

	Oklahoma Union School	Grow Your Own Educator Match Program Policy (SB 235 Compliance)
Board Approved: 12/10/25	Revised:	Pg. 1 of 4

Purpose

The Oklahoma Union School District (“District”) establishes this Grow Your Own Educator Match Program to encourage current employees to pursue accredited teacher preparation programs leading to Oklahoma teacher certification, consistent with SB 235. The program aims to strengthen the teacher pipeline, support professional advancement, and address staffing needs within the District. The Oklahoma Union Grow Your Own Educator Program will be in alignment with the guidelines, goals, and timelines of the OSDE.

Definitions

- **Eligible Employee:** A current District employee enrolled in an approved accredited undergraduate teacher preparation program that leads to a standard Oklahoma teaching certificate.
- **Matching Funds:** Financial assistance provided by the District to match OSDE Grow Your Own Educator funds, not to exceed the amount in Section 3.
- **Approved Program:** Any teacher-preparation program accredited and recognized for standard teacher certification in the State of Oklahoma that is on the OSDE approved list.

Funding

A. The District will match state Grow Your Own Educator funds **up to \$2,500 per eligible employee per academic year**, subject to the availability of state and District funds.

B. Matching funds may be applied to:

- Tuition and required fees
- Qualified loan-repayment assistance related to the employee’s teacher-certification pathway

C. Funding is not guaranteed each year and may be adjusted based on budget limitations or state allocations.

Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for District matching funds, employees must:

1. Be currently employed full time by the District.
2. Be enrolled in an accredited teacher-preparation program leading to standard certification that is on the OSDE approved list.
3. Demonstrate good standing with the District, including:
 - Satisfactory job performance
 - Positive professional conduct
 - Compliance with District policies and procedures
 - Acceptable attendance records
4. Not be on a performance improvement plan or under active disciplinary action.
5. Submit all required application materials.

Application Process

A. Application Submission

Eligible employees must submit a completed **Grow Your Own Educator Assistance Request Form**, including:

1. Proof of program enrollment
2. Documentation of tuition, fees, or loan-repayment obligations
3. A written recommendation from the employee's immediate supervisor confirming satisfactory performance and professional suitability

B. District Review & Discretion

The Superintendent or designee will review applications.

- Participation in the program is not an entitlement.
- The District retains sole discretion to approve or deny any application based on performance, conduct, staffing needs, or available funding.

C. State Grant Application

Upon District approval, the District will submit the required documentation to the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA) to request state matching funds in accordance with SB 235.

Disbursement of Funds

A. Funds may be disbursed as reimbursement to the employee or paid directly to the educational institution.

B. Employees must provide:

1. Evidence of course completion
2. Proof of payment for tuition, fees, or loan-repayment expenses

C. Failure to provide required documentation may result in denial or delay of funds.

Continued Participation Requirements

Employees receiving assistance must:

1. Maintain enrollment in the approved program.
2. Demonstrate satisfactory academic progress each term.
3. Submit updated documentation for ongoing funding requests.
4. Notify the District immediately of any changes in enrollment or academic standing.

Employment Commitment

Employees who receive program funds may be required to commit to two (2) years of employment in the District upon receiving certification.

If an employee voluntarily resigns before fulfilling this commitment, the District may require repayment of assistance on a prorated basis.

No Guarantee of Employment

A. Participation in or completion of the Grow Your Own Educator Program does not guarantee employment with the District.

B. All applicants for vacant positions, including program participants, will be evaluated based on qualifications, certification, experience, interview performance, references, and District needs.

C. If a more qualified or better-suited applicant applies for an open position, the District retains full discretion to hire that applicant, regardless of a program participant's status or completion of training.

D. Nothing in this policy constitutes an employment contract or promise of future employment.

Program Limitations

A. Program participation is contingent upon available funding and state grant approvals.

B. The District may limit the number of participants annually.

C. The District may discontinue or modify the program at any time due to funding changes or legislative adjustments.

Reporting

The District will comply with all SB 235 reporting requirements, including annual reports to OEQA documenting:

1. Employee progression in coursework
2. Certification progress
3. Funds awarded
4. Employment status of participants

Records shall be maintained according to state and District retention policies.