Q & A: NEW Instructional Materials Fee 2012 - 13

Flat $320 Instructional Materials Fee is OPRF’s new book purchase model

Introduction

Last year there was a major change in the way students obtain their assigned course materials. Students no longer picked out their books and materials and paid for them individually at the Bookstore. Instead, families were charged a flat Instructional Materials Fee of $320 per student. This required fee will show up as a back-to-school financial obligation. The book fee is in addition to the District Registration Fee, and the book fee will cover all instructional materials for all courses during both semesters of the school year.

Rationale

For years, OPRF families have criticized the wildly unpredictable and high cost of books. Now, the state has eliminated the one predictable cost-saving variable -- the Illinois Textbook Loan program. Over the years, this program provided a significant subsidy to nearly every family’s out of pocket annual book costs. With the loss of this approximately $100 per textbook subsidy, book costs were going to increase significantly this coming year.

As we explored alternatives, this new fee model emerged as an effective way to maintain the quality and affordability of instructional materials and bring OPRF more in line with other area high schools’ practices.

We understand this is a significant change for our families. For some of you, the $320 fee may be more than what you paid in prior years for your student’s books and instructional materials. Please know this decision was made after extensive study and with clear evidence that this new model will be a better way to contain rapidly escalating book costs. This model also will provide greater oversight and accountability for instructional materials assigned– ensuring continued high quality at good value.

Though this is a very basic explanation, the $320 fee amount was set by determining the District cost of purchasing and providing all instructional materials divided by the number of students. For most families, this fee will be less than they would pay under the current purchase model given that the state loan subsidy has ended. Our counselors and staff have put together an extensive Q & A that we hope will answer most questions you have about this new fee and how it works. For more information or for questions we’ve missed, please feel free to contact any of the following staff members:

- Bookstore Manager – Jacqui Charette-BassiriRad (708-434-3140, jcharettebassirirad@oprhfs.org)
- Business Office - Pam Jansen (708-434-3278, pjansen@oprhfs.org)
- Communications – Karin Sullivan (708-434-3099, ksullivan@oprhfs.org)

(PLEASE CONTINUE FOR Q & A)
When did this Instructional Materials Fee go into effect?

The new Instructional Materials Fee of $320 per student enrolled at OPRFHS went into effect starting with the 2012 - 13 regular school year.

What's covered by this new Instructional Materials Fee?

The fee covers all instructional materials for all courses during both semesters of the school year.

Specifically, here’s what the $320 fee per student WILL include:
- District-loan textbooks (checked out to individual students. They must be returned at the end of the year by publicized deadlines to avoid replacement and late return charges.)
- Paperback books and workbooks (students keep)
- Course article packet handouts (students keep)
- Initial art and photo supply kits (students keep)
- Lab kits (students keep)

The items NOT included will be:
- PE uniforms
- Calculators (remember, all incoming freshmen should purchase TI-Nspire calculators)
- Locks
- Replacement of lost books, art and photo supplies
- Purchase of additional art and photo supplies as needed throughout the year
- Personal school supplies (notebooks, pens, pencils, binders, etc.)

Am I going to be able to resell my student's books at the end of the year?

Starting with the 2012 - 13 year, the OPRF Bookstore book buyback program was discontinued. The textbooks will be checked out to your student and must be returned for use by future classes. All other instructional materials are the students to keep.

I have lost/don’t have my Family Access login or password info. Now what?

☐ Incoming freshmen parents: you should have received a letter this summer explaining our Family Access resources and tools and providing you with your PARENT ONLY temporary password and user name. If you cannot find your letter, than please email familyaccess@oprfhs.org and you can expect a reply within 24 hours.
Current families: Please email familyaccess@oprfhs.org if you have lost that information. You can expect to receive a reply within 24 hours.

*Important note to all parents: DO NOT SHARE YOUR FAMILY ACCESS login information with your students. They will be given their own login info.

How are we going to be charged for this new fee?

The Family Packets mailed in summer will include instructions for payment of the Instructional Materials Fee and the District Registration Fee. Both are required fees, due by Thursday, July 26.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012-13 Fee type per student</th>
<th>Frosh</th>
<th>Soph</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Materials Fee</td>
<td>$320</td>
<td>$320</td>
<td>$320</td>
<td>$320</td>
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<tr>
<td>District Registration Fee</td>
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<td>$220</td>
<td>$35</td>
<td>$70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$370</strong></td>
<td><strong>$545</strong></td>
<td><strong>$355</strong></td>
<td><strong>$390</strong></td>
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Payment can be made online through Family Access [http://www.oprfhs.org/Educational-Technology/Online-Payment.cfm#](http://www.oprfhs.org/Educational-Technology/Online-Payment.cfm#) as well as mailed in or dropped off in person along with the District Registration Fee, at the Welcome Center (Room 105) immediately inside the front entrance.

Do I still have to pay a separate District Registration Fee? What is that for?

Yes: families must pay both the District Registration and Instructional Materials Fees for each student enrolled at OPRF.

What is that for?

The 2012-13 District Registration Fees – also due Thursday, July 26th -- covers such items as IDs, registration, transcripts, standardized testing, PE towel fees, Commencement, Driver Education, and more. OPRF has maintained the District fees this year. The chart above shows 2012-13 fees for each class:

With this new model, how will my student get her/his course materials? Will students receive any books in August when they pick up their schedules?

During the August registration days, students will only pick up their assigned course textbooks that will be checked out to them. Students will also be able to purchase their PE uniforms, locks, and calculators. All other instructional materials will be delivered and distributed to students in the classroom at the time of their actual use throughout the school year. This will reduce loss and ensure students have the materials and resources they need when they are assigned during the course.

What if my student’s schedule changes?
The student will need to return/exchange any textbooks, but the Bookstore will handle everything else and make sure the student receives all the other correct instructional materials for the new course.

**Can I avoid the fee by ordering/buying books from other sources?**

No. There is no opt-out option. Families must pay the fee for each student enrolled at OPRFHS.

**What will happen if I haven’t paid this fee by the July 26th deadline?**

Like paying the registration fee and clearing residency, the Instructional Materials Fee is an obligation that must be met before students can receive their 1st semester class schedule and books.

**What if we can’t afford to pay the fee?**

Families can apply for annual District Fee and Book Fee Waivers. (Families must reapply each year.) Details on who qualifies; how to apply, and the necessary forms are available in each Registration Packet on the OPRFHS website.

www.oprfhs.org or via Services > Bookstore > District Fee and Book Waiver Policy at this link: [http://www.oprfhs.org/bookstore/District-Fee-and-Book-Waiver-Policy.cfm#](http://www.oprfhs.org/bookstore/District-Fee-and-Book-Waiver-Policy.cfm#). There is a computer for public use in the Welcome Center, just inside the front entrance, available when the Welcome Center is open. Printed forms are also available from the Bookstore and at the Welcome Center.

**Please note:** families who – through the state -- already qualify for and receive TANF/food stamp benefits **delivered to the student’s parent/guardian at an Oak Park or River Forest address** automatically qualify for the waiver. The school receives notification of your eligibility directly from the state. Others may bring in the necessary documentation to apply for the District waiver and determine eligibility.

*More detailed Waiver information can be found at the end of this Q & A

**We don’t qualify for a waiver. What other payment options do we have?**

Families can choose to pay the Instructional Materials Fee in eight $40 installments due monthly from August 2012 through March 2013. Arrangements must be made through the Bookstore by the parent/guardian. The District Registration Fee must be paid in full.

**We still have financial obligations left over from last year. What do we do?**

Please contact Pam Jansen in the Business Office immediately at 708-434-3278 or pjansen@oprfhs.org)
Are there discounts for multiple children?

No: the $320 fee is per student.

Under this new plan, what books will my student have to return at the end of the school year?

Students will have to return to the Bookstore all of the textbooks that were initially checked out to them at the beginning of the school year by the publicized deadlines. Families will be charged a $5 late fee per book, plus the replacement cost of each book that is not returned in acceptable condition by the deadline.

What other materials can they return?

The other materials are theirs to keep and cannot be returned for credit.

What will happen if they annotate or damage their textbook?

Students will be billed the replacement cost of the textbook if they annotate, highlight, or damage the textbook in any way. Teachers will be providing alternative strategies to annotation in textbooks.

What are you going to do for students who get two sets of books via IEP or 504?

The 2nd set of books will be provided without charge, according to the students’ plans.

What about families who like to buy a second set on their own for non-mandated reasons?

Families have the option of purchasing textbook copies online, using the ISBN numbers. A limited quantity of other instructional materials will be available for cash/check/credit card purchase in the Bookstore.

What happens when students lose books during school year?

As is the current practice, the student will be charged the cost of replacing the textbook. After payment is made, a 2nd copy will be issued. Other lost instructional materials will be available for cash/check/credit card purchase at the Bookstore.

How will this impact the courses that have allowed families to opt out of a print textbook and go online only?

The $320 fee covers all instructional materials, including online materials the District also must purchase. Over time, online options are likely to become the norm. We can hope this digital trend will eventually help slow down textbook cost increases.
Are teachers going to be able to add additional materials during the year? Change their syllabi?

The fee will cover ALL instructional materials assigned for the year.

How much are you going to charge students who come in half-way or in midst of school year?

Currently, the plan is to charge the same $320 fee for all students whenever they start at OPRFHS.

Whose idea was this anyway?

Faced with the elimination of the state book loan program and the certainty of big book cost increases for families, an OPRF committee, including a parent representative, spent the fall and winter exploring numerous models and methods for continuing to provide high quality instructional materials for all students in as cost effective and equitable way as possible.

Where can I find out more information?

The administration presented a detailed report and recommendations at the Board of Education’s February and March 2011 Finance Committee meetings in advance of Board approval at the March 24 regular business meeting. Detailed information is available here:


March 15, 2011, Finance Committee (p. 72):

*Additional Fee Waiver Information*

Families can apply for a Fee and Book Waiver for each year that their child attends OPRFHS. This process is separate from the Free and Reduced Lunch program.

- **District Fee and Book Waiver**: Families may apply. Each application must be returned with the proper verification of income and family size paper work to: OPRFHS, 201 N. Scoville Ave., Oak Park, IL 60302. Questions? Please contact Pam Jansen in the Business Office at, pjansen@oprfhs.org. Families will be notified by letter within seven days.

- **TANF/Food Stamps**: If you qualify for food stamps through the state TANF program, you automatically qualify for both the Free and Reduced Lunch and District Fee and
BOOK WAIVERS. The state will notify the school of your eligibility. PLEASE NOTE: your state eligibility report MUST show that the parent/legal guardian is receiving benefits at an Oak Park or River Forest address. Please be sure the state has processed all the necessary change of address notifications.

- **Free and Reduced:** Families who wish to apply for the Free and Reduced Lunch program should complete the form and sent it directly to Food Services. Forms will be available online via the Food Services link and at the Welcome Center starting July 16, 2012. NOTE: Applying/qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch does not qualify families/students for Fee and Book Waiver.

**Summer Building Hours – Monday, June 11 – Wednesday, August 8, 2012**

During the summer dates of June 11 – August 8, office hours are:
- 7:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays (building closes at 3:30 p.m.)
- 7:30 a.m. – noon Fridays (building closes at 12:30 p.m.)