

## Create a financial worksheet that includes all costs

Helping parents plan their expenses

***“How customer-friendly are your prices and fees? What I mean is do you add fees... that either surprise them or make them feel like they are being taken advantage of?”***

Shep Hyken, Author & Speaker  
*"Do you offer customer friendly prices?"*  
hyken.com

### **Create a financial worksheet that includes all fees and expenses for the year.**

You are asking parents to make a huge financial commitment for the year. Please don't keep surprising them, unpleasantly, with additional expenses as the year progresses. These nasty little jolts are a quick way to turn a happy, "promoter" parent into a passive one. And to turn a passive parent into a detractor.

#### **What should be listed?**

- Tuition
- Registration fee
- After or before school care
- Supplies—If you ask parents to send students to school with any supplies, please list what they need for each grade along with what those will cost altogether (not each item priced separately).
- Outdoor education trips—If you don't know the details yet at least give them an estimate and commit to keeping expenses below that amount.
- Field trips—Yes, I know many teachers don't plan these for the whole year. But imagine how impressed your parents will be if you do. If you truly don't know, use one of these approaches:
  - » List "field trips" as a total with an overall cost you are sure you won't exceed.
  - » List each trip with its expenses and for a trip you are unsure of list your best guess and indicate it is an estimate.
- Learning tours (history, science, heritage) —If these happen occasionally it doesn't hurt to list them even on years when they aren't scheduled so parents can see what to expect in the future.
- Music tours—see above
- School uniforms—Of course, the cost of these can vary if your school has an "exchange event" (also an excellent idea) or a more flexible uniform policy that

allows for purchasing through different suppliers. Nonetheless, you need to help parents plan for these expenses.

- PE uniforms
- Hot lunches
- Books—If your schools does not supply books please at least list a range and tips on bargain sources. An exchange event or time at an existing event is a great idea here as well.
- Varsity sports (fees, uniforms, travel costs)—This will need to be listed by sport since they likely vary significantly. (Hint: It will help your parents to also know when each season starts and ends.)
- Club fees
- Music lessons
- Parking or registering a car for on campus parking
- Senior class events
  - » Class jacket, sweatshirt, letter jacket
  - » Trips
  - » Graduation regalia
  - » Graduation announcements—if ordered through a school-wide supplier
- Anything else you can think of...

### **How should it be presented?**

Please include a note at the top (written in "first-person friendly"—not "official school bulletin" style) that explains your intention to simplify your parents' lives by letting them know what to expect.

Any activities or items that are optional should be clustered together under the heading "Optional expenses." I would still put "(optional)" behind each item to reinforce this is not required.

If you find this list is long and daunting—your parents will too. I strongly suggest you and your board consider including everything you can in your tuition and thereby shortening this list. But either way, don't skip creating the list. Even a daunting list is better than surprising parents throughout the year.

### **Where should this be listed?**

Not on your one-page application. That should be as simple as possible.

This should be included in your registration packet. Ideally, it should be designed as a worksheet parents can fill out for their own use.

**Delegating:**

This is best delegated to a relatively new parent who may have an easier time remembering all the things they were asked to pay for that they didn't expect.

**Binder tab:** March

**School size:** All

**Marketing process step:**

- 1) Who are we?
- 2) What do families want?
- 3) What needs to change?
- 4) How do we tell our community?
- 5) How do we track results?