

### **3.4.2 -- EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT FOR CERTIFIED PERSONNEL**

The Van Buren School District values the continued professional growth of all certified personnel. The district values employee commitment to the completion of advanced education degree programs which will enhance professional practice, effectively deliver curriculum to students, and otherwise ensure that student needs are successfully met.

The Van Buren School District will make available a program of partial reimbursement to certified employees after successful completion of graduate courses according to the following guidelines:

1. Interested certified employees must apply for participation in this program using the appropriate application process. Application forms are available on the Van Buren School District web site at [www.vbsd.us](http://www.vbsd.us).
2. Only full-time certified employees of the Van Buren School District are eligible for participation in the program.
3. Reimbursements may be used only for graduate courses in pursuit of a specific graduate education degree at an accredited Arkansas or Oklahoma institution of higher education.
4. Participants must be degree-seeking students in good standing with the higher education institution.
5. Funding for this program will be budgeted on an annual basis through the normal budgeting process of the Van Buren School District; therefore, applicants will be required to plan one year in advance. Applications will be accepted each year beginning April 15 with May 1 being the final day applications will be accepted. Courses may be taken in the summer or in the following school year, but must be completed by June 30 of the following fiscal year. The deadline for submission of the reimbursement request will be August 1 each year.
6. Reimbursement for a graduate course will be paid at the rate of \$150 per semester hour for courses in which the certified employee/student earns an "A" or "B." Reimbursement forms (attached) must be completed and documentation must include an official transcript and proof of payment to the institution. (Should the cost of the graduate course be less than \$150 per semester hour, the district will pay the smaller amount.)
7. In order to receive reimbursement under this program, certified employee participants must (a) apply for and be accepted into the program, (b) complete the prescribed course(s), and (c) complete all reimbursement paperwork by June 30 of the fiscal year in which the course(s) are

approved for participation. Courses completed after the fiscal year will not be eligible for reimbursement.

8. Failure to properly complete the initial application or reimbursement application, failure to satisfactorily complete the course(s), failure to meet policy deadlines, and/or failure to provide appropriate documentation by the appropriate deadline or falsification of any documentation will result in loss of reimbursement.
9. The number of participants in the program will be limited by the amount of funds budgeted for the program. Reimbursement awards will be granted based on the following formula: 70% for certified employees working toward a Masters Degree and 30% for certified employees working toward a Specialist Degree or Doctorate. Any funds budgeted for the program for the current year not used by a particular group will be diverted to the other.
10. Individual participants will be limited to reimbursement for six graduate hours per fiscal year. Therefore, no employee will receive more than \$900 per year through this program (6 hours x \$150 per hour = \$900).
11. Applicants must apply for participation each year. Participants will be selected based on a “first come-first served” basis. Applications will be accepted beginning on April 15; the final deadline for applications will be May 1. In order to document exact date and time of application submission, applications must be submitted online at the following web site: <https://secure.vbsd.us/forms/domainuser/educationreimbursement.aspx>
12. After participants are selected, all applicants will be notified of the results by letter.
13. The selection process will be monitored by two members of the Personnel Policy Committee appointed by the Chairperson of the Committee.

Approved by Board: May 9, 2006  
Amended by Board: March 13, 2007  
Amended by Board: June 10, 2008