

**GLENBROOK HIGH SCHOOLS**  
**Office of the Superintendent**  
**Glenview - Northbrook, Illinois**

To: Board of Education

From: Mike Riggle

Re: Convenience Fees

Date: March 4, 2010

**Critical Question:** Should the board approve convenience fees set by the administration for online services offered by District 225?

Currently

At the February 22 meeting of the board, extensive discussion was held regarding convenience fees charged to the district for the use of credit cards by students and parents. The administration initiated a \$2.50 convenience fee at the end of January based on current expense to the district for Quest Food Services and planned to do the same for future transactions involving summer camp and summer school registration, transportation, and bursar expenses. The only active convenience fee charge at the present time is for pre-loading a student account for food purchases at the schools through Quest. The board reached unanimous consensus that expenses charged to the district for online credit card transactions should be charged to the user and not a business expense supported by taxpayers.

Concern was expressed by the board on the legal liability that might exist due to the administration's action to initiate a convenience fee without board approval. A further question was raised as to the ability of the board to retroactively approve the convenience fee at the next meeting or whether the convenience fees charged for Quest services the previous four weeks would have to be refunded.

As directed by the board, I discussed the situation with district legal counsel to review state code, board policies, and past practice. There are no state statutes that require the board to officially approve student fees or fees charged to users of this type. Current board policies do not require the approval of student fees by the board and implies that the setting of fees charged to students is the responsibility of the administration, but does not clearly delegate that responsibility. Past practice by the board has been to adopt student fees that potentially impact the general population whether as a source of revenue or to defer expenses as part of the budget process. It has also been past practice to delegate the setting of fees for courses and other voluntary items to the administration.

It is the opinion of legal counsel that there is no liability for the Quest convenience fee initiated by the administration. To be consistent with past practice, the board should ratify the decision of the administration to initiate the convenience fee.

### Going Forward

Quest – At the start of the next school year, Quest will be implementing their own online service and the district will no longer be collecting or disbursing their funds. The outside service gives the user the option of selecting a percentage fee or set fee for using a credit card. The district will no longer have credit card expenses for food services once the service is implemented. This service will remain available to students and parents through the new portal system.

Transportation – A convenience fee of \$2.50 will be charged for each credit card transaction.

Summer School and Summer Camp Registration – A convenience fee of \$2.50 will be charged for each credit card transaction.

Bursar – A convenience fee of \$2.50 will be charged for credit card transactions only during booksale. Transactions during booksale constitute the nearly all of the expense to the district in this category. It is not common for students to use credit cards for their purchases outside of booksale. We will not be charging convenience fees for small purchases such as field trips, etc.

Ticket Sales – Both schools currently allow the use of credit cards for the purchase of tickets to the variety shows and the Glenbrook Musical. A mechanism will be developed to eliminate the cost to the district for this convenience.

### Recommendation

I recommend that the board approve the action of the administration to initiate a convenience fee for Quest Food Services as well as the planned convenience fee charges for transportation, summer camps, summer school, and bursar expenses during booksale.