

Staff Retention Incentive Policy:

The Newark Board of Education (NBOE) Head Start (HS) program will incorporate within its Policy a Head Start Staff Retention Incentive to recognize staff well being, hard work and dedication in support of children and families within the HS program. NBOE Head Start program values its great staff both educators/non-educators and recognizes their contributions that make NBOE Head Start program one of the best places to learn and work.

Staff wellness is of utmost importance to mental and physical health and how it impacts engagement, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life. Research tells us staff that are happier, healthier, less stressed and experience less depression is able to engage in higher quality interactions with colleagues, children and families.

As with any other educational institution at this time, NBOE is experiencing funding limitations based on salary wages, which surfaced this school year with Family Workers declining offers of employment due to the starting salary without negotiations and the position being 12 months. We have also experienced staff seeking other positions and are hired in other positions within the district structure due to earning higher pay and working a school year schedule of 10 months.

NBOE Head Start program have and will continue to highly value the dedication and commitment of our staff and we are destined to support their wellness in order to keep them with us. We have an established “Healthy and Ready to Learn” plan in the District’s “The Next Decade: 2020-30 Strategic Plan; Priority 1- Unified and Aligned Systems and Priority 5- Integrated Systems of Supports. However, this policy specifically applies to the financial “quality of life” component, as an effort to uphold staff retention, encouraging employees to remain with us during staffing challenges.

The past two years have been challenging ones for Head Start staff. NBOE HS program is grateful for its staff continuous efforts in their commitment to service children and families both virtual and in-person. This financial incentive demonstrates the work rendered to children and families does not go unnoticed and it is profoundly appreciated.

The incentive amount to be awarded based on funding availability:

The NBOE Head Start program shall establish a maximum award amount ***based on funding availability***. We believe two installments may be impactful for our staff that has been employed rather than a single lump sum payment. Additionally, hiring bonuses for our new staff over time will promote retention, rather than issuing one lump sum upon hire. Installments will be based on the prorated charges or net other incentives offered, or wage analysis comparison of the Tri-State areas (NJ, NY, PA, CT and Rhode Island). Head Start staff inclusive of teachers, teacher assistants, family workers, fiscal staff, HS management team, custodial staff, and administrators will receive the incentive.

The retention incentive is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act, COVID-19 Relief Funds, and Federal Head Start Funding.