

# NEWS



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SCHOOL FEES SPIKING AS BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPLY COSTS DECREASE, ACCORDING TO 2016 HUNTINGTON BANK BACKPACK INDEX**

*Families must pay increasing fees for activities from baseball to band, 10-year index reports*

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – Families with school-age children can expect a decrease this year in classroom supply costs, but a spike in school extracurricular activity fees, according to the Huntington Bank Backpack Index released today.

At the 10-year mark for the Huntington Backpack Index, the cost of supplies and extracurricular activities has increased from 2007-2016 by 88 percent for elementary school students, 81 percent for middle school students and 68 percent for high school students.

For the 2016-2017 school year, according to the Backpack Index parents can expect to pay per child:

- \$659 for elementary school children, a 1.5 percent increase compared to 2015.
- \$957 for middle school children, a 1.6 percent increase compared to 2015.
- \$1,498 for high school students, a 6.8 percent increase compared to 2015.

Back-to-school costs continue to climb due to the spike in extracurricular activity fees, despite the slight decrease for classroom supplies. From 2015 to 2016, high school supply costs decreased 1.8 percent, while there was a 10 percent increase in combined extracurricular and college prep activity costs, primarily due to increasing sports participation fees.

Middle school supply costs for the coming school year decreased 6 percent, while fees increased 6 percent driven by rising sports participation costs.

Because elementary schools don't typically offer school-sanctioned sports and clubs, fees at those grade levels saw a slight stabilization with an increase of 2.9 percent, offset by a 1.6 percent supply costs decline.

The Huntington Backpack Index has tracked classroom supply and school fee costs passed on to parents since 2007 to highlight the added burden of public school expenses beyond assessed taxes. The Index is exclusive to required supplies and common fees to remind parents there is more to back-to-school shopping than buying clothes for the new school year. For a complete list of the Index supplies and costs click [here](#).

“The cost of the basket of goods that Huntington has analyzed for 10 years is down as the retail sector continues to appeal to consumer demand for value pricing,” said George Mokrzan, director of economics for Huntington Bank. “But overall, families are not seeing relief as schools increase activity costs to cope with tightening budgets.”

According to recently updated data from the U.S. Department of Education, one in every five school-age children were living below the federal poverty line in 2014, nearly 11 million children. Many of these students will not have the opportunity to participate in school sports, clubs or activities because of the increase in fees.

High school students participating in more than one sport can expect to pay up to \$375 in pay-to-play fees, which is an 87.5 percent jump from 2015. The large cost increase represents schools moving away from previous caps on sports participation fees for student athletes involved in more than one sport. High school athletes have higher grades than non-athletes, lower absentee levels, a significantly smaller percentage of disciplinary referrals, lower percentages of dropouts and higher graduation rates, according to the Child Trends Data Bank.

“As the nation's largest dropout prevention organization, we understand that a student's success goes far beyond the classroom,” said Gary Chapman, Communities In Schools' executive vice president for the national network of the educational advocacy and support nonprofit organization. “Instead of struggling to afford just school supplies, families will now have to worry about funding their children's activities. Many of these students will no longer be able to participate in clubs or sports, which can put them at a disadvantage and hinder their long-term success.”

### **Huntington Backpack Index Methodology**

Huntington annually obtains classroom-supply lists from a cross-section of schools throughout the six states it serves and compiles a representative list of required supplies and fees. Costs are determined by selecting moderately priced items at online retailers.

### **About Huntington**

Huntington Bancshares Incorporated is a \$74 billion asset regional bank holding company headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, with a network of more than 750 branches and more than 1,500 ATMs across six Midwestern states. Founded in 1866, The Huntington National Bank and its affiliates provide consumer, small business, commercial, treasury management, wealth management, brokerage, trust, and insurance services. Huntington also provides auto dealer, equipment finance, national settlement and capital market services that extend beyond its core states. Visit [huntington.com](http://huntington.com) for more information.

### **About Communities in Schools**

Communities In Schools (CIS) is the nation's largest and most effective dropout prevention organization, dedicated to doing whatever it takes to help students succeed in school and achieve in life. Operating in more than 2,300 schools in the most challenged communities of 25 states and the District of Columbia, Communities In Schools serves nearly 1.5 million young people and their families each year. Based directly inside schools throughout the country, Communities In Schools connects students and their families to basic and critical educational and community-based resources, tailored to each student's specific needs. Learn more about Communities In Schools at [www.CommunitiesInSchools.org](http://www.CommunitiesInSchools.org).

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