

Guidelines for Receiving a Tuition Reimbursement

In an effort to recruit and retain highly qualified administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and classified staff, federal funds, **when available**, may be used to pay tuition for professional development activities. For teachers, paraprofessionals, and classified staff, Columbus County Schools will reimburse tuition (no fees or books) for the first bachelor degree or master degree related to teacher education programs or job assignment and/or licensure requirements courses/testing that is completed during employment with Columbus County Schools. For personnel currently in an administrative position, Columbus County Schools will reimburse tuition (no fees or books) for the first advanced degree beyond the job-required master degree. All personnel are encouraged to further their education through graduate and advanced degrees. These federal funds will pay a maximum of six hours per semester (in-state tuition) or three hours per semester (out-of-state tuition). The reimbursement will be provided until allotted funds are depleted.

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 and High Quality Professional Development Guidelines form 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.
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.