**Alexandria City Public Schools**

**2017-2018 Tuition Assistance Grant Application**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Who is eligible for a Tuition Assistance Grant?**

Licensed employees who are eligible for other employee benefits are also eligible for tuition assistance for credit courses from an accredited college or university. For eligible employees working less than full time, tuition assistance will be prorated in accordance with the percentage of employment specified in their contract. Substitutes, non-contracted adult education teachers, and employees on leaves of absence are not eligible.

**What courses are eligible for a Tuition Assistance Grant?**

Employees may receive tuition assistance only for tuition expenditures that meet the instructional/program goals and priorities aligned to the ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan, Characteristics of High Performing School Districts, and the 12 Priorities of the Curriculum and Instruction Office. Courses are to be on the graduate level from an accredited teacher preparation institution.

**Courses eligible for tuition assistance will be classified according to the ACPS priority areas listed below:**

1. Dual language certification in EL or Special Education certification holding more than one endorsement.
2. Math: Content and Instruction
3. Reading/Literacy: Content and Instruction
4. Honors/Gifted Education
5. Educational Leadership

**Ineligible Courses:**

1. Courses such as Classroom Management or those related to needing to complete a general teacher certification.
2. Courses that will lead to qualification in a new trade or business.
3. Non-credit or audit courses.
4. Courses covering the same content as those being offered for free by ACPS.
5. Courses taken by video, travel, independent study, directed study, student teaching, practical observations, or field experiences.

Also, for courses that are taken multiple times during one’s course work, ACPS offer employees a one-time reimbursement option pending the course meets the eligibility criteria listed above. Multiple enrollments in the same course are not eligible for multiple reimbursements.

**How much tuition assistance can I receive per course?**

The maximum amount of assistance per graduate 3-hour course is established each year based on the tuition rate set by local, in-state universities. For example, the tuition reimbursement rate for the 2016-2017 school is $1690 per course. This rate was aligned with the in-state tuition costs set by George Mason University. Only tuition costs are eligible for reimbursement. Approved applicants are not reimbursed for technology fees, late fees, registration, travel, costs of books, or other non-tuition expenses.

**How much tuition assistance can I receive in any one year?**

Eligible ACPS employees can receive Tuition Assistance Grants supporting up to six (6) credits per fiscal year (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018).

For classes that take place during the summer, the credits count towards the fiscal year in which the class starts, not ends. For example, if one takes EDUC 1815 EL Teaching & Standards in which the class runs from June 10, 2017 to July 19, 2017, the three credits earned go towards school year 2016-2017 although reimbursement will be issued after July 1.

**How do I apply?**

The Tuition Assistance Grant Application Form is available on the Professional Learning Website (ACPSk12.org/pl/). Click here for the application. Applications must be submitted to Dr. Debra Lane (debra.lane@acps.k12.va.us) on the following dates:

June 1, 2017 for Summer 2017 courses

September 1, 2017 for Fall 2017 courses

December 15, 2017 for Spring 2018 courses

These dates are non-negotiable. The employee’s principal or program manager (or designee) must sign the application as verification that the course for which tuition assistance is sought is directly related to the five ACPS tuition assistance priorities. Applicants seeking additional endorsements and those who are on provisional, conditional or local licenses must submit a copy of the Virginia Department of Education list of courses required for certification. A photocopy of all required information must be attached each time and application is submitted.

It is important to note that an application does not guarantee tuition reimbursement. There are limited funds which are distributed on a first come, first serve basis.

**What is the application deadline?**

**The Tuition Assistance Grant application must be submitted on the noted dates shown:**

June 1 – Summer 2017 courses

September 1 – Fall 2017 courses

December 15 – Spring 2018 courses

**How will I know if I have been approved for a Tuition Assistance Grant:**

Once the grant application has been processed, the applicant will receive a response via email within two weeks from the date the application was received indicating if the application was approved or not approved. For unapproved applications, the response form will provide the reason(s) the application was not approved.

**For approved applications, the response form will indicate:**

* The course(s) for which a Tuition Assistance Grant is to be awarded.
* The pending amount of assistance; and
* What documents need to be submitted before the approved Tuition Assistance Grant can be awarded.

**When will I receive reimbursement?**

Payment will be initiated upon receipt of the following two documents from the approved applicant:

1. A copy of a receipt clearly indicating full payment of course tuition and specifying the exact tuition paid.
2. If tuition was paid by eCheck or a version of an electronic check, a copy of your bank account statement showing that the money was withdrawn and paid to the university or college. Information related to account numbers and financial totals may be blacked out. The financial office must see your name, the bank’s name, the amount withdrawn, and to whom it went to; and
3. A grade report, transcript, or other official notification from the university or college showing that the course has been completed and assigned a final grade of ‘A’ or ‘B’ or a passing grade if the course if offered on a pass/fail basis.