**Purpose**

Making Waves Academy (MWA) has a long-term commitment to recruiting and retaining instructional, administrative, and support staff with the skills and abilities to work effectively with MWA’s diverse student population. We will provide assistance either to cover part of the tuition for the pursuit of higher educational opportunities for professional growth and development or provide assistance to support paying off a portion of employee student loan debt accumulated in the pursuit of educational opportunities.

**Definitions**

* School Year: The school year begins July 1 and ends June 30 of any calendar year.
* Annual Maximum: The maximum dollar amount that MWA will pay on behalf of an employee in one school year.
* Lifetime Maximum: The maximum dollar amount that MWA will pay on behalf of an employee for the entire duration of their employment with MWA.

**Eligibility Criteria**

* The applicant must be a full-time employee (40 hours work week) in good-standing as defined in the Employee Handbook, and have completed a minimum of two full-time years of service with MWA.
* Applicants are not eligible to receive both benefits. For example, if an employee is awarded tuition remission assistance then they are ineligible for student loan repayment assistance.
* Recipients of the Student Loan Forgiveness/Home Down Payment Assistance Program are not eligible to receive either benefit.
* **Eligibility for Tuition Remission:**
	+ The undergraduate/graduate/doctorate courses should be directly related to work responsibilities.
	+ Courses being taken toward initial educator certification/licensure are not eligible for reimbursement.
	+ The employee must successfully complete the course by achieving a grade of “B” or better in order to be eligible to receive tuition assistance for subsequent requests submitted. Applicants not meeting these criteria can appeal the decision to the CEO and a committee of the MWA Board.
	+ An obligation for employees receiving tuition assistance is that they will remain at MWA for an equivalent amount of years that they received tuition assistance. For example, if they receive tuition assistance for one year, we would expect they would remain at MWA for an additional year after the year that they received assistance.
	+ An employee, who resigns his/her position before meeting the years of service obligation will be required to pay back 50% of the total tuition reimbursement to MWA.
* **Eligibility for Student Loan Repayment:**
	+ The employee must provide lender documentation that verifies debt accrued during undergraduate or graduate school. Program completion dates do not apply.
	+ An employee receiving repayment assistance will have no obligation to remain at MWA for an equivalent amount of years, since the benefit is only disbursed following each year of service that follows the service year requirement. For example, after an employee completes two full-time years at MWA, they may apply for this benefit during the application period in their 3rd year, payment will be made during the last quarter of their 3rd year (April-June).

**Application Process and Payment**

**Tuition Remission Application and Payment**

Application

* Must be submitted prior to start of the course
* The employee completes one (1) Tuition Reimbursement Application for EACH undergraduate/graduate/doctorate course and must attach a copy of the course description.
* The employee submits the completed application to his/her immediate supervisor who will then recommend approval/not recommend approval, sign, and forward it to Human Resources for approval. HR will then obtain CEO approval. Incomplete applications and/or applications for courses that do not meet the requirements will be returned and/or denied.
* Once the application is approved, the employee is responsible for providing a bill or invoice from the college and MWA will pay for the course as directed by the institution offering the course.

Reimbursement

* All of the following documents must be submitted to the Business Office within two (2) weeks of the registration and tuition deadline:

1. Complete Staff Reimbursement Form with all approved signatures

2. Tuition/School Fee invoice or bill

3. Proof of enrollment and “paid” receipt upon paying for the course (submit afterwards)

* The amount of the award will not exceed $5,000 per year for a maximum of four years for a total reimbursement of $20,000.
* Other fees and costs (i.e., lab, registration, books, etc.) associated with taking the courses are eligible for reimbursement up to the amount of the maximum term.
* Tuition reimbursement is not guaranteed to be available annually. Limited funds are allocated per fiscal year. Approvals will be on a first-come, first-serve basis until funds for that fiscal year are exhausted.

**Student Loan Repayment Application and Payment**

Application

* The employee completes a student loan repayment application and must attach lender documentation of their student loan balance that verifies debt accrued during undergraduate or graduate school. Acceptable verification may include a verification letter or completed from the lender.
* The employee submits the completed application to HR who will then submit to the employee’s immediate supervisor to recommend approval/not recommend approval, sign, and return to HR

for approval. HR will then obtain CEO approval. Incomplete applications and/or applications that do not meet the years of service requirement will be returned and denied.

* Applications are due by November 1st. Any applications received after the due date will not be considered and must be resubmitted the following year.
* Once the application is approved, the HR and Business Services Department will coordinate the payment and verification process directly with the applicant.
* Approvals will be on a first-come, first-serve basis until funds for that fiscal year are exhausted.

Payment

* The amount of the award will not exceed $1,500 per year for a maximum of 5 years for a total repayment of $7,500.
* The student loan repayment benefit is not guaranteed to be available annually. Limited funds are allocated per fiscal year and may be subject to change at any time.