



## Career and Technical Education (CTE) Brief – Lab and Operations Fees

Minnesota statutes regulate the ability of public high schools to charge lab fees for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to ensure equitable access to education. According to [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 123B.36](#), schools may not charge students for instructional materials or supplies necessary to complete required coursework.

This means that if a tool, material, or resource is essential for participation in a CTE class, the school must provide it at no cost to students. However, [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 123B.37](#) allows schools to charge fees for optional projects, provided that students have a free alternative that meets course requirements.

Here are some examples of allowable and unallowable fees in CTE program areas:

- **Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) Courses:** In a horticulture class, students must have access to plants and growing materials for course-required activities at no cost. However, if a student wishes to take home additional plants they propagated beyond the curriculum, the school may charge for those materials. Additionally, if students are required to wear work boots for an agriculture mechanics course and they keep them after the class, a fee may be charged.
- **Business and Marketing Courses:** Instructional materials, software access, and classroom projects must be provided without charge. However, if a student participates in a school-based enterprise (e.g., running a student store) and wants to purchase items produced in class for personal use, they may be required to pay. Fees may also apply to optional certifications, such as Microsoft Office Specialist or QuickBooks certification exams, unless the district covers the cost.
- **Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Courses:** Students enrolled in a culinary arts course cannot be charged for ingredients needed to complete a required foods lab. However, if a student opts to prepare a specialty dish beyond the required curriculum for personal enjoyment, they may be responsible for the cost of additional ingredients. Similarly, in a textile course, essential materials and fabrics must be provided for required assignments, but students may incur costs if they choose to use premium fabrics for personal projects.
- **Health Science Courses:** Schools must provide required training equipment such as CPR mannequins, first aid supplies, or medical tools needed for instruction. However, students pursuing optional industry-recognized certifications, such as CPR/AED certification through the American Heart Association, may be responsible for the certification fee if the school does not cover it. Personal-use items, such as scrubs for a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program that students keep after the course, may also be subject to a fee.

- **Trade and Industry (T&I) Courses:** Students in woodworking, welding, or engineering courses must be provided with the materials necessary to complete required projects. However, if a student chooses to build a custom furniture piece instead of a standard class project, they may be charged for the additional or upgraded materials. Similarly, in an automotive technology course, students may use school-provided tools for repairs, but they may need to purchase personal safety gear, such as work gloves or custom-fitted safety glasses, if they wish to keep them.
- **Work-Based Learning (WBL) Courses:** Students will be provided instructional materials and supplies for classroom assignments and projects without charge. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that may be required for a student work experience should be provided by the employer. Students receiving compensation for their WBL experience may be required to furnish their own transportation to and from their worksite. A board may require the payment of reasonable fees for transportation to and from worksites as part of an approved WBL program. See [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 123B.36, subd. 3, Authorized Fees.](#)

In all cases, schools must offer a free alternative to ensure equitable access to CTE programs, and financial waivers should be available for students in need. If anyone has questions about these or other CTE program areas, please reach out to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) CTE Specialist on the [CTE Program Approval webpage](#).

Additionally, fees may be assessed for extracurricular activities, field trips, or personal protective equipment that students retain for personal use. Schools must ensure that fees are clearly communicated, and waivers are available for students facing financial hardship to maintain accessibility for all learners.

## **CTE Revenue (CTE Levy) Reporting and School Fees**

If districts are asking students to pay for materials used in the course, the district must not include those material costs in their report for the CTE Revenue (Levy). Detailed guidance is outlined in the CTE Revenue User Manual. More information is available at the [CTE Levy webpage](#).

CTE Revenue is a permissive levy for school districts to provide extra support based in part on the district's CTE expenditures. [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 124D.4531](#), as modified by the 2014 Legislature, allows a district with a career and technical program approved under this section to be eligible for career and technical revenue equal to 35 percent of approved expenditures in the fiscal year in which the levy is certified. Districts submit anticipated CTE budgets each year in the spring for the coming school year, and detailed information about actual CTE expenditures each fall for the previous school year. (The dual reporting is required due to the legislative timing of the levy.)

Eligible CTE Expenditure UFARS codes:

- Classroom support and extended time (140/143/185)
- Teacher travel (365/366)
- Specialized CTE Instructional Supplies/Food (406/433/490)
- Curriculum Development Activities (610)
- Contracted Services (305/394/396)

Reference the CTE Levy Web-Based Reporting System User's Guide for detailed descriptions of eligible expense codes found on the [CTE Levy webpage](#).

## Helpful Links

The following links provide some helpful background about this topic:

[Minnesota's Public School Fee Law](#)

The Minnesota House of Representative provides an overview of public school fee law.

[Q&A: Minnesota Public School Fee Law](#)

This document answers some frequently asked questions concerning the public school fee law.

[Minnesota Department of Education \(MDE\) User's Guide for CTE Revenue](#)

User's Guide for the web-based reporting system. District Users and Administrators must read this document before accessing the web-based reporting system.