

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TRAINING

Professional Development

Tuition Assistance

This regulation supersedes regulation 4032.1

I. PURPOSE

Provide Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) contracted employees with tuition assistance to increase their competence and ability to contribute to the achievement of school division goals.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION

- A. Department of responsibility has changed from the Department of Human Resources to the Department of Professional Learning and Training.
- B. Section III. language has been added to explain individual assistance priorities.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

All contracted instructional and support employees shall be responsible for meeting qualifications necessary for original employment; the school division shall help employees, within available funds, to remain qualified and, to prepare employees to meet the school division's future needs.

IV. INSTRUCTIONAL AND SUPPORT EMPLOYEES

A. Eligibility

All full-time and part-time contracted instructional and support employees who are eligible for employee benefits are also eligible for tuition assistance, within available funds each fiscal year.

B. Tuition Assistance Opportunities

1. Tuition Reimbursement Program

Within available funds, all FCPS full-time and part-time contracted instructional and support employees, who are eligible for employee benefits, are eligible for tuition reimbursement. The refund shall not exceed the maximum tuition reimbursement amount determined annually by the assistant superintendent of the Department of Professional Learning and Training.

- a. Tuition reimbursements will be approved for contracted instructional and support employees completing coursework that will lead to qualification for positions that exist in FCPS.
- b. A part-time contracted employee's tuition reimbursement is prorated according to the percentage of time being worked as specified by the employee's contract.
- c. Based on available funding, tuition reimbursement priority shall be given to contracted employees as follows:
 - Priority 1: Provisionally licensed instructional employees currently teaching in an FCPS critical field, as identified by the Department of Human Resources each year.
 - Priority 2: Instructional and support employees enrolled in FCPS-approved coursework to meet the qualifications in a designated critical need area within FCPS.
 - Priority 3: An instructional employee completing a three-semester-hour college or university course to fulfill the content area requirement for the renewal of his or her five-year renewable Virginia teaching license.
 - Priority 4: Instructional and support employees completing coursework through a regionally accredited college, or university-approved program culminating in an associate's, a bachelor's, a master's, or a doctoral degree and/or endorsement to meet the qualifications in a designated critical need area within FCPS.
 - Priority 5: Support employees who are not required to hold a degree for their position, and are completing: (1) college credit course work to earn a degree; (2) apprenticeship program courses for a technical trades position designated as a critical need area in FCPS; or certificate programs through the FCPS Adult and Community Education program (up to a maximum of 45 hours of adult education credit per fiscal year).
- d. It is the employee's responsibility to request tuition reimbursement and to do so only when eligible.
- e. Tuition reimbursement preapproval process:

The employee will complete the tuition reimbursement request form and submit the completed application to the Department of Professional Learning and Training by the second Friday of the month during the

months of August for fall semester, December for spring semester, and May for summer semester.

2. Upon receipt of the request, the Department of Professional Learning and Training will notify the employee of the approval or denial. Once a tuition reimbursement request is approved, the funds will be held in reserve for the employee.

Requests for tuition reimbursement will not be approved after the last day on which a course meets.

a. To receive reimbursement:

1. Tuition reimbursement payments will be initiated after the approved course has been satisfactorily completed with a grade of "A" or "B" or "Pass" if a Pass-Fail for a graduate-level course, or "C" or better for an undergraduate course as verified by an unofficial university transcript and/or grade report.

2. Grade verification must be received by the Department of Professional Learning and Training within 60 days of course completion.

3. Tuition reimbursement payments are paid monthly and are included in the employee's paycheck.

- b. The cost of textbooks, miscellaneous fees, travel, etc., is not reimbursed through the tuition reimbursement program.

- c. Substitutes, hourly paid employees, and employees on leaves of absence are ineligible for tuition reimbursement.

- d. Final determination of an employee's eligibility for tuition reimbursement shall rest with the assistant superintendent, Department of Professional Learning and Training, or his or her designee.

3. FCPS Academy Course Program

The school division shall contract with regionally accredited colleges, individual instructors, and FCPS Office of Adult and Community Education, to provide college credit courses, noncollege credit, and noncredit courses for contracted instructional and support employees, that reflect the needs of the school division and its employees as identified through representative channels.

Failure to successfully complete an academy-sponsored college credit course shall result in loss of an employee's eligibility for tuition assistance for any course taken while such debt is outstanding.

4. FCPS Endorsement Programs

With the approval of the Division Superintendent, or his or her designee, university endorsement programs designed to support areas designated as critical to the employment needs of the school system may be established for contracted employees. Each cohort program shall be publicly advertised, and a consistent selection process will be completed with each cohort established.