

## **School Psychologist Apprentice (SPA) Pilot Program**

### **Effective July 1, 2025**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the School Psychologist Apprentice (SPA) Pilot Program is to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified school psychologists by creating a structured, multi-year pathway aligned with professional training and certification requirements. This program is designed to address staffing shortages in the Huron ISD school psychology department by hiring apprentices aligned to vacant school psychologist positions.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

- Possess Bachelor's Degree in education, psychology, or closely related discipline
- Provide proof of acceptance into a School Psychology Master's or Specialist Program that leads to a Michigan Preliminary School Psychologist Certificate within 2 years of hire and full certification within 3 years of hire
- Hold a valid Michigan teacher substitute permit
- Commit to progression through the SPA program as outlined, including adherence to enrollment and certification timelines

### **Program Structure**

#### **Year 1: Apprentice**

- Compensation: \$20/hour
- Hours: Approximately 28 hours per week
- Classification: Non-union support staff,
- Benefits:
  - Single subscriber health insurance
  - 72 hours paid sick leave
- Submit proof of program acceptance
- Be enrolled in college coursework leading to full certification for school psychologist

#### **Year 2: Apprentice**

- Compensation: \$25/hour
- Hours: Approximately 28 hours per week
- Classification: Non-union support staff
- Benefits
  - Single subscriber health insurance
  - 72 hours paid sick leave
- Practicum experience embedded

- Enroll in practicum as part of university program
- Continued progression toward certification

### **Year 3: Internship with Preliminary School Psychologist Certificate**

- Preliminary school psychologist certificate from MDE is required prior to internship start
- Paid Internship
  - The SPA may apply for a paid internship if a school psychology vacancy is available, and if selected and approved by the HISD Board of Education, may be hired under:
    - HIEA contract
    - HIEA salary schedule, based on level of education and experience
- Unpaid Internship
  - If no vacancy exists, the SPA may apply for an unpaid internship supervised within the department
  - Completion of an unpaid internship does not guarantee employment in the following year; however the SPA may apply for any open positions in the subsequent years following full certification
- Completion of Year 3 is contingent upon successful fulfillment of academic and certification requirements. HISD will not guarantee internship placement beyond Year 3 if minimum performance and progress expectations are not met.

### **Year 4 and Beyond: Fully Certified School Psychologist**

- Upon receiving full Michigan School Psychologist Certification, the SPA may apply for open positions in the HISD school psychology department if the Year 3 internship was unpaid
- SPAs who completed a paid internship in Year 3 are already employed under the HIEA contract and do not need to reapply for employment in Year 4, provided they meet all certification and performance requirements
- Employment as a fully certified school psychologist is subject to standard hiring procedures

### Tuition Reimbursement Program

- If selected and hired for a full-time position with HISD, the SPA will enter into a legal agreement to remain employed at HISD as a full-time, fully certified school psychologist for five consecutive years
- To be eligible for tuition reimbursement, the SPA must:
  - Have successfully completed at least two academic years of employment as a SPA at HISD
  - Have successfully completed both practicum and internship experiences at HISD

- Be employed as a full-time, fully certified school psychologist at HISD (either through continued employment following a paid internship or through new hire after an unpaid internship)
- Agree to a five-year employment commitment agreement with HISD
- Reimbursement is reserved for full-time, fully certified school psychologists. Requests for exceptions due to documented medical or family hardship may be considered on a case-by-case basis
- Eligible individuals may receive reimbursement of approved costs associated with completing a required School Psychology Master's or Specialist degree program, up to a total of \$60,000 distributed over five years of full-time employment at HISD, as follows:
  - Year 1: \$15,000
  - Year 2: \$10,000
  - Year 3: \$10,000
  - Year 4: \$10,000
  - Year 5: \$15,000
- Reimbursement is issued at the end of each completed school year of full-time employment in the fully certified school psychologist role
- Covered Expenses:
  - Tuition for courses that are part of the approved School Psychology Master's or Specialist program leading to Michigan School Psychologist Certification
  - Required course fees (e.g., lab fees, registration fees)
  - Required textbooks (must be listed in the syllabus or university bookstore as "required")
- Expenses Not Covered:
  - Repeated coursework
  - Coursework not part of the approved Master's or Specialist program required for certification
  - Housing, travel, or meals
  - Optional course materials, supplies, or supplemental textbooks
  - Parking permits, transportation fees, or commuting costs
  - Student activity fees, gym/recreation fees, or health service fees
  - Technology fees not required for course participation
  - Late payment fees or registration penalties
  - Certification or licensure fees (e.g., MDE certification application)
  - Professional association dues or membership fees that are not required (e.g., NASP, MASP)
  - Expenses submitted without itemized receipts or proof of payment
- Required Documentation for Reimbursement:
  - The SPA must submit the following:
    - Approved course of study from their university program
    - Paid invoice or itemized receipt for each course, including:

- Proof of payment
  - Course name and number
  - Number of credit hours
  - Total tuition amount
- Grade report or transcript showing successful completion of each course
- List of required textbooks/materials (e.g., from syllabus) if requesting reimbursement for books
- Cover sheet summarizing the reimbursement request (course dates, term, cost breakdown, and total amount requested)
- The SPA will forfeit any future tuition reimbursement if they resign before completing the five-year commitment or if their employment status with HISD drops below full-time
- No prorated reimbursement will be issued for partial years of service or part-time employment
- Reimbursement may be considered taxable income and will follow IRS guidelines