

## **HIGHLY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL/TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

### **1.0 PURPOSE:**

Wirt County Schools supports the No Child Left Behind mandate for highly qualified teachers and understands the positive impact of having a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. In an effort to ensure that all Wirt County students are taught by highly qualified teachers, Wirt County Schools will use federal funds, when appropriate, to recruit, train and retain fully certified and highly qualified teachers.

### **2.0 ESTABLISHED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:**

2.1 Wirt County Schools' process for increasing the percentage of core classes taught by highly qualified teachers will include the following:

- WVEIS certification data will be entered and updated regularly for all teachers by the school principal or designee.
- The principal or designee will review all WVEIS certification data to identify potential problems and to address the by:
  - A) Ensuring that teaching assignments match endorsements
  - B) Ensuring that WVEIS information is properly coded
  - C) Notifying teachers who are not "highly qualified"
  - D) Using Housse procedures, where applicable
  - E) Using Section I of WVDE Policy 5310, Performance Evaluation of School Personnel, where applicable

2.2 Unqualified teachers will be required to enroll in a program of study in the area in which s/he holds a permit in accordance with the State of West Virginia's certification requirements.

2.3 Wirt County Schools central office staff will, in a timely manner, notify teachers whose certificates, permits or authorizations will expire at the end of the school year as per Wirt County Board of Education policy G-05.

### **3.0 TUITION REIMBURSEMENT:**

3.1 To meet legislative requirements of Title I and Title II (having 100% or core academic classes taught by highly qualified teachers.) Wirt County Schools will utilize federal funds, when

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available, to assist personnel in their efforts to become highly qualified. Annual county wide tuition reimbursement will be limited to the yearly allocation for this purpose in both Title I and Title II and will be used on a first come first serve basis.

- 3.2 The unqualified teachers, as well as those pursuing additional certification in identified areas of critical need, will apply to the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) for tuition reimbursement for completed course work as his/her first avenue of financial support. Reimbursement is limited to the cost of tuition, registration and other required fees only for appropriate college or university course work used for license renewal or for an additional endorsement in a verified shortage subject area. The term “fee” refers to any mandatory cost associated with tuition, excluding payment for books and supplies.
- 3.3 When an applicant has submitted all required documentation to the WVDE, and the application is considered as approved by the WVDE, but no state funds remain for reimbursement, the applicant will be granted an “out of funds” letter. This letter will list the exact amount of reimbursement that would have been paid to the applicant by the WVDE if the application had been submitted by the June 15<sup>th</sup> fiscal deadline (and if WVDE funds were remaining). This letter may be taken to the superintendent of Wirt County Schools for possible reimbursement.
- 3.4 The letter from WVDE must be accompanied by a receipt issued to the individual from the institution granting the credit and a transcript verifying a grade for the course. Additionally, coursework must reflect a minimum of a 3.0 grade point average or a letter grade of “B” or higher. Satisfactory/unsatisfactory or pass/fail grades will not qualify.
- 3.5 If the unqualified teacher takes the PRAXIS exam in order to become highly qualified in a core academic or reading specialist certification and works at a Title I school, Title I funds will be used to reimburse the teacher for the cost of the exam with the proper verification. In the event that there are no Title I funds available, the unqualified teacher may request reimbursement from Title II.
- 3.6 Unqualified teachers working in non-Title I schools may request tuition or PRAXIS exam reimbursement from Title II with the appropriate documentation.
- 3.7 Each teacher will be limited to a total reimbursement of 15 semester hours unless prior approval is granted by the superintendent in the Certificate/Program Agreement. Wirt County Schools will issue reimbursement to individuals who earn certificates or endorsements in areas of critical shortage.

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3.8 Teachers receiving tuition reimbursement shall be required to sign a Tuition Reimbursement Agreement and to remain under contract, assigned to the identified area of need, for a minimum of two (2) years following completion of the certification or advanced degree.

#### **4.0 SEVERABILITY:**

If any provision of this policy or application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this policy.

#### **Review Schedule:**

This policy shall be reviewed in accordance with the policy review schedule published by the Superintendent

**Authority:** §18A-3-3a, §126-136-8, §136-136-4, WV State Board of Education [Policy 5202](#), No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

**Replaces:** DH, Use of Federal Funds for Tuition Assistance, July 11, 2006