

## 4500

### Reimbursement for Higher Education Costs and National Board Certification

The Board, in its sole discretion, shall determine the level of funding for higher education and national board certification reimbursement, as described below, and may terminate or amend the provisions of either or both programs for any reason it deems necessary at any time.

The District is offering a limited opportunity for teachers to acquire coursework contributing toward either a Special Education or English Learner (EL) endorsement from 2021-2024, subject to the availability of federal ESSER funding.

#### Tuition Reimbursement

I. The District shall reimburse tuition, fees, and other associated expenses for any teacher currently employed by the District who meets one of the following criteria:

1. The teacher is enrolled in a graduate degree program at an accredited college or university in his/her field or in a closely associated field (e.g. curriculum and instruction) as approved by the superintendent. Programs of study in educational administration are not eligible for reimbursement. The classes for which tuition reimbursement is requested must fulfill requirements of the graduate program of study.
2. The teacher, at the request of and pre-approved by the superintendent, is taking coursework to add additional endorsements to his/her certificate.
3. The teacher is taking graduate credits, at the request of and pre-approved by the superintendent, to be able to offer dual credit classes to Lexington High School students, or are participating in either the Special Education or English Learner (EL) endorsement cohorts. The teacher understands that a condition of qualifying under this provision is that a dual credit class(es) will be added once the teacher earns sufficient graduate credits to teach it, and that the dual credit class could have additional requirements that may need to be met, including modifications to the current course syllabus and/or use of a required college textbook or other teaching materials. Teachers participating in either the Special Education or English Learner cohorts understand that they may be reassigned based on district Special Education and English Learner (EL) needs.

II. The District may agree to reimburse tuition, fees, and other associated expenses for a newly hired teacher who is deficient in coursework required to secure an initial Nebraska teaching certificate with a clearing endorsement for the desired teaching position.

#### Procedure:

1. For those teachers seeking reimbursement for a graduate degree program: Sufficient evidence of admission into an eligible graduate degree program and a program of study shall be provided to and approved by the superintendent prior to requesting reimbursement.

For those teachers seeking reimbursement for adding an additional endorsement, securing an initial Nebraska teaching certificate with a clearing endorsement, or for teaching dual credit classes: A program of study for the additional endorsement, initial certification or clearing endorsement, or dual credit teaching requirements shall be submitted to and approved by the superintendent prior to requesting reimbursement.

For those seeking reimbursement for their participation in the Special Education or English Learner (EL) endorsement cohorts: An application needs to be submitted to the central office. Teachers approved for participation will be required to take coursework included in either the Special Education or English Learner (EL) endorsements.

2. Prior to taking an approved course, the teacher shall fill out and submit a Tuition Reimbursement Request Form to the superintendent. The form must be received by the superintendent by May 25 for summer sessions. For fall or spring classes, the superintendent must receive the form at least one week prior to the start of the course.
3. To be reimbursed, the teacher shall submit a copy of the college transcript documenting successful completion of the approved coursework. Successful completion shall mean a passing grade as determined by the college or university from which the coursework was taken and credit awarded by the college or university toward the teacher's respective program.

Level of Reimbursement:

1. For teachers pursuing a graduate degree that does not result in the district being able to offer dual credit to LHS students, the District shall reimburse the actual cost of the coursework at a rate of \$180.00 per credit hour. If the total requested reimbursement exceeds allocated program funds, the superintendent or designee shall pro-rate the reimbursement to each participating teacher on an equal basis. Teachers may also seek tuition reimbursement for classes taken during the fall and spring, subject to the availability of program funds after summer requests have been paid.
2. For teachers pursuing a graduate degree or hours required either a) to acquire an additional endorsement requested by the superintendent, or b) to be able to teach dual credit classes to LHS students, c) to complete coursework in either the Special Education or English Learner (EL) cohorts; or d) to secure an initial Nebraska teaching certificate with a clearing endorsement, the District shall reimburse the coursework at a rate of \$300.00 per credit hour. Teachers may also seek tuition reimbursement for classes taken during the fall and spring, subject to the availability of program funds after summer requests have been paid.

Repayment Provision:

A teacher shall not be required to repay the cost of the tuition if he or she remains in the

employment of the school district for five years after earning the degree or completing the approved coursework. A teacher shall repay all tuition, fees, and expenses that were reimbursed by the school district should the teacher leave the district before completing five years of employment.

#### Reimbursement for National Board Certification

The District shall reimburse any teacher, while employed by the District, up to \$1000.00 for expenses incurred in obtaining National Board Certification. This reimbursement shall be authorized after the individual provides sufficient evidence to the superintendent that s/he has obtained this certification.

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