

Article 19

Tuition, Project and /or Workshop Reimbursement

A. Reimbursement Allocation and Authorization

For the duration of this agreement, each **full-time** unit member shall be entitled to tuition reimbursement **at a prorated amount in accordance with the unit member's percentage of full-time FTE** as follows:

Each full-time unit member shall have a reimbursable amount equivalent to six (6) hours each year **during the life of the contract** at the Fall 2014 Portland State University graduate rate **for that year (i.e. 2017, 2018, 2019)**. Hours may accumulate during the term of the contract. Members may borrow up to six (6) credits from their future entitlement in any one (1) year for the purpose of tuition for classes. Any member who borrows from her/his future entitlement and leaves employment with the District prior to earning the borrowed hours shall have the dollar value repaid through a mutually agreed upon payment plan, provided all funds owed are repaid prior to separation of employment.

Tuition money may be used in the following manner:

1. At the unit member's request to pay for tuition and materials embedded in the cost of the classes, workshops, and conferences that align with the member's professional goals, building goals, district goals, and/or license/credential requirements. Any materials paid for with tuition dollars are the property of the **employee unit member**.

Each unit member shall be eligible to use up to \$250 of their tuition reimbursement allocation over the life of the contract toward the cost for membership in professional organizations that relate to the member's assignment. Approval for professional organization memberships will follow the process for meeting, workshop, and conference approvals.

2. ~~Upon district approval,~~ **If the unit member's request meets any of the stipulations listed in A. 1. above, she/he may use the equivalent of up to six (6) credits on one occasion during the life of the contract** to pay for **domestic** travel and related costs for classes, workshops and

conferences not available or offered in the Portland Metropolitan Area or the state of Oregon.

The District shall cover all costs for unit members who are required by the District to present at conferences.

3. At the unit member's request, to pay for the cost of a substitute (if one is required) necessary to attend classes, workshops or conferences. The member shall give the building administrator prior notification when days off are being taken to attend classes, conferences or workshops.
4. District approved projects.
5. The District at its discretion may approve additional tuition grants for areas such as, but not limited to:
 - a. Additional endorsement programs.
 - i. for members who have been or may be RIFed from current position.
 - ii. for members adding endorsements that complement current endorsements and District curriculum goals
 - iii. additional state requirements to maintain a current position.
 - b. Programs meeting District-identified needs.
Such grants shall be for a specified dollar amount that may be used during an identified time period.

The District shall on an annual basis identify criteria used for the authorization of costs that require District approval. Upon request, the District shall provide a unit member with an itemization showing amount of tuition dollars used and remaining.

B. Reimbursement Procedure

To qualify for reimbursement for classes taken, the unit member shall notify the District of intent to seek reimbursement prior to the start of the class. Following the conclusion of the class, the member will submit a grade slip indicating successful completion of the class to the District. The grade slip

or verification of completion shall be submitted within one (1) month of its receipt by the member. Additionally, the member shall submit verification of cost for classes taken.

All notices of intent for tuition reimbursement shall be submitted on or before June 30th of the fiscal year in which the course began so funds may be reserved. Notices of intent submitted after that time will not be reimbursed. Classes qualify for funds available in the contract cycle in which the class begins.

The unit member shall receive reimbursement, prior to the receipt of grade slip, by submitting verification of completion of the class or workshop. The granting of early reimbursement does not relieve the member of the responsibility of submitting grade slips as outlined in this section. Members who fail to submit a grade slip within sixty (60) days of the completion of the term shall be subject to having their next regular paycheck reduced by an amount equal to the early reimbursement they received.

While the normal circumstances are outlined above, the District understands that in some situations this may create a financial hardship, thus preventing the member from taking classes. In these instances, the member may apply to the District for consideration for prepayment.

The District shall not be responsible for payment for the course if the member receives a failing grade, leaves the district's employment before completing the course, or does not complete the course. Any fees already paid may be recovered through payroll deductions or other means.

C. Tuition Vouchers

Any unused tuition vouchers shall be made available to unit members on a first-come-first-served basis.