

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Purpose:

The district encourages, but does not entitle, career personnel to pursue their career goals through additional education or training to increase their competence in their present position and to prepare them for advancement within the district. These opportunities shall be based on district needs and funding ability.

Scope:

This SOG applies to all career personnel of the district in good standing who have successfully completed their probationary period.

Policy:

It is the policy of the district to encourage professional development for personnel by providing assistance with educational expenses.

Guidelines:

- A. Personnel wishing to enroll in college classes must submit the course title, schedule, and other pertinent information on the appropriate form to their direct supervisor for approval at least two weeks prior to the start of the class. Supervisors are responsible for fulfilling directives on the appropriate form to obtain final approval.
- B. Courses will be considered for reimbursement on a case-by-case basis, but must be job related. General education courses (i.e., History, English) may not be funded by the district unless they are part of a defined and approved degree program. Personnel attending classes and training in preparation for career advancement should not expect the district to fully fund related expenses, such as lab fees, administration fees, testing fees, etc.
- C. If prior approval is granted, the employee will receive reimbursement for tuition upon completion of the class and submission of a copy of the grade report proving receipt of a passing grade of "C" or higher. In special circumstances, tuition costs may be paid in advance with the approval of the Chief.
- D. Books and course materials are not reimbursable expenses.
- E. The district may require an employee commitment agreement.
- F. Personnel wishing to enroll in job related seminars or training courses must submit all pertinent information to their direct supervisor at least two weeks prior to the class date. The Chief must also sign their approval. To

receive advance funding, the request must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the class.

- G. If approval is granted for a district-required, out-of-town course, mileage will be paid at the Federal rate. In addition, appropriate meal per diem will be paid at the approved rate. Hotel expenditures must be arranged in advance through the Executive Staff. Other pre-approved expenditures will be reimbursed upon submission of receipts. Travel expenses will not be reimbursable for employee requested, non-required training or education.
- H. Personnel eligible to receive other educational benefits, such as Veterans Administration or other employers are not eligible to receive tuition reimbursement from the district.
- I. An employee who terminates employment prior to completion of a course will not be reimbursed. If the district made advance payment, the course cost will be deducted from the employee's final payment of wages and accrued leave.
- J. District mandated training classes will be compensated as hours worked, whether on or off-duty, and entered as paid educational leave. Non-mandated training will not be compensated as hours worked. Personnel may utilize annual leave or shift trade to sustain regular pay.
- K. The Chief will consider each request for educational assistance on an individual basis, evaluating such factors as the nature of the course, benefits to be derived by the employee and the district, costs involved, and level of responsibility of the employee.
- L. Educational and training funding needs must be included in budget submittals to ensure funds are available.