



Hawks Athletic Boosters, Inc.  
7630 Telegraph Road  
Alexandria, Virginia 22315

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**To:** Fairfax County School Board  
**From:** Hawks Athletic Booster Club, Inc.  
**Date:** May 12, 2017  
**Re:** Proposed Athletic Fee for student-athletes for the 2017-2018 school year

It has come to the attention of the Hawks Athletic Booster Club, Inc. that during the next Fairfax County Public Schools budget work session on May 15<sup>th</sup> the School Board will evaluate implementing an athletic fee for high school athletes for the 2017-2018 school year. It is our understanding that the planned use for these funds is to help offset the budget shortfall. As a volunteer organization, we are opposed to the implementation of this fee. This fee will have a detrimental impact on the ability of our booster club to raise the funds we currently provide to support our athletes and Hayfield Athletic Programs. These funds are essential to the successful operation of the programs, safety of the athletes and maintenance of fields and facilities. Further, negative sentiment about this change will impact our ability to recruit and retain essential volunteers.

A mandatory fee for sports participation will have grave implications for a school such as Hayfield Secondary, which has 30% of its population receiving free and reduced lunch. This is a significantly higher percentage than schools in the western part of Fairfax County. If such a fee is imposed, waivers would be granted to those students; therefore, Hayfield would collect even less than other schools on a per-athlete basis. This fee will create a socio-economic division in our student body. FCPS should promote inclusion in every aspect of their programs. This is an unfair and imbalanced fee for the high schools with a large percentage of athletes on free and reduced lunch. Many of these high schools, such as Hayfield, are located in the southern part of Fairfax County.

While Hayfield is very grateful and appreciative for all that Fairfax County did to provide us two turf fields, they do come at a cost to booster clubs. If this athletic fee is imposed, there will be an adverse impact on our Booster club's ability to raise money when we have already committed to pay FCPS to maintain the fields on an annual basis. In the past two years, we have made our payment of \$15,000 each year to FCPS for turf related expenses. We still have eight years on our Memorandum of Agreement with FCPS, this expense is already a big portion of our budget each year. If this fee is passed, parents will be less likely to join the booster club. This will reduce membership fees collected and reduce volunteers for concessions and other fundraising efforts. Parents will perceive they have given already by paying for the activity through this proposed fee.

Being an athlete has many positive aspects such as promoting academic achievement, community service, leadership abilities and develops well-rounded students. This past year, we had over 1,000 student athletes participate in a sport at Hayfield with 48% of them earning a GPA of 3.5 or higher. This is an important and valuable achievement for the Hayfield Community. Being a part of a team also promotes a healthy lifestyle. Sport participation helps to curb obesity which is a nationwide problem. Further regular athletic activities help fight obesity related diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

Participation in sports also gives students a valuable and positive activity to fill their time. When students have too much time on their hands, negative impact such as: gang related activity, truancy, petty crimes, drug use and more can occur. We do not want to see numbers rise because parents cannot afford the athletic fee.

We understand the difficulties that the School Board is facing trying to create a fair and equitable budget for everyone involved. Athletics is a very small portion of the school budget, with total funding accounting for less than 0.8% of the total budget, there has to be another solution the current shortfall. It is also problematic that if the athletic fee is implemented, that these funds will not be used to support athletic programs but will subsidize other programs.

With the recent VHSL reorganization of Districts, Hayfield is finally placed where competition is on an equal playing level and stadiums and gyms are more geographically desirable. This new District is already having a positive influence at Hayfield. There are more students working out in the weight room preparing for the next season and participation in green day activities as grown. We urge you not to implement the activity fee. Sports are producing a positive influence at Hayfield and it is nice to see the school spirit and community pride in each of our athletes.

The Hayfield Boosters ask that you consider carefully all the options before imposing such a fee. If this fee comes to fruition, it will unfairly and disproportionately impact the families of student athletes and will result in less money which is critical for safety, operational and capital improvements items that the boosters fund. It is understood that these deliberations will require difficult decisions being made but we urge you to refrain from imposing this fee. It will prove to be counterproductive. We seek to provide as much support as possible for our students and our athletic programs. We ask for your support to continue the very positive trend we have at Hayfield.