
To: Finance Facilities & Technology Committee

Prepared By: Jason Reid
Secretary Treasurer

Subject: International Program Homestay Fees

Date: November 15, 2022

Purpose and Background

The purpose of this briefing note is to recommend that the monthly homestay fee for international program students be increased from \$1,100 to \$1,200 effective September 2023 for new registrations.

The Board establishes tuition and homestay fees for international students per policy 25 (International Student Program).

International Program enrolment has not yet fully returned to the pre-pandemic levels of approximately 330 FTE (full time equivalent), with 2022/23 enrolment forecasted to be 250 FTE. This reduction in enrolment has and continues to negatively impact the fiscal balance of the school district, with recovery being limited by our ability to recruit homestay families (and not by interest in enrolling in the program).

In February 2022, the Board approved increasing the homestay fee from \$975 to \$1,100 effective September 2023, in order to remain competitive with other homestay providers including SD61 (Victoria). Prior to this, homestay fees were last adjusted from \$925 to \$975 effective September 2020.

In April 2021, the Board approved increasing international program tuition fees from \$13,750 to \$14,750 effective September 2022 reflecting inflationary costs of program delivery.

Proposed Increase to Homestay Fees

Since February 2022, further escalation in the cost of living has continued to increase the cost of hosting international students by homestay families. Feedback from homestay families indicates many feel strongly that the reimbursement rate in 2023/24 needs to increase further to offset the growing cost of living. This is a concern because our ability to recruit homestay families is directly impacting program enrolment and net revenue.

We expect SD61 (Victoria) and other homestay providers will be reviewing their fee structures and may adjust their fees for the 2023/24 year. With the window for adjusting the 2023/24 fee closing, if we are going to adjust the fee for 2023/24 it needs to happen now.

If the Board approves the proposed fee increase it would only apply to new contracts, and we would honour contracts already in place with the current fee of \$1,100/month. As approximately 25% of contracts for 2023/24 will be in place by December, the homestay reimbursement rate in 2023/24 would reflect a blend of relative enrolment at each fee level (\$1,100/month versus \$1,200/month).

While homestay recruitment is currently the factor limiting enrolment, there is also a balance to consider between our ability to recruit homestay families and our ability to recruit enrolment into the program. Our closest competitor in the recruitment of international program students is SD61 (Victoria). As the program tuition fee in SD61 (Victoria) is currently higher at \$16,000 for a full year (versus \$14,750 in Saanich), overall fees in 2023/24 would remain competitive even if SD61 (Victoria) held their homestay fee at \$1,100/month. The tuition fee in Saanich does need to increase in the future to fund wage inflation; however, at this time recruitment of homestay families is a priority in order to support enrolment recovery.

Staff Recommendation:

That the Board approve increasing the monthly homestay fee from \$1,100 to \$1,200 effective September 2023 for new registrations.

Respectfully submitted,



Jason Reid
Secretary Treasurer

JR/klg