

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

College and university coursework can contribute significantly to professional growth and development and result in increased personal and professional ability.

Depending on the availability of professional development funds, the Superintendent or designee may reimburse staff members for tuition paid for college or university coursework according to the following guidelines:

GUIDELINES

1. Worthy college or university coursework calls for rigorous study. Job performance may be hindered by the time needed to complete more than two courses during a semester/term. Reimbursement of tuition will be limited to two courses per semester for a total of no more than five courses per school year (if a summer term is included). Exceptions to this policy will be made only when certification or licensure issues require completion of coursework within an abbreviated time frame and with prior approval from the Superintendent or designee.
2. Reimbursement of tuition will be conditioned upon maintaining all annual evaluation standards at proficient or above.
3. Staff members must be enrolled in an approved program of study leading to a degree or certification, or the course must be specified as a need on the employee's licensure plan and meet DPI licensure requirements.
4. Coursework and approved degree programs must (a) relate directly to the staff member's current job assignment, (b) be in an area specified by the Board as a critical need for the school district, or (c) prepare the employee for more responsibilities or promotions within the district. **The school district will not bear the responsibility of the cost of training taken solely for the purpose of licensure renewal.**
5. Staff members enrolled in out-of-state or private programs will be reimbursed at a rate not to exceed the tuition for similar study within the University of North Carolina system.
6. High academic achievement is important for students and staff members. Only coursework resulting in grades of "A" or "B," or their equivalents, will be considered for reimbursement.
7. Reimbursement of college tuition does not guarantee job placement.

8. All staff members receiving tuition reimbursement shall agree that such monies will be returned to Asheville City Schools should their employment terminate for any reason during a period of two school years succeeding the school year the coursework was completed.

APPLICATION/APPROVAL PROCESS

1. **Before the first class meeting**, staff members must apply for and receive written prior approval from the Superintendent or designee for any coursework for which they want tuition assistance. The Application for Educational Assistance is attached to this procedure and must be submitted to the Human Resources Department in advance. No reimbursement will be paid if approval has not been given before the first class meeting.
2. If your approved application includes a multi-semester educational program, you will not have to submit a new application each semester, provided that all guidelines continue to be met and you keep the HR Department informed of your progress.
3. After completion of a course, requests for reimbursement of tuition should include a copy of the approved ACS application, receipt for payment of tuition, and grade documentation.
4. Once the correct paperwork is submitted, fifty percent (50%) of tuition payments will be reimbursed for coursework necessary for lateral entry licensure or HQ status. Twenty-five percent (25%) of tuition payments will be reimbursed for all other approved coursework tuition, up to a maximum, in each case, of \$1,000 per year. **Other costs incurred such as books or fees will not be reimbursed.**
5. In order to aid in professional development budget planning, staff members wishing to have tuition reimbursed for a summer university course must submit an Application to the Human Resources Department no later than April 1 of the concurrent year.
6. In the case of critical district needs, hard-to-fill positions, or classified (non-certified) employees approved to work toward teacher licensure, the Superintendent or designee shall have the discretion to provide additional educational assistance; provided, however, for tax purposes educational assistance payments shall never exceed \$5,250.00 in any calendar year.

Adopted: August 25, 2014



Asheville City Schools
Application for Educational Assistance

School Year

A. Employee Background Information – PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

Name: _____ Last 6 digits of SS#: _____

School/Location: _____ Position: _____ Phone No.: _____

Home Address: _____

College/University enrolled in: _____

Estimated tuition cost: \$ _____ Fall \$ _____ Spring \$ _____ Summer

Coursework or Program is required for: __ HQ __ Lateral Entry __ Teaching Degree __ Administration

B. In which degree program are you enrolled and what licensure area or other area of study will this fulfill? (Please describe your course schedule or degree plan and attach a copy if available)

B. A./B. S. in Education

Post-Graduate Coursework

Master's Degree

Educational Specialist

Doctorate Program

C. When do you expect to graduate or complete your degree or coursework program?

D. Please ATTACH a detailed explanation of how this coursework directly relates to your current job assignment, fulfills a critical need for the school district, or prepares you for more responsibilities/promotions within the district, including your career plan and educational goals.

E. References – Please submit one (1) letter of recommendation with this application from current principal or supervisor.

F. Essay Section – For classified employees wanting to work toward teacher licensure, please answer each of the following – you may use this form or attach separate page(s).

1. What are your three most important reasons for wanting to be a teacher?
2. How much do you want to know about your students, in order to be most helpful to them?
3. What three things do you most want to know about your students?
4. When you think about your students, in what major ways do you most want to influence their lives?

G. After each semester or course completion; please submit the following documentation to the Human Resources office:

Copy of **tuition payment receipt** (should be an itemized invoice).

Copy of **grade report** (this does NOT have to be an official transcript. However, in order to receive the reimbursement, employee must earn a grade of B or better).

By submitting this application, I agree that any tuition reimbursement I receive from Asheville City Schools will be repaid to Asheville City Schools if my employment should terminate for any reason during a period of two school years succeeding the school year the coursework was completed.

Employee Signature

Date

Joyce Graves, Executive Director of Human Resources

Approved _____% Date_____

Not Approved Date_____

Tuition reimbursement requests should be submitted within four weeks of completing the course. Expect a MINIMUM three (3) week time frame for processing and receiving reimbursement payments.