

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

(1) Target Loan Recipients

The Board will make tuition assistance loans available to classified staff, college graduates, and to previously certified staff who are willing to obtain initial certification in a teaching critical shortage area. This will include staff that are (1) new to education, seeking a master's degree in education after previously holding a degree in another field, as well as (2) staff that hold a bachelor's degree in education and are seeking certification in an additional critical-need area of education. Tuition assistance is not available if the applicant is taking coursework to maintain certification or pursue an advanced degree in a teaching critical shortage area.

Staff that are new to education are eligible to apply for up to \$5000. The amount of any loan under this section will not exceed \$5,000 and the lifetime maximum amount available for loan to any one employee shall not exceed \$5,000.

Staff seeking a master's or rank 1 degree that hold a bachelor's in education are eligible to apply for up to \$3000. The amount of any loan under this section will not exceed \$3000 and the lifetime maximum amount available for loan to any one employee shall not exceed \$3,000.

Along with guidance from KDE, The Superintendent will annually identify and designate the teaching critical shortage areas in which individuals may qualify for tuition assistance.

(2) Loan Conditions

(a) Loans applied for and granted under this policy presume that the borrower is committing to teach in a teaching critical shortage area in Oldham County Schools after either graduating or becoming recertified in the shortage area

(b) A loan under this section becomes repayable: (i) within 30 days after the borrower who has not yet achieved the certification ceases enrollment in required courses or fails to pre-register for future courses; or (ii) if the borrower fails to fulfill the service requirement set forth in (2)(c).

(c) During the period that the employee works for the Oldham County Board of Education in a critical teaching shortage area, the loan will be forgiven at a rate of \$1,000 per year without interest. If the employee's employment terminates before the full amount of the original loan is forgiven, the employee is responsible for repayment of the balance per (2)(d).

(d) The loan becomes repayable to the board in the principal balance plus interest of 7.5% APR from the date the money was initially loaned to the borrower. The amount is due thirty (30) days after any of the conditions described in (2)(b) occur.

(e) The following specific conditions apply to the three (3) qualifying groups designated in 3065.07 (1):

Classified staff – must remain employed in the district in his/her same position held at the time that the application is made until such time as the certification is achieved.

College graduates – must be hired and serve as an employee in the district after being granted a tuition assistance loan until the time he/she is qualified to become employed as a contract certified staff member in a critical shortage area and shall become employed as a certified staff member thereafter.

Certified staff – must remain employed in a certified teaching position in the district.

(f) At the completion of each quarter/semester, the borrower must furnish the Personnel Department with a transcript of the borrower's grades for that period.

(3) Loan Application

Each person desiring to secure tuition assistance under the provisions of this section will complete and sign an application including a promissory note to the Superintendent for the loan. The application will list the specific coursework intended, the dates of enrollment, the cost of tuition, and the specific teaching certificate that he or she intends to obtain.

(4) In the event the Superintendent does not continue a teaching critical shortage area from one year to the next, the Board will continue to honor the provisions of the loan under which the loan agreement was originally approved.

(5) Any exception to the requirements of the Tuition Assistance Program shall be approved in writing by the Superintendent after a written recommendation, stating reasons for the exception, are provided to the Superintendent by the employee's supervisor.

(6) Approval of any loan will be dependent upon availability of funds designated for this purpose.