

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE EDUCATION AWARD STIPENDS

On Thursday, March 15, 2007 the Superintendent met with Meet and Confer representatives to continue discussion and to reach tentative agreement regarding Education Award stipends for classified employees. The definitions and procedures outlined below are presented to assist our mutual understanding of what an Education Award is; what the levels of awards are; how eligibility is determined; how an employee applies for an award; and, what the timelines are for applications and distribution of awards.

What is an Education Award?

An education award is recognition for *job-related* education *beyond the minimum requirements of an employee's position classification*, obtained prior to, or in the course of employment with the Lake County Office of Education.

What are the Levels of Awards?

The following annual monetary awards will be granted to full time classified employees who have fulfilled requirements for a job-related Associate's, Bachelor's, or Master's degree and *complete the application and approval process*. Degrees must be earned from a regionally-accredited college or university:

Associate's Degree: \$350

Bachelor's Degree: \$700

Master's Degree: \$1,050

Doctoral Degree: \$1,400

Part-time classified employees are also eligible for Education Awards on the basis of their percentage of full time equivalence (FTE).

The awards will be added to the yearly base pay of the employee. Awards are granted for the highest level of education attained above the minimum required for the classification. For example, an employee with a Master's degree that is above the minimum requirements of the position is eligible for *one* award of \$1050.

How is Eligibility Determined?

To be eligible for an Education Award earned prior to employment, the employee must have earned a job-related degree that *exceeds* minimum requirements for the classification at the time of initial employment. The employee must provide evidence of degree completion before an award may be granted.

To be eligible for an Education Award earned while employed with LCOE, the employee's program manager must approve the degree/training plan prior to beginning the course of study or training program, and the coursework/training must be job-related. Education Award credit will be granted for approved coursework taken and completed on the employee's own time and at the employee's own expense.

A few examples may help to illustrate how eligibility for education awards is determined:

Example 1:

- Sandy's classification is: **Early Childhood Coordinator—Infant and Toddler**
- The minimum education requirement for her classification is: **24 units Early Child Education, including core courses, 6 units administration and 2 units of Adult Supervision**

- Sandy has an A.A. in early childhood education, with core courses in administration and adult supervision.
- Sandy's education *exceeds* minimum requirements for the classification.
- Sandy *is* eligible for an education award.

Example 2:

- Audrey's classification is: **Mental Health Clinician I**
- The minimum education requirement for her classification is: **Master's degree in psychology, social work or related field**
- Audrey has a Master's degree in sociology
- Audrey's education *does not exceed* minimum requirements for the position.
- Audrey *is not* eligible for an education award.

Example 3:

- Jim's classification is: **Prevention Specialist I Safe Schools/Healthy Students Program**
- The minimum education requirement for his classification is: **Associate degree or equivalent in Alcohol and Other Drug Studies**
- Jim has a Master's degree in health science.
- Jim *is* eligible for an Education Award.

Example 4:

- Jean's classification is: **Business Services Fiscal Specialist I**
- The minimum education requirement for her classification is: **Requires high school education or recognized equivalent, including or supplemented by courses in general accounting.**
- Jean has an A.A. degree in art with no courses in business or accounting. Jean *is not* eligible for an Education Award.

How Do You Apply?

Education Awards are employee-initiated. The application is simple. It requires the employee's name, position classification, award sought, Program Director's signature, and evidence of completion of degree requirements. Accompanying evidence must be in the form of an official transcript noting the degree award, (copies of transcripts will not be accepted). It is then forwarded to Human Resources for review, signature, and initiation of the HR Action Form for payment.

Classified Employee
Education Award Application

Date: _____

Employee Name: _____

Program: _____

Position Title _____

Award Applying for: _____

Associate's-\$350, Bachelor's-\$700, Master's-\$1,050, Doctorate-\$1,400.

Degrees must be earned from a regionally-accredited college or university. Eligibility for an award earned while employed with LCOE requires the program manager's approval of the degree/training plan prior to beginning the course of study and must be job-related. The application process requires proper submission of this form accompanied by evidence of degree in the form of official transcript, noting the degree (copies will not be accepted.) Appointed employees who work less than full time or less than twelve months will receive the award in the ratio that their service bears to fulltime employment.

Official transcripts noting degree must accompany this application.

Required Signatures:

Employee: _____ **Date:** _____

Supervisor: _____ **Date:** _____

Program Director: _____ **Date:** _____

Human Resources: _____ **Date:** _____

What Are the Timelines for Applications and Distributions of Awards?

The Superintendent wants eligible employees to receive this benefit immediately and retroactively to July 1, 2006, so that it encumbers funds for the present fiscal year. *Accordingly, employees may submit Education Award Applications to Human Resources effective with this notice.*

Human Resources will notify payroll of the amount of stipend to be paid when the application and evidence of degree completion has been received and approved.

In subsequent years, applications may be submitted and processed whenever an employee has completed degree requirements and is able to provide proof in the form of transcript or diploma copy.

Employees should expect an approximate 30 to 45-day processing timeframe. When the paperwork is received by payroll the normal monthly stipend will be paid on the next available end of month payroll. Any retroactive amounts due to the employee will be paid on the 15th of the month following the end of month payroll (examples follow).

Examples:

Notification received by payroll on or before the 15th of April. Payment of educational stipend will be on April 30 payroll. Payment of any retroactive educational stipend will be paid on May 15.

Notification received by payroll on April 16th. Payment of educational stipend will be on May 30 payroll. Payment of any retroactive educational stipend will be paid on June 15.

Employees should be advised that the annual stipend amounts would be divided evenly over the months they are on contract. For example an employee on a 12-month contract receiving the \$350 annual amount would receive a stipend of \$29.17 each month.