

**SECTION J
STUDENTS**

11. (JQA) Student Financial Assistance (Voted 9/8/16, #16-59)

I. Establishment of Financial Assistance Program

This policy authorizes creation of a PSB financial assistance program to provide qualified families with assistance paying certain school-related fees and/or charges.

II. Program Goals and Scope

The Superintendent will provide a centralized financial assistance application process for families seeking relief from various school-related fees and/or charges. Eligibility will be renewed or updated through an annual application process.

Financial Assistance will be offered to meet any PSB student fees or charges, including those for Athletics, Instrumental Music, and other program and field trip fees. Other fees include but are not limited to curriculum-based field trip expenses, Brookline Early Education Program (BEEP), School Department Summer Programs, and other fees the school department may charge that are as a result of curriculum requirements.

The program goals are as follows:

1. Implement an objective financial assistance program and application process for all students and families;
2. Allow families a single point of contact and determination within the school district; and
3. Adhere to a standard of confidentiality throughout the district.

Submitted financial information shall follow USDA Free and Reduced Lunch Guidelines and related state privacy laws in the collection, handling, and disseminating of information regarding the financial status of students.¹

Program Eligibility and Determination for Participation

1. Principals, Guidance/School Counselors, and all other employees are prohibited from making a determination of financial need outside of the Superintendent's established process.
2. Families in the United States on an active Visa are not eligible for financial assistance.²
3. Eligibility shall only be determined by the Office of Administration and Finance.

¹ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/EliMan.pdf>

² "The purpose of the form is to show that you have the financial means to live in the United States without needing welfare or financial benefits from the U.S. government. The law requires that the sponsor demonstrate that he or she is able to assist you financially. The sponsor must show that he or she has an annual income of not less than 125 percent of the federal poverty level. The federal poverty guidelines are set once a year, and can be found on Form I-864P, Poverty Guidelines." <https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-processes-and-procedures/public-charge>

4. The Homeless Liaison shall maintain a list and provide an update as necessary to the School Business Administrator of all students who have been determined to qualify for services under McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.³
5. The Public Schools of Brookline School Committee has made the following determination for income eligibility for financial assistance.⁴

Determination Status	Income Level over Poverty Guideline for Household Income	Households will pay
Approved for Free	<200%	\$0 program fee
McKinney-Vento Homeless Determination		\$0 program fee
Foster Care (individual only)		\$0 program fee
75% Reduction of Fee	201% - 300%	25% of the program fee
50% Reduction of Fee	301% - 350%	50% of the program fee

* % above HHS Poverty Guidelines

Exclusions

The Financial Assistance Program does NOT apply to optional activities, including but not limited to student travel programs and senior prom.

At the superintendent's discretion this financial assistance program may be used to support qualified students in optional trips.

Optional activities that receive official sponsorship of the School Committee must comply with equitable access as determined by the School Committee for all students to participate.

³ <http://doe.sd.gov/oess/documents/EligRight.pdf>

⁴ The Financial Assistance program shall use the US Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines and expand it by a multiplier to better match our community's income level and assist families that are above the Free and Reduced Lunch Guidelines with school fees that are assessed for a variety of activities. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/income-eligibility-guidelines>