

TOWN OF STOW

EDUCATIONAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The Town agrees to offer all part- and full-time permanent employees, except as noted below, regardless of their date of employment, an annual educational incentive bonus on their base salary of 5%, 10% and 15% respectively upon attaining an associates degree or 60 points earned toward a baccalaureate degree; a baccalaureate degree or a master's degree respectively.

The educational incentive base salary bonus shall be predicated on the accumulation of points earned in the following manner: one point for each semester hour credit earned toward a baccalaureate or an associate degree; sixty points for an associates degree; one hundred and twenty points for a baccalaureate degree; and one hundred and fifty points for a degree of master or for a degree in law; provided, that said course credits or degrees were earned in a course of study or degree program approved by the State Board of Higher Education and/or accredited by the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Further, the degree program or course of study must reasonably relate to the nature of the duties and responsibilities associated with the employee's job. Also, the employee must have achieved a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.50 in order to earn any educational incentive bonus. A list of acceptable course studies and degree programs will be provided by the Town. It is not intended that the list be definitive but rather that it serve as a benchmark representing a sample of acceptable degree programs and course study. Whether a degree program or course study appears on the list does not in and by itself determine approval. The Town reserves the exclusive right to make decisions on course study and degree program acceptability on a case by case basis.

An employee seeking approval for an educational incentive bonus who has attained his or her degree(s) or completed his or her course study prior to program implementation must submit acceptable written certification verifying the degree and cumulative grade point average to the Town Administrator.

An employee seeking approval for an educational incentive bonus who has begun but not completed a course study of 60 credit points or attained a degree at the time of program implementation must submit acceptable written certification verifying the courses completed and his or her cumulative grade point average to the Town Administrator. Also, written documentation must be submitted enabling the Town Administrator to establish which if any of the previously completed courses qualify for the educational incentive bonus program. Additionally, the employee must submit in writing advance notice for every college course he or she intends to take after implementation of this program. Any future course study must receive written approval from the Town Administrator prior to enrollment in order for the course to be counted toward earning a possible future bonus benefit.

Any employee expecting to seek future approval for an educational incentive bonus who has not begun any acceptable college course study at the time of program implementation must submit a letter of intent to the Town Administrator prior to enrollment in any course study. The Town Administrator must approve in writing prior to enrollment every course study submitted for

consideration after program implementation.

The Town will reimburse 50% of the tuition and book costs for approved course study to those employees who successfully complete the course(s) with a minimum 2.75 GPA and 75% reimbursement with a minimum 3.00 GPA, subject to annual departmental expense budget approval by the Town Administrator and Town Meeting appropriation. This tuition\book reimbursement program, beyond the limitation established by an approved budgeted amount, further generally limits each employee reimbursement to no more than 1 course per grading period (e.g. semester or trimester). The Town Administrator at his discretion may waive this limitation. Acceptable written documentation must be provided to the Town Administrator verifying the tuition and book costs.

Approved educational incentive bonuses and tuition\book reimbursement will be paid to the employee at the beginning of the Fiscal Year next following the Fiscal Year the approved course study occurred or degree was attained. Written advance notice by the employee on or by March 1st annually to the Town Administrator of course study completed or course to be completed by June 30th and earned degrees is required for bonus payment in the following Fiscal Year. Tuition\book reimbursements for approved courses will be made upon a written request for payment by the department head. Approved bonuses must be accounted for in departmental operational budget requests.

Prior written approval of the Town, by and through its Town Administrator, is required before any educational incentive bonus can be earned or received by an employee. The employee is solely responsible for providing the Town Administrator with the records and documents necessary to enable the Town Administrator to render an informed and reasonable decision establishing whether and when the employee qualifies for an educational incentive bonus pursuant to the provisions of the program. The Town Administrator will expect the employee to provide those documents and records that are customary and usual within the accredited academic profession (e.g. certified school transcripts, published course descriptions).

The Town Administrator is solely responsible for determining all matters of course study and degree acceptability and bonus approval pursuant to the provisions of this program. The Town Administrator will rely on published standards and guidelines in force and effect at the time established by the Board of Higher Education and the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools to assist in determining course study and degree acceptability. These standards and guidelines, together with any other applicable standards and guidelines, will be utilized by the Town Administrator in exercising his best judgment in determining whether to approve an employee's request for an educational incentive bonus.

No tuition/book reimbursement credit will be given for costs incurred prior to the implementation of this program.

The Town Administrator, Police Chief and Town Accountant only, as full-time contract positions generally requiring college degrees as a condition of employment, are not eligible to earn an educational incentive bonus pursuant to the requirements of the Educational Incentive Program. However, they are eligible to earn tuition/book expense reimbursement.

The Town Administrator will not unreasonably disapprove a request for course study or a request for credit toward attainment of an educational incentive bonus for courses and/or degrees completed

pursuant to the provisions of the program.

The Town Administrator reserves the exclusive right to determine whether and when an employee has earned an educational incentive bonus. All bonuses are subject to Town meeting appropriation. An employee may appeal a decision by the Town Administrator to the Board of Selectmen.

This educational incentive program, having been voted at the Annual Town Meeting in May 2001, will be in force and effect beginning July 1, 2001. It is expected that modifications will be made to this program by the Town Administrator, with approval by the Selectmen, over time as necessary.

Respectfully,

William Wrigley
Town Administrator

7/17/01