

Rob Jackson, Ed.D., Superintendent

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Memorandum

Date: April 27, 2026

To: Dr. Rob Jackson, Superintendent of Buncombe County Schools
Members of the Buncombe County School Board

From: David Ball, District Athletic Specialist
Buncombe County Schools

Subject: Recommended Change in Athletic Participation Fees for BCS
High Schools and Middle Schools for the 2026-27 school year.

Upon request from Buncombe County School's Athletic Directors, and after examination of the financial records of our high schools and middle schools, it is my recommendation that the athletic fees paid by Buncombe County School's Student Athletes be changed for the 2026-27 school year. A summary of the proposed changes follows.

Currently, the athletic fees are set at the following.

Middle School student athlete	=	\$40.00 (one-time fee good for the entire school year)
High School student athlete	=	\$50.00 (one-time fee good for the entire school year)

For the 2026-27 school year, it is proposed that athletic fees would change to the following.

Middle School student athlete	=	\$45.00 (one-time fee good for the entire school year)
High School student athlete	=	\$60.00 (one-time fee good for the entire school year)

This fee is targeted toward providing athletic and catastrophic insurance for BCS student-athletes and to pay expense for athletic transportation provided by the schools. However, under the current fee structure, funds generated are paying a smaller percentage of the school's expenses for Insurance and Athletic Transportation, especially at the high school level. Historically, the fee was last raised in the fall of 2011 (15 years ago).

A major justification for the request to raise the Athletic Participation Fee would be that transportation expenses have increased significantly over the last two years. Supporting documentation illustrates this increase in transportation costs for Buncombe County Schools.

Lastly, each Buncombe County school has in place a system to address students and families with economic needs. A system to grant full or partial waivers of the student athletic participation fee is in place at each of our 7 middle schools and 6 high schools.

Recommendation: Approve the change in Athletic Fees for the 2026-27 school year.

Attachments: Summary of Insurance and Athletic Transportation Expenses versus Athletic Fees Collected in the 2025-26 School Year (through March for January billing of transportation expense).

Activity Bus Charges to Schools (2024-25 vs. 2025-26)

Contributing Factors to Increased Transportation Expense

2025-2026 Athletic Expenses & Revenues						
School	Insur. Total Expenses (476)	Transportation (490)	Total Ins. & Transp.	Athletic Participation Fee (481)		
Enka HS	\$3,736.14	\$24,314.27 as of Jan. 2026	\$28,050.41	\$14,517.00	updated 3.26.26	
Erwin HS	\$2,594.30	\$15,067.77 as of Jan. 2026	\$17,662.07	\$9,718.81	updated 3.20.26	
North Bunc. HS	\$2,859.70	\$15,596.79 as of Jan. 2026	\$18,456.49	\$19,611.77	updated 3.19.26	
Owen HS	\$2,594.74	\$22,090.76 as of Jan. 2026	\$24,685.50	\$10,183.92	updated 3.19.26	
Reynolds HS	\$3,489.86	\$20,485.13 as of Jan. 2026	\$23,974.99	\$21,050.00	updated 3.25.26	
Roberson HS	\$4,584.24	\$25,616.57 as of Jan. 2026	\$30,200.81	\$22,530.00	updated 3.19.26	
Cane Creek MS	\$818.76	\$ 3,307.86 as of Jan. 2026	\$4,126.62	\$5,765.00	updated 3.18.26	
Enka MS	\$708.36	\$1,756.35 as of Jan 2026	\$2,464.71	\$4,600.00	updated March 2026	
Erwin MS	\$696.12	\$3,945.62 as of Jan 2026	\$4,641.74	\$5,240.00	Updated 3.20.26	
North Bunc. MS	\$810.36	\$1,910.67 as of Jan. 2026	\$2,721.03	\$6,040.00	updated 3.18.26	
Owen MS	\$816.60	\$3,650.46 as of Jan. 2026	\$4,447.06	\$4,926.48	updated 3.20.26	
Reynolds MS	\$690.96	\$4,726.52 as of Jan. 2026	\$5,417.48	\$3,588.59	updated 3.18.26	
Val. Springs MS	\$813.84	\$2,810.63 as of Jan. 2026	\$3,624.47	\$5,271.16	updated March 2026	

Activity Bus Charges to Schools

2024-25 vs. 2025-26 School Year

Per Mile Charge

2024-25 School Year	=	\$.89/mile
2025-26 School Year	=	\$1.9276/mile

Fuel Charge (Adjusted Monthly)

2024-25 School Year	=	\$2.25-\$2.30/gallon
2025-26 School Year	=	\$2.30-\$2.50/gallon (July – Feb.)
		\$2.75 - \$3.11/gallon (March)
		\$3.11 & up/gallon (April)

Activity Buses pay Gas Station Prices for refueling (Out-of-town).

The per mile charge established by the NCDPI was increased to \$1.9276/mile for the 2025-26 school year. Additionally, the price of diesel charged to the schools has increased from the \$2.30 range in the 2024-25 school year to \$3.11 per gallon in the 2025-26 school year. The combination of these two factors have significantly increased transportation cost for activity bus use in Buncombe County Schools.

Contributing Factors to Increased Transportation Expense For Buncombe County High Schools

- 1. Local non-conference opponents for our high schools are difficult to schedule. As a result, many of our non-conference opponents are located a greater distance away than in the past. This increases transportation expenses and typically reduces gate revenue when you play these opponents at home.**
- 2. The NCHSAA change to 8 classifications increases distance to playoff opponents. This factor may often require Charter Buses which increases transportation expenses for our schools. Revenue at the gate is often less, especially in the early rounds of the playoffs, for these games/matches.**
- 3. Many BCS teams desire to play better competition, play in regional or national tournaments, or travel greater distances during Christmas or spring break, thereby increasing travel expenses.**

Transportation Advantages of Buncombe County Middle Schools

- 1. All opponents for Buncombe County Middle Schools in the French Broad Middle School Conference are located within Buncombe County. Travel is maintained from season to season at a consistent moderate level.**
- 2. Scrimmage games for Buncombe County Middle Schools may involve travel to adjacent counties (Madison, Haywood, or Henderson).**
- 3. Even with these advantages, increased per/mile charges and increased fuel costs have caused transportation expenses to increase for Buncombe County Middle Schools.**