

Schools May Charge to Play Sports

School board committee looks at 'donation' to balance budget

By Amy Sylvestri
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It might cost San Leandro students some green to get out on the athletic field from now on.

The school board's policy committee has been thinking about asking student-athletes for money to play to help balance the district's budget.

State law prohibits mandatory fees for public school athletes, but the state budget situation is forcing schools to look at what can be done to offset the cost of the district's sports programs, said Board President Mike Katz-Lacabe.

Katz-Lacabe said the board is looking at what other school districts have been doing to save money. He said they are discussing the possibility of instituting a transportation fee for the athletes' travel to other schools. He added that, even if the fee is established, subsidies would be available for students whose families couldn't afford the charges.

"We are still doing the research," said Katz-Lacabe. "The idea is that we will be asking for a donation of some sort for transportation costs."

The amount of such a donation hasn't been established and the fee itself would have to be approved by the school board.

The district spent \$307,923 on extracurricular sports at the middle schools and San Leandro

High last year. Katz-Lacabe said the committee is taking a look at how to keep all the sports teams active.

"On one level, that \$300,000 isn't a tremendous amount given the number of students in the district," Katz-Lacabe said. *see SPORTS FEES, page 9*

Sports fees: No cuts to sports are planned

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district. But on the other hand it is quite a bit given our current budget situation," said Katz-Lacabe.

Katz-Lacabe said that no cuts to sports programs are currently planned, but the district

must present a balanced budget to the Alameda County Office of Education in October and the state is expected to put an additional squeeze on the district, so nothing is safe from the chopping block yet.

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