \$250/yr. The more significant impact would be on the student-athlete (or family) who plays 1 or 2 sports and doesn't reach the family cap. The examples below illustrate the impact.

As was shared in the October revolving accounts update, our Athletics revolving account ended FY24 with a deficit of approximately \$60,000, which requires the district to identify operating funds that can be used to offset that shortfall and reconcile all obligations. This is not a sustainable practice and needs to be remedied in FY25. We predict this draft increase in user fees would generate enough revenue to balance the athletics revolving account at the end of the FY25 fiscal year. The target for any fee increase will be to break even in the revolving account at the end of the fiscal year.

Hanover has an exceptional athletic program with high participation across all sports and teams. We have been able to maintain a level of excellence for 10 years without increasing fees; however, the past two years have demonstrated that we need to increase revenue to maintain the current level of service for our student-athletes, coaches, and families. This draft fee structure is shared for your consideration, and we remain open to ongoing evaluation of options.

## Examples: Future Draft Fee Structure

Example 1: Family with 2 sibling student-athletes (5 sports total):

Student 1	Current Fee	Draft Fee	Increase
Football	\$260	\$350	\$90
Wrestling	\$200	\$250	\$50
<b>Total: Student 1</b>	<b>\$460</b>	<b>\$600</b>	<b>\$140</b>
Student 2	Current Fee	Draft Fee	Increase
Volleyball	\$200	\$250	\$50
Basketball	\$260	\$350	\$90
Track	\$200	\$250	\$50
<b>Total: Student 2</b>	<b>\$660</b>	<b>\$850</b>	<b>\$190</b>
Family total:	\$1,120	\$1,450	\$330
Family Cap	\$1,000	\$1,250	\$250
<b>Total Family Cost</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$1,250</b>	<b>\$250</b>

Example 2: Maximum financial impact for a three-sport athlete and/or family:

Student 1	Current Fee	Draft Fee	Increase
Football	\$260	\$350	\$90
Hockey	\$260	\$500	\$240
Baseball	\$200	\$250	\$50
<b>Total: Student 1</b>	<b>\$720</b>	<b>\$1,100</b>	<b>\$380</b>
Student 2	Current Fee	Draft Fee	Increase
Volleyball	\$200	\$250	\$50
Hockey	\$260	\$500	\$240
Track	\$200	\$250	\$50
<b>Total: Student 2</b>	<b>\$660</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$340</b>
Family total:	\$1,380	\$2,100	\$720
Family Cap	\$1,000	\$1,250	\$250
<b>Total Family Cost</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$1,250</b>	<b>\$250</b>