

YOUTH SERVICES POLICY

Title: Teacher Tuition Reimbursement	Type: A. Administrative Sub Type: 2. Personnel Number: A.2.66
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References: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Title II, Part A of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002, and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.	
STATUS: Approved	
Approved By: <i>William A. Sommers, Deputy Secretary</i>	Date of Approval: 08/23/2022

I. AUTHORITY:

Deputy Secretary of Youth Services (YS) as contained in La. R.S. 36:405. Deviation from this policy must be approved by the Deputy Secretary.

II. PURPOSE:

To establish a reimbursement and ranking system of funding for Teacher/Paraprofessional tuition available through Federal funds to provide opportunities for teachers/paraprofessionals to take courses for on-going professional development.

III. APPLICABILITY:

Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Undersecretary, Deputy Undersecretary, Chief of Operations, Youth Facilities Director - Statewide, Director of Education and School Principals.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

Coursework Reimbursement – Only tuition costs shall be reimbursed.

Education Grants Management System (EGMS) – A state automated system used to manage grant funds.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – was signed into law in December 2015 and replaces the “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) Act of 2002.

Highly Qualified (HQ) Paraprofessional - A paraprofessional who has not less than two (2) years of experience in a classroom; and post secondary education or demonstrated competence in a field or academic subject for which there is a significant shortage of qualified teachers.

Highly Qualified (HQ) Teacher - A teacher who has obtained full State certification as a teacher (including certification obtained through alternate routes to certification) or passed the State's teacher licensing examination, and holds a license to teach in such State.

Out-of-field Teacher – The term out-of-field teacher means a teacher who teaches an academic subject or a grade level for which the teacher is not HQ.

School District – Youth Services is the School District for the schools located in the secure care facilities.

V. POLICY:

A. It is the Deputy Secretary's policy that YS shall align tuition reimbursement through Federal funds to identified staff needs, and shall develop a ranking system to establish criteria for reimbursement.

B. The Director of Education shall ensure that application is made annually for the Federal funds under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) should such funds be available.

NOTE: The application for these funds is processed through Education Grant Management System (EGMS).

C. The Teacher Tuition Reimbursement assists employees in financing formal education. Tuition reimbursement shall not guarantee continued employment, new job assignments, pay increases or promotions.

D. The following participant categories for tuition reimbursement shall be considered:

- Enrolled in Alternative Certification Program (Practitioner License 1,2,3 or 4);
- Teaching Out-of-Field (OFAT); and
- Seeking certification as defined by the ESSA.

E. The ranking system for tuition reimbursement shall be as follows:

- Full time teachers who are seeking certification under the ESSA; and
- Certified teachers becoming certified and HQ in areas of declared critical shortage.

F. Eligibility Requirements for full time teachers shall be as follows:

- Must have been employed during the entire school semester for which assistance is sought;
- A course must begin after the first day of employment for new hires;
- A course must be completed during the time of employment for separated employees; and
- Applicants must attend an accredited institution and must receive grades and college degree credits.

NOTE: Employees on sabbatical leave shall not be eligible for tuition reimbursement.

G. Non-Eligibility Determinants:

- No Summer school Tuition Assistance/Reimbursement will be provided.
- Failed courses, withdrawals, and/or Incompletes.
- Pell Grant Recipients.
- Unapproved courses.
- Changed courses without prior approval from Principal and/or Director of Education.
- Timeframes outside of the fiscal year.
- Late fees, book fees, or any fees other than courses.

VI. PROCEDURES:

- A. Each applicant must download and complete a Teacher Tuition Assistance/Reimbursement application. All applications must be signed by the Principal and submitted to the Director of Education at least five (5) days prior to the beginning of the semester. Failure to receive prior approval before registering/enrolling in classes that are expected to be considered for tuition reimbursement, will result in funds being withheld.
- B. Funds for this program shall only be used to cover “pure” tuition costs; therefore, applicants shall pay all other fees, including any late fees charged by the university at the time of registering for the coursework.
- C. A maximum of six (6) credits shall be allotted per semester for each fiscal year. Tuition reimbursement shall be made equivalent to the current cost of graduate or undergraduate in-state public tuition, not to exceed \$700 per course. Payments for online universities are limited to \$500 per three (3) hour credit.

NOTE: Withdrawal or incomplete courses shall not be paid.

- D. Reimbursement for credit courses shall be paid for participants who successfully complete approved courses as evidenced by a grade of A, B, C or Pass for a Pass/Fail course, should such funds be available.
- E. Participants shall attend all approved courses.
- F. Upon completion of coursework, the signed application for Teacher Tuition Reimbursement shall be completed.

NOTE: Applications are available in each School Principal's office.

- G. Following completion of the application signed for approval, each participant shall forward it, along with documentation of the final grades, to the Principal/Assistant Principal for review/signature.
- H. Following approval, the Principal/Assistant Principal shall forward the application to the Director of Education's office for review/approval. (Section VII of this policy explains the process for payment.)
- I. After final approval, reimbursement shall be paid to the participant within 30 (thirty) days of receipt of grades, should such funds be available.

NOTE: Requests with incomplete documentation and/or failure to turn in documents by the end of the July 1st through June 30th fiscal year shall not be processed.

VII. PROCESSING FOR PAYMENT:

- A. The Director of Education's staff shall prepare a 156-B "Request for Purchase" form in the Lotus Notes Database for tuition reimbursement.
- B. The 156-B, along with the participant's approved application and final grades, shall be forwarded to the Undersecretary for review.
- C. Following review, the Undersecretary shall send the application and attachments to Department of Public Safety Services/Office of Management and Finance (DSP/OMF) for review and payment.

VIII. RECORDKEEPING AND REPORTS:

- A. Records shall be maintained by DSP/OMF that reflects the following:
 - The amount of funds received;
 - How the funds were used;
 - The total cost of project activities;
 - The share of the cost provided from other sources, if applicable; and
 - Other records to facilitate an effective audit.

NOTE: Records shall also be kept to show compliance and program requirements, and permit an “audit trail” that clearly documents that all funds were used in accordance with the ESSA of 2015.

- B. DPS/OMF shall forward quarterly summaries of the status of the funds to the Director of Education’s office.

Previous Regulation/Policy Number: A.2.66

Previous Effective Date: 08/09/2021

Attachments/References: