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Loudoun County School Board, Human Resources and Talent Development (HRTD) Committee Meeting, Thursday, August 29, 2024

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[00:00:00] I'm calling to order the HRTD committee meeting for today, August 29th, 2024. I understand we do not have public comment today, so we will move on to start the meeting, I guess, with 3.1.

[00:00:17] And let's see what that is. The draft minutes. All in favor of approving the draft minutes? Oh, okay. Second by Ms. Donahue. Thank you, Chair.

[00:00:34] Okay. Okay, so it is, and then April? Yes. Yes, thank you so much. So we'll move on as far as the draft minutes being approved. And then our next item on the agenda is 4.01. We will take a look at revisions to policy 7316, supplementary pay for athletic coaches, sponsors of Virginia High School League activities, co-curricular and other stipends.

[00:01:01] If you will, I believe, Ms. Bolin, that would be you. That is correct. Thank you so much. So tonight we are bringing policy and regulation 7316 to you for review. Policy 7316 relates to supplementary pay in regards to coaches, co-curricular activities, and other stipends.

[00:01:26] And specific to the details, I will turn it over to HRTD Director Bob Phillips to walk you through the changes. Thank you. Good evening. Tonight, the recommended changes to Policy 7316 you see first

provide updated language from Virginia Code, as well as LCPS terminology used to govern the supplementary pay.

[00:01:48] Secondly, the policy on Line 5 incorporates former Regulation 7316 to identify the names and corresponding pays of all stipends, pointing prospective employees to the annually published buddy book for the information.

[00:02:05] Hence, Regulation 7316, which once listed all of the stipends, would be struck completely, redirecting all employees to the buddy book when we make or change our stipends. This allows for more flexibility when adding or revising the stipends and other supplementary pay positions.

[00:02:27] Any questions? Much. Questions? Ms. Chandler, Ms. Donahue? So you're okay? Okay. We're okay here. so That means that we will continue I guess to move this as an information item or act or an action action item to the board Thank you so much an action item to the next committee the next committee. Okay. All right. Thank you so much We'll move that along and we'll continue on to

[00:03:02] The next policy we're going to discuss today and forgive me for a minute. I believe it's a Let's see 30, if you will, Ms. Bolin? Absolutely. So as a reminder, with the support of the school board, the appropriated fiscal year 25 budget includes some funding to initiate a tuition assistance program that differs from traditional tuition reimbursement programs. As Mr. Phillips will be sharing later in regards to more detail about our new tuition assistance initiative, this new

[00:03:40] initiative also led to our review of the related policy, which I'm going to ask Mr. Bennett to review with you now. All right. Good evening. So what you'll see primarily in this policy is it's very specific to a tuition reimbursement. So what we're doing is we're broadening this to be more of an umbrella policy that would cover a myriad of different tuition programs, if you will.

[00:04:12] What we've also added into this, because HRTD is the driver of the tuition assistance program, we added language that says HRTD will oversee the programs. But we also left in that appropriate departments may oversee programs because there are department cohorts and different types of programs that they manage themselves.

[00:04:33] So it isn't intended to be all HRTD, but kind of give that latitude. And then what we're also working toward is providing greater clarity within the regulation, within the accompanying regulation that we're currently working through as well.

[00:04:49] I'm happy to answer any questions, but specific to the tuition assistance program, Mr. Phillips, as Ms. Boland said, he's going to be sharing more of those details shortly. Happy to answer any questions. Any discussion? Ms. Chandler or Ms. Donahue?

[00:05:06] Thank you very much, Chair Griffiths. I don't have a question about the policy. I think the revisions look fine. I was curious, I assume there's a regulation that sets out more specifics, understanding that that's your lane and not our lane to make any recommendations about the regulations.

[00:05:24] I am curious what it says, and I wondered if it might be possible for us to see the regulation perhaps when we vote on it as an action item. I mean, we can absolutely bring it next month. How about that? Does that work? Okay.

[00:05:39] I want to thank you, Ms. Donahue. I think that's a great suggestion. Yes, if you could provide that, that would be fantastic. Are there any other questions on the tuition assistance? I don't actually have

a question, and I'm sure that after we see the presentation shortly, we'll have a more fulsome discussion.

[00:06:01] I just wanted to say I'm very happy to see this coming into fruition and hope that it can help us in terms of incentivizing our teachers to stay and be happy here. So thank you very much. Thank you, Ms. Chandler. So as far as this policy goes, 7630, action again to the next committee meeting.

[00:06:24] Got it. Thank you so much, Ms. Fullen. So we'll move on to, oh, I'm sorry. Do I have a second to move, or do we have to do that, or we're just good to move that to action? I don't think you have to make a motion to send it to action in the committee, but you would have to take an action, when it's an action item, to send it to the full school board.

[00:06:47] Okay. Perfect. Perfect. Thank you so much, Ms. Bolin. I guess we can now move on to discussion items. Talent Development HRTD Committee Tuition Assistance Presentation. Thank you. Great. And I will turn that over to Mr. Phillips. He's going to walk us through this initial pilot. Thanks, Ms. Bolin. So tonight, we're very pleased to let us share information for you about our tuition assistance initiative. You'll get an overview of the

[00:07:22] initiative so far and how it supports our overall strategic plan in Loudoun County Public Schools. Just as a reminder, here is our driving statement that HRTD centers all of its actions in terms of attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining a high-performing and inclusive workforce.

[00:07:41] Next slide, please. Another reminder, this was a graphic that we recently updated, which now reflects our reconfigured HRTD department as a whole. Next slide, please. On this slide, you can see the agenda and hear about tonight and some of the things that you'll hear about our initiative and how it impacts employees across various departments again strive as LCPS strives to be the employer of choice. The tuition assistance initiative designed to support our valued staff members educational and professional development. This initiative reflects our commitment to

[00:08:18] fostering growth learning and excellence within our school community while targeting the district's critical need areas. As part of the FY25 budget process, the tuition assistance initiative stands out for its targeted approach, offering tuition assistance specifically tailored to support hard-to-fill positions through defined programs and the attainment of critical credentials.

[00:08:42] The overarching goal is to progressively expand the scope of this initiative in the coming years, extending its support to a broader range of programs and employees. It's important to note that this program differs from our traditional tuition reimbursement programs as it operates with a more targeted approach and is in an open-ended fund available to all. We're excited about the opportunities it presents for supporting our employees in achieving their career goals.

[00:09:15] Next slide, please. Partnering with Let's Talk and their design team, HRTD was able to create an efficient information portal and submission process for employees to take advantage of the myriad of options. Here is a screenshot or snip from the buttons from the Ask HRTD page under the Tuition Assistance Initiative button. A brief overview of each of these programs can be found when you click on the individual buttons. I will provide to you these this evening.

[00:09:47] To qualify for any of the options that are listed here, candidates must be employed or becoming employed with LCPS in a full-time or part-time role. This also includes substitutes who must work at least 50 full days in any substitute capacity. Please note that an employee is only allowed to

participate in one option per fiscal year. Next slide, please. The slide in front of you comes from one of our four events hosted by HRTD in collaboration with other program

[00:10:23] directors from Educate Virginia and iTeach. The events were hosted in person and through our Zoom events platform. This slide shows the eligibility criteria and the critical needs licensure areas that the tuition assistance initiative program supports through Educate Virginia and iTeach. To help build a more robust teacher candidate pipeline and to grow our own,

[00:10:49] Both Educate Virginia and I-Teach are alternative pathways to licensure for any current LCPS or newly hired employees eligible for or holding a provisional license in one of the following certification areas listed on the slide.

[00:11:04] Eligible participants must have a bachelor's degree to participate in these options. Educate Virginia has an in-person component while I-Teach is 100% asynchronous learning, each taking approximately one year on average to complete.

[00:11:20] participants have the option to begin the program now and concurrently work as a teacher, or they can start the program as in their other role and begin teaching for LCPS in 25-26 school year. Once accepted into the program and approved through the Let's Talk submission, LCPS is billed directly from I Teach and Educate Virginia with zero cost to the employee. Next slide, please.

[00:11:51] As you can see, the other options on here, I'll briefly go over those. The next option of the RN exam and test prep prepares our current LCPS health clinic specialists to take and pass the NCLEX exam.

[00:12:11] Eligible employees are reimbursed after completing and passing the course and exams. Next option, the Praxis test prep, the test and test prep option allows for the reimbursement of one Praxis test fee taken after July 1 for any current LCPS or newly hired employees to get an initial or an add-on endorsement in one of the aforementioned critical need areas.

[00:12:40] Eligible participants must be eligible to work in a licensed position for LCPS. Employees are reimbursed for both test prep fees up to \$90 and a test fee after passing the exam as long as they are current employees or newly hired to teach for us in Loudoun County Public Schools.

[00:13:01] To help mitigate the shortage of special education teachers, the Special Education Foundations course reimbursement provides up to \$572 to take the Special Education Foundations course. The course must be taken after July 1, 2024 by any current LCPS or newly hired employees with a minimum of a bachelor's degree again to get initial special education endorsement.

[00:13:27] Employees are reimbursed after passing the class as long as they are current employees or newly hired to teach special education for us here in Loudoun. The network certifications option pays for digital experience specialists to gain CompTA, that's the name of the company, Tech Plus, A Plus, Network Plus, or Security Plus certifications to broaden their knowledge in working with our teachers and our students in our networks.

[00:13:56] LCPS is, again, billed directly for fees upon employee completion and approval to take the coursework and the exam. Finally, the reading endorsement cohort option is in collaboration with the Department of Teaching and Learning.

[00:14:12] This program provides tuition assistance for current LCPS teachers who are accepted into a reading specialist cohort through the Department of Teaching and Learning that started after July 1, 2024.

The employees through LCPS receive a one-time sum of \$1,000 after acceptance into the program and provide the appropriate documentation to support that acceptance.

[00:14:38] next slide please this is a chart that shows our participation in the different options that we have provided since rolling this out on July 1 and you can see up until Friday of uh last week when we had to get the slides up onto board docs we have since had about three or four more iTeach candidates uh submit their um credentials as well as their let's talk um submissions to be approved to join the program. That seems to be our most frequent or popular program. Finally, what's next?

[00:15:16] Next slide, please. As we mentioned earlier, we look to expand this program to other employee groups. And as Mr. Bennett has mentioned, in terms of revising the policy to go along with it. So we're hoping that next, this budget season, we'll see some increased funding for different reimbursement programs. In addition to that, we're very happy to have the talent development team back in HRTD and partner with them as we look to fill some critical leadership roles and how this tuition assistance program can be built out to help support those employees

[00:15:56] in Loudoun who are seeking leadership development that can impact our leadership roles that are critical need areas next slide next slide oh that's it okay well are there any questions there's a question slide on mine thank you so much for the presentation um i do have a couple of questions um and in case i missed it all the employees have a portal they can go to to find out this information right um what class you know how classes are reimbursed and that sort of thing

[00:16:33] Correct. If they go to the ask HRTD on our website, on the new website, there's a button called the tuition assistance initiative. And if they click that, it then expands to those eight options. There's one option to ask general questions. And then all the other ones are related to the specific program.

[00:16:53] So if they were going to join iTeach, they would click the iTeach, fill out the information, and then it gets routed to us in HRTD. For approval, we coordinate with iTeach to make sure that the person has been approved through iTeach as well, because they have specific criteria to join the iTeach or Educate Virginia or any of the other programs.

[00:17:16] So we have close coordination with those outside business partners or partners for the programs. Thank you. I also have a couple more questions. Marketing of this tuition assistance program to the teachers separately, you know, like through email or some form to let them know that this is available rather than them, you know, they might not go into the portal every day.

[00:17:42] And, you know, you did say, this is a different question, but you did say expanding the program. So, you know, we have permanent subs. We have people that maybe, you know, they like subbing and they want to go on to teaching.

[00:17:58] And I'm hoping that's being considered as well to offer it to subs. I don't know if that's part of your expansion program. And the new hires, I just assume you let them know. I'm assuming you could tell me that you let all new hires know about our tuition assistance program in detail.

[00:18:19] So I guess the first part of that was marketing to all the teachers. How are you going to go about doing that? So we already did that when the board approved the funds in May or April of last year.

[00:18:36] And we were hosting our meetings about particularly Educate Virginia and iTeach. We worked with our communications outreach office to send out Blackboard messaging to let them know when these

presentations were going to take place, because we did one in person and then many through Zoom events.

[00:18:54] In addition, after we got the Let's Talk, because that took a little bit longer to get up and running, after we got the Let's Talk buttons up and ready to go to accept the applications into the programs, We sent out another ConnectEd to all employees in Loudoun because this is not just targeting teachers.

[00:19:15] It's all employees. And as you mentioned, I'll answer the other question. We do include substitutes. The substitutes have an opportunity to be part of any one of these programs, but most of them are taking advantage of the Educate Virginia or the I-Teach programs to become fully licensed teachers for us in the future.

[00:19:36] Some are continuing their roles as a substitute while they do it. Others have started the classwork, got the provisional license, and have already started to become teachers for us in our classrooms. Thank you so much. And if I could bring up one thing, Ms. Bolin, maybe you can answer it for me.

[00:19:54] I had mentioned CPR subs. I understand you hold the CPR classes like at certain times of the year. We were going to try and include subs. is that correct or can you uh so i know that um financial cost the budget cost was being pulled all the information was being pulled we do hold um cpr classes i may be relying on mr bennett with more information about when how often if he's aware but we do hold them as they are part of

[00:20:29] our teachers' requirements for their licensure renewals, but again, we don't make the teachers pay for those, so those would be at a cost for us. We don't pay for them to come in to cover that where we would have to for subs, so there is a financial cost there, and of course, we would Ultimately, we have 4,000 subs, so that would expand the number of classes that we would have to offer.

[00:21:04] Well, if I may, as far as tuition assistance, can they take the course elsewhere and then submit it for tuition reimbursement? So right now, we don't have tuition reimbursement as part of the funding.

[00:21:19] That would be something that we could consider as we look to expand it. Right now, it's just tuition assistance that is designed because it's only \$300,000, which I know is a lot of money and we're very grateful for. When you're looking at 14,000 employees, it doesn't go very far. So we're very intentional on the programs that it's currently supporting and we hope to grow it year over year.

[00:21:42] So that is something we can definitely consider in the future. I'm definitely encouraged by that. I'd like to see more attention given to the subs because maybe they would enjoy going on to teaching full-time with us.

[00:21:57] And I do think CPR is very important, along with we pass the policy on insulin and the diabetes and making sure that subs and teachers understand how to handle those situations. So with that, I'm going to ask my colleagues if they have any thoughts on this presentation.

[00:22:17] Ms. Chandler. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you so much for this presentation. I'm very heartened to see this opportunity available, And I appreciate hearing the amount, and it looks like you're able to serve quite a few members of our community with that budget allocation, which is fantastic.

[00:22:39] I'm also heartened that this is something that we're able to do that can help perhaps alleviate some of our hardest hit or hardest to fill positions. So I'm just really delighted by the initiative. I would love to hear a little bit more about the process that HRTD goes through in terms of determining how many people did you have to turn away, how did you decide who qualified or received the assistance, and I would love to hear more about the RN exam and test prep

[00:23:18] if you're able to give me some more context. In terms of the process, we want it to be as inclusive as possible for all of our employee groups. So when we partnered with the two alternate pathways programs, we made sure that they had criteria that matched our vision of what a successful teacher would look like. And so we did that. They have their own acceptance criteria that someone, if you apply, we tell all of our employees that are interested in that to first apply to them and then upload your acceptance

[00:23:57] letter from either one of the programs into our Let's Talk portal. And then from there, we verify that they're an employee with us, right? We've had some people who aren't apply. And sorry, you're not an employee. You won't qualify because they hear word of mouth. And then from there, then we connect them with Sabrina McEver, who is our financial analyst, to let them know that you're going to be taken care of. They do have a waiver that they have or a notification at the sign that if they separate before the program is completed, then they're going to have to

[00:24:36] reimburse us. But beyond that, we're leaving that to the companies to give them the curriculum, the content, the assessments, pieces that go along to moving someone from the provisional license to a professional license. So we're not involved in that. We're kind of the go-between and the conduit for that and then providing the financial support for them. In terms of the nursing exam, I would have to get more information on that and what that covers. I know we were really targeting those employees who still were not a certified RN yet for us in our schools

[00:25:15] that were still working in our clinics. And that was the purpose for setting that up and working with Student Health Services of Loudoun County to get that together. Thank you very much. Most helpful. Yes, Ms. Donahue.

[00:25:33] Thank you, Chair Griffiths. I don't have any questions. I was going to ask about the advertising to our employees, so thank you, Chair Griffiths, for asking about that. I just wanted to say that I would like to second what Ms. Chandler said earlier. I'm very excited about this program. I'm very enthusiastic about the changes that we're making, and I'm really happy to see the plans, and I'm excited to learn more about it.

[00:25:55] Thank you very much. I would also like to add retention is really important. So I look forward to this program and the expansion of this program. So hopefully that will happen. And if we have no other questions, I guess we'll close on that one.

[00:26:20] Can I actually add some? Sure. Oh, did you want to say something? I just want to say something. Sure. I guess under new business, I want to speak to the committee in regards to this is our first committee meeting for this school year, and we try to reflect on what we think the committee might want to know, especially as we work on initiatives, but HRTD is quite expansive.

[00:26:42] We have a lot of teams. We don't just hire, and we don't just, you know, investigate, or we don't just do all the negative. We do lots of positive things. So I'm hoping that the committee members over time

can think through some things that they might want to hear more about or learn more about.

[00:27:06] You know, we're happy to continue to bring things. We have thoughts and ideas for other meetings this year. Next, in October, we want to bring information about the participate learning teachers and all the things that we did in regards to that piece. But if there are things that committee members would like to know more about or are interested in learning about, if you could be thinking about that and feel free to reach out so that we can be prepared to bring those items, I would really appreciate it.

[00:27:35] Thank you, Ms. Boland. Yeah, anything that you want to bring up as far as new business? And I'll ask my colleagues if they have new business to bring up today. Anybody? Oh, you do. Ms. Donahue. Thank you, Chair Griffiths.

[00:27:52] And thank you, Ms. Boland. I am interested in the grievance and discipline process, which I understand from our conversations is on the agenda for your staff anyway, to be taking a look at that and proposing some possible changes. So I realize that's not a new idea for you, but I was glad to hear that you are looking at that because that's something that I was interested in.

[00:28:17] And I'm also interested in, which I think could possibly be appropriate for this committee, But I am interested in the idea of if it would be possible or feasible to offer tuition reimbursement or discount for LCPS employees who do not live in Loudoun County, but want to enroll their students in our schools.

[00:28:45] So I know we don't do that right now and I would love to, particularly if Mrs. Griffiths supports investigating this idea, I would love to, if it would be possible for your staff to gather some information about what might be done with that, what budget impact would be, how something like that would work, if it would be possible, maybe as another recruiting or retention tool.

[00:29:13] Yes, Ms. Boone. Okay, thank you. So we're happy to assist with that. That is actually not our, we would not be the lead. HR is not the lead on that type of request, surprisingly.

[00:29:30] Although we could be partners in it as a retention piece, it really is housed, I think it usually goes to F&O. This question comes up a lot. Ms. Willoughby has all the information. They would be who we would be going to to pull the information in regards to students who are enrolled.

[00:29:51] For employees here, we don't have student enrollment data. So I'm happy to relay the message, and it would probably be a combination, but it wouldn't necessarily be. We could maybe have someone come in, but it wouldn't be this staff that would have the information to bring.

[00:30:10] Thank you. May I, Ms. Corbett? Thank you. Thank you for that clarification, Ms. Boland. I will share with my colleagues the reason why I thought of that is when you mentioned tuition reimbursement on this agenda, that was what my mind went to before I actually read the policy.

[00:30:30] I'm like, oh, no, that's not different tuition reimbursement. But that's why it was on my mind as a possible avenue for this committee. But I appreciate that clarification. Absolutely. And if I can add one more thing, If there are things like that that potentially would have a budget impact that you are interested in that are housed in HR, I would love to hear them as well as I start to work on our budget asks.

[00:30:57] Our priority, of course, is always recruitment and retention. So that's our goal, to expand programs and things that we're doing, such as the tuition assistance program. We'd like to add tuition reimbursement, but we have lots of other things as well as we look to appreciate and recognize staff.

[00:31:13] At a greater level so if there are certain things that you think apply and if they don't I can let you know if it That's a different area, but please feel free to share this as well. Thank you. Miss Bolin. Yeah, I Think myself and my colleagues Agree that we need to retain teachers and tuition assistance is very important. So I look forward to the expansion and more details on it. So thank you so much And I think that was our new business, right? Okay, so The next thing is we can adjourn at this time.

[00:31:50] Yes? Do I get a second? Thank you, Ms. Dunn. All in favor, say aye. Aye. Okay. Thank you so much for this meeting today. I appreciate it.



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