

Guidelines for Receiving a Tuition Reimbursement

In an effort to recruit and retain highly qualified employees, federal funds, **when available**, may be used to pay tuition for professional development activities. **Effective July 1, 2017**, only the following Columbus County Schools employees will be eligible for tuition reimbursement, regardless of tuition reimbursement status prior to this date:

- For lateral entry teachers, Columbus County Schools will reimburse tuition (no fees or books) only for courses required to complete the requirements of the employee's plan of study to convert the lateral license.
- For paraprofessionals who received tuition reimbursement during the 2016-2017 school year to complete a bachelors degree in education, tuition reimbursement will be available only throughout the time required to complete the degree.

For both of the eligible categories above, these federal funds will pay **a maximum of \$750 per semester**. The employee must provide documentation if scholarships, grants, or loans were received for the coursework. If the financial aid will fully pay for the employee's tuition costs, with no repayment expected to the granting agency, no tuition reimbursement will be given to the employee by Columbus County Schools. **The reimbursements will be provided until allotted funds are depleted.**

For these guidelines, a semester will be designated as:

Spring Semester: January 1 through May 15
Summer Session I: May 15 through June 20

Summer Session II: June 20 through July 30
Fall Semester: August 1 through December 30

The district will also reimburse a teacher for testing requirements up to a maximum of **three** attempts per test, if the testing is to fulfill lateral entry requirements OR the test is required for a position assigned to you by the district.

In years where funding is available, the following guidelines must be followed for requesting a tuition reimbursement:

1. A **Prior Approval** form with "Before Activity" portion completed must be submitted to Julie Watson at the Central Office. (Prior Approvals are processed in the order they are received, not by special circumstances, unless approved and signed by the superintendent.)
2. Employee will read, complete, and sign the Tuition Reimbursement Memorandum of Agreement and provide documentation as to whether financial aid has been awarded to him/her.
3. **At least four weeks prior** to completion of the courses for which tuition reimbursement is being requested, the employee will submit the items in numbers 1 and 2 above to Julie Watson. **If not submitted at least four weeks prior to the end of the semester, funding may not be available for reimbursement.**

4. Once processed, copies of the Prior Approval form are returned to the staff member requesting tuition reimbursement.
5. Upon completion of the courses, participant should complete the "After Activity" portion of the copy of the Prior Approval and attach the following:
 - tuition receipt from university (receipt should not include books and fees unless the course was mandated by the Board of Education)
 - transcript showing satisfactory completion of course (grade of C or better)
6. Return all documentation in number 5 above to Julie Watson at the Central Office.