



Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education
June 2021

Special Education Teacher Tuition Reimbursement Grant Overview and Application Checklist

Overview

In response to the ongoing and intense need to provide appropriately certified and endorsed teachers for students with disabilities, the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education (MDE OSE) is offering a Special Education Teacher Tuition Reimbursement Grant opportunity. The Special Education Teacher Tuition Reimbursement Grant funds are intended to incentivize certified Michigan teachers to earn an additional endorsement in special education for employment in a program where they are currently not qualified.

Prior to applying for this grant, districts must follow the Special Education Personnel Approvals process for employing teachers under initial temporary approval. More details as well as information about the designed uses and the differences between approvals can be found on the [Special Education Personnel Approval System web site](#). Here is an overview of the steps for a district to obtain a Special Education Initial Temporary Approval.

1. District conducts a search for a fully qualified teacher and there is no certified teacher holding the appropriate endorsement available to fill the position.
2. Verify the individual has a valid Michigan Teacher Certificate or Temporary Teacher Employment Authorization.
3. Determine the appropriate approval needed for the candidate. The approval must match the category of the special education position (resource program approvals may hold any special education endorsement).
4. Complete all tasks related to confirming the approval requirements have been met (e.g. background check per school safety law).
5. Make sure the candidate is aware they must enroll and get accepted into an approved Michigan Educator Preparation Program which matches the category of the assignment and the candidate must complete 6 credits in the program category prior to renewal.
6. Submit the required documentation in the Michigan Online Educator Certification System (MOECS).
7. Receive the Letter of Approval from the Michigan Department of Education for the initial temporary approval.

To better understand the differences between types of approvals and permits, please refer to the [Special Education Personnel Approval System web page](#) and the [Permits and Placement web page](#).

Grant Requirements and Application Checklist

| Met? | Application Checklist | Explanation |
|------|--|---|
| Y/N | Application is submitted by a district or ISD administrator (not a teacher). | This grant is for eligible districts following the Special Education Personnel Approval System. A teacher may be hired under this system, but the district is the entity responsible for following the requirements of the Special Education Personnel Approval System, so the district must apply. |
| Y/N | District is on the Eligible District List. | Districts are only eligible to apply if they have a 60 percent or higher free and reduced price meals population, based on the fall 2019 data provided by the MDE Office of Health and Nutrition Services. |
| Y/N | The teacher was hired under a special education teacher temporary approval. | This grant is for eligible districts following the Special Education Personnel Approval System and hiring a teacher under a temporary approval. Hiring teachers under a waiver or any type of permit does not meet the requirements for this grant. The Letter of Approval issued by MDE which contains the type of approval, effective date of approval, and the endorsement area must be uploaded. A separate application should be submitted for each teacher meeting the grant criteria. |
| Y/N | The date of the INITIAL temporary approval is no earlier than 5/14/21 and no later than 9/30/22. | The effective date of the INITIAL temporary approval must be no earlier than 5/14/21 and no later than 9/30/22. All initial applications approved during this time frame make a district eligible to request reimbursement for up to \$800 per credit hour for up to 6 credit hours per year for three years through 9/30/24 as long as the district is issued continuing temporary approval for years 2 and 3. |
| Y/N | Endorsement area on the application matches the endorsement area on the temporary approval. | In addition to the endorsement area on the application matching the endorsement area on the temporary approval, the 6 credits per year must be completed in the endorsement area as approved by the approved Michigan Educator Preparation Program in which the teacher is enrolled. Proof of enrollment from the university of training should be provided to the employing district. |
| Y/N | A valid Michigan teaching certificate OR valid Temporary Teacher Employment | The district must follow the Special Education Teacher Personnel Approvals process, which includes the teacher holding a valid Michigan teaching certificate or valid Temporary Teacher Employment Authorization (T2EA). |

| Met? | Application Checklist | Explanation |
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| | Authorization (T2EA) was uploaded. | |
| Y/N | The person to whose attention the reimbursement should be sent is a district administrator (not a teacher). | <p>All reimbursement checks will be issued to the district and sent to the district at the address on file in the EEM to the attention of the district administrator indicated in the application.</p> <p>It is up to the teacher and district to work together to determine how courses will be paid for and how the teacher will be reimbursed if the teacher is required to pay the tuition up front.</p> |
| Y/N | The requested reimbursement does not exceed \$800/credit hour for up to 6 credit hours per school year of the temporary approval period. | <p>This grant can be used to cover tuition costs up to \$800.00 per credit hour for a maximum of six credits per year per teacher for up to three years. Eligible courses are those that are toward a special education endorsement in the area for which the initial temporary approval was issued. Only tuition is reimbursable; other program or course fees or course materials are not reimbursable.</p> <p>If the cost per credit hour is less than \$800, the maximum amount requested may only be for 6 credit hours during the temporary approval period. <i>Example:</i> If all the grant criteria are met and a teacher takes 2 3-credit courses and either the district or teacher pays \$550/credit hour, the district may request reimbursement for \$1650 per course or a total of \$3300. Additional credits taken beyond the 6 credits in the same temporary approval period are not eligible for reimbursement.</p> <p>If the cost per credit hour is greater than \$800, the district may only request reimbursement for up to \$800/credit hour. <i>Example:</i> If all the grant criteria are met and a teacher takes 2 3-credit courses and either the district or teacher pays \$1000/credit hour, the district may only request a reimbursement for \$2400 per course or \$4800.</p> <p>NOTE: The reimbursement will be issued to the district, and if the teacher paid the original tuition or tuition is more than \$800 per credit hour, it is up to the district to reimburse the teacher according to the district's agreement with the teacher.</p> |

| Met? | Application Checklist | Explanation |
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| Y/N | Reimbursement for this teacher for this course has not already been paid through this grant. | Reimbursement will not be provided for repeated courses. |
| Y/N | The course name and number on the application matches what is on the submitted proof of payment. | To ensure the courses being taken to obtain the endorsement are the courses being reimbursed for, the course name(s) and number(s) on the application must be listed on the proof of payment. |
| Y/N | Proof of payment includes the teacher's name, course name and number, number of credits, total number of credits and total tuition amount (or cost per credit hour.) | To ensure the reimbursement is for the teacher named on the application and to ensure the reimbursement amount is calculated correctly, all these items must be included on the proof of payment submitted as part of the application. |

How to Get Reimbursed

The grant application serves two purposes: to get approval to obtain grant funds by meeting the grant criteria and to request reimbursement. Once a district's grant application for a teacher has been approved during the initial time frame of 5/14/21 – 9/30/22, reimbursement will be provided to the district. All reimbursement checks will be issued to the district and sent to the address on file in the EEM to the attention of the district administrator indicated in the application. Payments will be processed by Marquette Alger RESA, the fiscal agent for the Special Education Teacher Tuition Reimbursement Grant, in a timely manner following approval of the application for reimbursement by the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education.

For subsequent course reimbursement, the district should use the same application. Reimbursement may be requested one course at a time or at the end for all courses taken according to the district's preference as long as all other grant criteria are met.

For additional information on the grant, go to the [Special Education Teacher Tuition Reimbursement Grant web page](#). Links to the application and to ask questions can also be found on the web page.