

**Decision Item #15: ELIMINATE THE ATHLETIC “NO CUT” FRESHMEN RULE**

**Option A: Eliminate the “No Cut” Freshmen rule**

**Option B: Increase athletic fees for freshmen and sophomores**

**Background:**

The District implemented a “no cut” freshmen policy more than 20 years ago to provide freshmen an opportunity to gain experience in athletics before roster limitations were enforced. Before the policy was established, freshmen teams “cut” players to meet roster limitations after try-outs. The players were often cut without any access or experience in the sport.

The demand for athletics expanded. To meet the demand, middle school sports were created and assumed by MSCR (Madison school and community recreation) offering opportunities to gain further exposure to sports at a younger age.

It is important to note that no sport, whether it has multiple freshmen teams or not, is self-sufficient. Also, fee and admission revenues are not charged against relative expenditures, nor are revenues or expenditures captured at the team level (frosh, JV or varsity). Thus, it is difficult to determine, beyond estimate, which sports and even which teams are the most burdensome.

While eliminating the “no cut” freshmen rule and subsequently eliminating excess freshmen teams was considered in the past, the Board specifically approved an increase of \$20 in athletic fees for seniors and juniors to help fund the program rather than eliminate it.

**Expenditures:**

The District currently spends approximately \$111,000 (above and beyond typical freshmen sports) to accommodate the “no cut” freshmen rule.

	<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>Per Eliminated Roster Spot</b>
Salaries & fringe	\$ 88,000	\$196
Officiating	\$ 12,000	\$ 27
Transportation	\$ 11,000	\$ 24
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$111,000</b>	<b>\$247</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>(\$ 27,000)</b>	<b>(\$ 60)</b>
<b>Net Cost</b>	<b>\$ 84,000</b>	<b>\$187</b>

**Revenues:**

The District charges \$60 per freshmen, per sport to participate in athletics. Approximately 1650 freshmen students participate in athletics generating \$99,000 in fee revenue. Should the “no cut” freshmen rule be eliminated, approximately 450 freshmen would not participate in athletics, decreasing fee revenue by approximately \$27,000. The abandoned fee revenue may be overstated as “cut” freshmen may fill vacant roster spots in other sports.

**FTE:**

0. Coaches and other athletic support staff are not considered in terms of FTE.

**Decision Item #15: ELIMINATE THE ATHLETIC “NO CUT” FRESHMEN RULE (cont.)**

**Anticipated Savings:** **Option A:** \$84,000 could be saved if the “no cut” freshmen policy were eliminated.

**Option B:** Increase athletic fees charged to freshmen to \$110 to raise approximately \$82,000. The current fee for freshmen is \$60.

**Student Impact:** **Option A:** 450 freshmen would be impacted annually, a \$187 net cost per student.

**Option B:** Availability of athletics would not be reduced, however, the accessibility to students may be hampered as some students may not have the capacity to afford the increased fees. Also, facilities will continue to be overtaxed.

**Strategic Priorities:** While we have not analyzed the direct impact athletic participation has on attendance, District sources cited research supporting that participation in extracurricular activities, specifically athletics, positively impacts school attendance.

**Effectiveness:** While the “no cut” freshmen rule was established to provide students with an athletic experience that would not be otherwise available, offering middle school sports has addressed the need to expose students to sports before limiting their ability to participate to meet roster spots. The “no cut” freshmen rule has increased the cost of providing athletics by increasing coaching, transportation and officiating costs at the freshmen level, created additional teams at the junior varsity level and has overtaxed practice facilities.

**Redundancies or Availability of the Service Elsewhere:**

Students not participating in the athletic activity of their choice have the opportunity to pursue other athletic activities or participate in other, non-athletic extracurricular activities.

**Service Delivery:** As an alternative to eliminating the “no cut” freshmen rule, the District could significantly raise athletic fees for all participants.