

## ADDENDUM

### Item 3.

School Code Citation: 105 ILCS 5/27-815

### Item 4(a).

Narrative Identifying and Justifying the Specific Request:

Community Unit School District No. 5, McLean and Woodford Counties, Illinois is seeking renewal of its waiver or modification of Section 27-815 of the Illinois School Code allowing it to increase the fee for its driver education course to an amount "not to exceed \$450". The purpose of this request is to meet the intent of the Driver Education Act in a more effective and efficient manner, thereby allowing the District to provide driver education instruction to students sooner and greater support to not only the driver education program but also to high quality innovative courses in other areas of the District's curriculum.

The intent of the Act is to provide students with the knowledge, attitudes, habits, and skills necessary for the safe operation of motor vehicles, including without limitation instruction on distracted driving, special hazards, driving precautions that must be observed at emergency situations, highway construction, and railroad crossings, and law enforcement procedures for traffic stops including a demonstration of the proper actions to be taken during a traffic stop and appropriate interactions with law enforcement. Community Unit School District No. 5's driver education course includes a combination of classroom and behind the wheel instruction, both of which must be provided by certified high school teachers.

The current statutory and regulatory restrictions do not provide sufficient resources for a high quality program. Section 27-815 provides that a school district may charge a "reasonable fee", not to exceed \$50, which may be increased to an amount not to exceed \$250 following a public hearing. However, state regulations (23 Ill. Adm. Code 252.30) restrict a school district from including the salary and benefit costs of driver education personnel in calculating the "reasonable fee". By limiting the amount of the fee to \$250 and not allowing salary and benefit costs to be included, combined with receipt of only 75.7% of its adequacy target under the evidence-based funding model, the District is limited in the number of certified driver education teachers it can hire and retain to provide instruction to students. This limits the number of students the District can provide driver education instruction to per semester and unnecessarily prolongs the time students must wait to receive driver education instruction.

Prior to the current waiver, District parents paid a \$250 fee, but this amount, combined with state reimbursement, was insufficient to provide a program at high levels of student achievement. The District suffered more than an estimated \$291,195 deficit in its driver education program costs after subtracting state reimbursement and student fees. If the District's waiver is not renewed, it will surely have to look at means to reduce its driver education program costs which could negatively impact students.

**Item 4(b).**

Community Unit School District No. 5 believes its driver education course is a high quality learning experience for students. Evidence of this belief is the high success rates of students qualifying to take the Drivers Test and their subsequent success.

The current economic hardship throughout Illinois has placed a special burden on high quality innovative programs. With only 75.7% of its evidence-based funding adequacy target there are financial pressures both on the District’s driver education course and the District’s ability to support high quality innovative courses in other areas of the District’s curriculum.

Therefore, the District’s waiver renewal request is to raise the statutory fee from an amount not to exceed \$250 to "an amount not to exceed \$450". This fee will be waived for students who are unable to pay.

**Plan to Stimulate Innovation or Improve Student Performance**

The current student performance levels in driver education are measured by the percent of students receiving a "B or Better" in the course, who are then, through permission of the Secretary of State's office, permitted to take the drivers test. Recent records of student achievement are:

	B or Better in the course
2025-2026	82%

While student success is very good, the District’s goal would be to improve the percentage of students who earn a "B or Better" in the course. At the end of the 5 year waiver period, we hope to have at least 85% of our students earning a B or better in the driver education course. A larger goal would be to help decrease the number of teenage accidents and deaths as a result of improved instruction.

If the District is successful in receiving a renewal of the fee increase, while allowing for fee waivers to low income students, it will be able to maintain a reduced cost of the driver education program. This will allow the District to use those funds to promote innovations in programs for students elsewhere in the curriculum. Recently, the District added a STEM designation that students can achieve by taking courses in Math, Science, Engineering, and Technology over their high school career.

**Item 5.**

Description of testimony provided at public hearing:

- The number of people attending public hearing was TBD plus TBD online;
- The number people speaking in favor of the proposed modification or waiver was TBD (the Attorney for the District presented the proposal);
- The number of people speaking against the proposed modification or waiver was TBD;

- No one made verbal comments during the hearing.
- No written comments were received.

**Item 7.**

Documentation for each of the above is submitted with the application.