UPSHUR COUNTY SCHOOLS

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July 1, 2026
UPSHUR COUNTY SCHOOLS FEDERAL PROGAM
LEA (local educational agencies) Procedures for Recruiting, Retaining, and Retraining Educators

2026-2027

The following procedures will guide the efforts of Upshur County Schools to identify and to address needs in meeting the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) requirements for fully certified teachers through recruiting, retaining, and retraining educators.

Purpose

Under ESSA, the focus is to provide a well-rounded education for all students by effective educators who are fully certified. Fully certified is defined as meeting applicable WV (West Virginia) state certification and licensure requirements as defined within WVBE (West Virginia Board of Education) Policy 5202. The core academic subjects include the arts, reading/language arts, English, world languages, mathematics, science, and social studies. West Virginia defines the arts as dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Upshur County Schools seeks fully certified teachers in all subjects and in all schools. However, the district experiences a shortage of applicants for specific vacancies, which are deemed critical areas of need. Upshur County Schools' Federal Programs supports recruitment of fully state certified teachers through tuition reimbursement for employees of Upshur County that may be seeking certification in the areas of need.

Efforts to Fully Certify Teachers

Ensure Data Accuracy

- West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS) certification data will be entered and updated regularly for all teachers by the district Personnel Department designee.
- The principal will review the credentials of any teachers who are new to the building and a new position within their building to identify potential problems and to address them by notifying teachers who are not fully certified.
- The Assistant Superintendent will:
    - Communicate the necessity for accurate data to all staff who enter data in the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS)
    - Verify course codes entered for classes

- Verify teacher certification codes
- Verify each teacher's WVEIS ID number
- Verify each teacher's grade level assignments
- Verify certification codes match with course codes
- Ensure each teacher's certification codes are included
- Provide training to principals concerning data accuracy
- Provide technical assistance in the scheduling of teachers and students to ensure teachers and students are scheduled appropriately

- The Assistant Superintendent or designee will complete the highly qualified data management for reports on WVEIS
- The Assistant Superintendent or designee will, in a timely manner, notify teachers whose certificates, permits, or authorizations will expire at the end of the school year.
- Hiring procedures to ensure highly qualified teachers in core academic classes

Analysis of Data and Identification of Deficiencies

At least annually, the principal and district-level staff will analyze personnel data and conference with principals related to retirements, future retirements, potential transfers, reduction in force, potential areas of critical need, and teacher assignments in positions within the school.

– Title III requires such teachers to have English proficiency
  – A teacher who does not teach a core subject must still meet this Title III requirement if s/he teaches English language learners
  – In WV, English language fluency is measured by holding a teacher licensure

Report Qualification Needs to Teachers Who Are Identified as Not Meeting the Fully Certified Status

The principal will review the credentials of any teachers new to the building and a new position within his/her building to identify potential problems and to address them by notifying teachers who are not fully certified.

The principal, working in collaboration with district-level staff, may offer the possible solutions while in conference with the employee:

- Encourage the teacher to take more course work or to take the required assessments
- Submit the mandated applications to the WVDE (West Virginia Department of Education) Office of Certification and Licensure, and/or
- Notify an institute of higher education to secure advisement or counsel on

Examine recruiting, retaining, and retraining options to increase fully- certified teachers in core academic classes and identify appropriate solutions

A. Recruiting-

- The district will post current publications of job postings on the county web page.
- The district will implement a tuition reimbursement procedure, utilizing Title I and/or II funds, to assist teachers in completing required coursework in certifications deemed as critical need as stated in policy updated and approved by the local board of education annually.
- The district will utilize institutions of higher education that specialize in the category of teaching credentials needed, as supported by district data and the district will systematically develop professional and personal relationships within those institutions.

B. Retaining-

- The district provides teacher support and classroom modeling through the Upshur County Support for Improving Professional Practice (SIPP Plan).
- The district provides incentives and networks for teachers interested in pursuing or renewing National Board Certification.
- The district will develop and implement professional development plans that progress through the stages of awareness, development, transfer, and institutionalization over a period of three to four years. All schools include professional development plans within their strategic plans to support educators.

C. Retraining-

- The principal, in collaboration with the district staff, will conference with the teacher to encourage the unqualified teacher to enter into a contracted agreement with Upshur County Schools to take courses or the PRAXIS exam leading to additional certifications or endorsements in the identified areas of need to become fully certified for the identified position.
- The district will collaborate with local universities to provide programs of professional development for teachers.
- The district will identify and provide opportunities for teachers to take instructional courses specific to district needs in areas of critical need.
- Additionally, school-based, and district-based professional learning communities (PLCs) are supported by the district to provide teachers the opportunity to meet with colleagues to enhance classroom practices using book studies and sharing student work.

West Virginia Tuition Reimbursement Program

Under W.Va. Code §18A-3-3a, reimbursement is provided to teachers for courses completed toward an additional endorsement in a shortage area. An eligible applicant must hold a professional teaching, service, or administrative certificate or its equivalent and be seeking an additional endorsement in a verified shortage area. Reimbursement for shortage area

coursework is available currently for an unlimited number of semester hours completed. (See W. Va. Code §18A-3-3a and/or WVBE Policy 5202, Section 23.1)

Upshur County Tuition Reimbursement Program

- **Title II** may pay tuition reimbursement in any school with restrictions

  - Title II funds used for tuition reimbursement must first target the respective county's need for fully certified teachers in an area annually identified as critical need or shortages as approved by the local board of education and submitted to the State.

  - Teachers who are not eligible for tuition reimbursement from the state, and are not eligible for Title I funding, may be eligible for funding from Title II. Title II funds may be utilized to reimburse teachers for course work leading to fully certified status in either a core academic area, special education certificate, or advanced certificates that has been identified as an area of critical need or shortage.

- **Special Education** may pay tuition reimbursement in any school. Teachers who are not eligible for tuition reimbursement from the state may be eligible for Special Education funding, which has been designated for this purpose. Special Education funds may be utilized to reimburse teachers for course work leading to fully certified status in either a core academic area or special education certification based on assigned duties and certification requirements.

- **Tuition Reimbursement Request:**(See page 7) The applicant must submit all the required documentation to the state, and if the application is considered as approved by the state, but no state funds remain for reimbursement, the applicant will be granted an "Out-of-Funds letter." This letter will list the amount of the reimbursement that would have been paid by the state. A Rejection letter may also be considered if it would have met the criteria of being approved if the request had occurred within the same fiscal year. Tuition may not be reimbursed that exceeds one calendar year. The applicant will then take the letter to Upshur County Federal Programs Office for consideration of reimbursement. Consideration is determined on a first come first serve basis to not exceed the allocated funds designated for the Fully Certified Plan.

Budgeting for the Fully Certified Plan

- Upshur County Schools will utilize federal funds, when available, to assist personnel in their efforts to become fully certified in areas of critical need. The most recent regulatory guidance will be used when determining eligibility for receipt of funds.

- Title II funds will be set-aside to assist in tuition reimbursement for those teachers who do not meet the "fully certified requirements.

- Teachers of the core academic subjects who are not "fully certified" will be notified by the LEA of their status. Additional courses will be required for correct certification of their job assignment.
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Communicating the Procedures

- The district-level staff will explain new administrative procedures and timelines to all affected personnel.
- The Office of Federal Programs will post the procedures on the Upshur County Federal Programs website.
- The Director of Federal Programs will explain the updated procedures for reimbursement through Federal Programs funds to school-level administration at Principal meetings. Principals or designees will explain the updated procedures at school-level meetings (i.e. team, department, or grade level meetings, Faculty Senate meetings).
- The Director of Federal Programs will provide each school with a copy of the procedures.
- Regarding Parents Right to Know: All Title I schools will notify parents of children in a Title I school that they have the right to request information about the qualifications of their children's teachers. This information will be made available upon request from the school principal. Documentation of parent requests for teacher certification is kept at the LEA.

UPSHUR COUNTY SCHOOLS INDIVIDUAL FULLY CERTIFIED PLAN

Section A – Plan Development

(Please complete prior to beginning of 2nd school month or within 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) of new teaching assignment)

Teacher Name _____ Current School Year _____

School Name _____ Teaching Assignment _____

Certification _____

Current Status (Out of Field, Permit, Other) _____

Reason Not Fully Certified _____

_____

Plan to Become Fully Certified _____

_____

Institution(s) of Higher Learning Associated with Plan _____

_____/____ _____/____ _____/_____

Teacher Signature / Date Principal Signature/Date Title I/II Director Signature/Date

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Section B – Plan Update

(Please complete on or before June 1 of the current school year)

Progress / Modification of Plan to Become Highly Qualified _____

_____

(Please attach any supporting documentation relating to this plan, progress, and/or modifications.)

_____/____ _____/____ _____/_____

Teacher Signature / Date Principal Signature/Date Title I/II Director Signature/Date

Upshur County Schools Tuition Reimbursement Request Form

Applicant's Checklist

(Check items below to ensure your application is processed. You will be reimbursed only the amount approved by the West Virginia Department of Education. Reimbursement is subject to appropriation and distributed on a first come, first served basis.)

- ❑ Read all criteria to ensure you meet the reimbursement requirements
- ❑ Complete the form below
- ❑ Sign and date the application
- ❑ Attach your **Tuition reimbursement Out-of-Funds Letter or Rejection Letter** from The Office of Professional Preparation, West Virginia Department of

Education, (This indicates you completed all state requirements for tuition reimbursement.)

- ❑ Submit to Supervisor of Federal Programs or Special Education (indicated on Upshur County Schools Individual Fully Certified Plan submitted prior to 2nd school month) of Upshur County Schools, Buckhannon, WV

Name:

School:

Date:

College or University where coursework was completed:

Certification Area:

I certify that I have read the criteria for tuition reimbursement and that I meet the eligibility criteria as described in **WVDE Form 36: Request for Tuition Reimbursement**. I further certify that all information I have provided on the application is accurate and that I have completed the course(s) as indicated on the West Virginia State Tuition Reimbursement Application. *I agree to repay monies gained through the submission of inaccurate information.*

_____ _____

Date Signature of Applicant