

## **Graduate Credit / Tuition Reimbursement Process**

### Pre-Approval Process

The School Committee supports the graduate study of teachers. Funds are set aside in the budget to reimburse teachers who choose to take district sponsored courses that are highly recommended as well as other graduate level course from accredited degree granting institutions.

Please note the following guidelines:

- *Before you start the course*, submit electronic tuition reimbursement/graduate credit pre-approval form (detailed instructions below). This form serves two purposes:
  1. First, the form records the request and the approval of the Assistant Superintendent;
  2. Second, the form serves to initiate a reimbursement request, the recording of graduate credit, or both.
- *Upon course completion*, teachers must upload evidence of payment (when requesting reimbursement) and receipt of credit for qualifying courses (transcript or grade report).
- The maximum amount of reimbursement is \$825 per individual per fiscal year.
- Reimbursement for courses highly recommended by the District will occur twice a year, *in December and June*. All other reimbursement shall be made once during each fiscal year in June. All supporting documents must be uploaded by June 1<sup>st</sup> in order to qualify.
- Reimbursement for courses highly recommended by the District shall be paid first.
- Should claims for tuition reimbursement for other courses exceed the balance remaining after payment for those courses highly recommended by the District, each teacher will receive a prorated amount of his/her claim.
- Content of all coursework shall be within the parameters of the requirements for state certification.
- Teachers new to the district this year will also need to fill out a W-9 form for tuition reimbursement; you will be notified when this form is required.

### Credit Approval & Reimbursement Process

The process for Graduate Credit / Tuition Reimbursement is detailed below.

# Frontline Professional Growth Module: “HOW TO” for Educators

## Introduction

Belmont Public Schools has added a new module – *Professional Growth* – to our Frontline Education suite of solutions, which also includes the Absence Management system (for all BPS employees) and the Recruiting & Hiring system (for some BPS administrators). The Professional Growth module will be used for:

- Graduate credit course approval (Unit A)
- Tuition reimbursement (Unit A)
- Professional Development Point (PDP) tracking (Unit A) – *currently in progress*
- District internal course catalog and registration
- District required training tracking.

## Graduate Credit & Tuition Reimbursement

This module provides the following enhancements over the former “School Stream” process:

- **Easy login:** Once you are logged into your Frontline account, you can easily switch between Absence Management and Professional Growth
- **Online access to course history:** You have online access to your own Portfolio, which will list all courses you have taken for graduate credit; moving forward, it will also include any courses or activities you submit for PDP tracking
- **Online transcript and proof of payment storage:** You will scan and upload your course transcripts and receipts, which you will then be able to archive and access in your own online library
- **Standardized list of course providers:** The new form includes a drop-down list of our most commonly used colleges/universities.

## PDP Tracking

This module allows educators to input PDP-only courses, meetings, and activities, so they will show up on the educator’s Portfolio along with external graduate credit courses. The “by Purpose” view groups all Portfolio entries by PDP categories, making it easier for educators to track their PDP totals for the purpose of license renewal and license audits.

## District Internal Course Catalog

The module will allow employees to easily register for required internal building-based and curriculum-based training sessions. These will also be recorded on the educator’s Portfolio.

## Required Training Tracking (TBD)

Eventually, this module will replace the current digital-signature-via-google-form process of tracking annual required training that is conducted each fall.

## Professional Growth Module: Menu & Screen Guide

When you log into the Professional Growth module, you will see four menu categories on the left side of the screen:

- **My Info:** Your user profile, file library, and Portfolio (course history)
- **Learning Plan:** The current status of any forms you have submitted
- **Activity Catalogs:** The district’s list of internal training offerings
- **Forms:** Any forms you will use to request approval for graduate credit courses or track PDP activities.

## My Info

This menu includes the following subsections:

- MY INFORMATION
  - **My File Library:** This is where you go to upload any required PDFs, including scans of your course transcripts and proof of payment; all uploaded files will be stored in your My File Library, where you can archive them and retrieve them at a later date if needed (*please see 'Appendix B' below for more information*)
  - **My User Profile:** This is where you set your email notification preferences
- PORTFOLIO
  - This section provides various views of your past courses and activities. Choose **View All** to see a list of your courses by year
- TRANSCRIPT
  - This section allows you to download a PDF version of your course history (*note that this printable version of your Portfolio is not the same as the college course transcripts you upload to your My File Library*).

### Learning Plan

This screen shows you the status of any forms/requests you have currently in progress. Status categories include:

- **Save as Draft:** If you saved a form as a Draft before submitting it
- **Pending Prior Approval:** Forms you have submitted for first-level approval (e.g., Graduate Credit course requests in to Assistant Superintendent Darias)
- **Approved and/or In-Progress:** Forms that have been first-level approved (e.g., Graduate Credit course requests approved by the Assistant Superintendent, course now in progress)
- **Pending Final Approval:** Forms you have submitted for final approval (e.g., Graduate Credit completion and/or tuition reimbursement requests in to HR Assistant)
- **Denied:** Forms/requests that have been denied at Prior Approval or Final Approval step
- **Recently Completed**

For any form listed on this screen, you can click the blue "Manage" button to access the form, edit it, and submit it to the next level.

### Activity Catalogs>District Catalog

This screen shows you all internal courses being offered by the district. To register for a course, click on the blue course title, view the full course description and dates on the next screen, and click the blue "Request Approval" button.

### Forms

This menu is where you access all forms you can submit as a district employee. These currently include:

- **Graduate Credit / Tuition Reimbursement form:** Unit A educators will use this form to request approval to take a course for graduate credit toward salary lane movement, and/or for tuition reimbursement. This form can also record PDPs earned from the course (*please see 'Appendix A' for instructions on how to fill out this form*).
- **Professional Development Activity form:** Unit A educators will use this form to enter an activity such as a meeting or conference, for which the educator only wants to track earned PDPs. Please note that this form should NOT be used for:
  - Courses where you are requesting graduate credit or tuition reimbursement (please use the *Graduate Credit and Tuition Reimbursement* form instead)
  - Activities offered in the District Catalog (go to *Activity Catalogs>District Catalog* to enroll)

## Appendix A: Graduate Credit/Tuition Reimbursement Form - How to Request Course Approval

You will submit this form twice for a course:

- For *prior approval* from the Assistant Superintendent, before you begin the course
- For *final approval* from Human Resources, when you finish the course and provide your proof of credits and/or payment for tuition reimbursement.

### Before you complete the course

Please review all notes at the top and bottom of this form, then fill out all required fields per the following instructions:

1. **Purpose(s) of Form Submission:** *Check all that apply*
  - Graduate Credit / Salary Lane: If you want the course credits to apply to your next salary lane change
  - Tuition Reimbursement: If you want to be reimbursed for this course
  - District Requirement is N/A on this form: *Do not check*
  - PDP: If this course will also satisfy licensure PDP requirements, check applicable PDP category
2. **Course Type:** Check either "Highly Recommended" or "Non-Recommended"
3. **Mailing Address:** Please enter your current mailing address, which we will double-check against MUNIS for mailing your reimbursement check
4. **Name of College/University:** If your school is not on the drop-down list, you need to select the last option "Not Listed" and then type the school name in the space below
5. **Course Title:** Type the course name from your catalog or transcript
6. **Course Number:** Type the course number from your catalog or transcript
7. **Course Description:** This is an optional field. You may copy/paste a brief description if the course title is vague (i.e., if it will facilitate the Assistant Superintendent's review)
8. **Number of Credits:** Enter the number of credits that will appear on your transcript (using a 1, 2, 3, etc., scale)
9. **PDP/Hours equivalents (optional):** If this course will also satisfy licensure PDP requirements, calculate and enter the equivalent PDPs per Tables 2 and 3 of [DESE License Renewal Guidelines](#); note that PDPs will be labelled as "Hours" on your Portfolio
10. **Total Cost:** Enter your requested reimbursement amount; note \$825 cap per employee on all non-highly-recommended courses taken in one year (July-June)
11. **Semester:** Select the semester of the current school year in which your course will run
12. **Course Start Date:** Enter the start date from your catalog
13. **Course End Date:** Enter the end date from your catalog; please note that you will not be able to submit your transcript and proof of payment for Final Approval until after this date
14. **Supporting Documentation (My File Library Upload):** *This section is for use the second time you submit this form, for Final Approval after you have completed your course.*
  - a. Directions for uploading your proof of credits and payment to your My File Library are shown at the bottom of the form.
  - b. Once uploaded, the proof documents will be listed in this section. Check off each document that applies to this course.

Once you have filled out all required fields, click the Submit button (*if you need to leave the form and come back to it, you can 'Save as Draft'*).

After you Submit the course for Prior Approval, an electronic copy of this form is stored in your Learning Plan, where you can see when it receives Prior Approval.

After you complete the course

1. Scan your official grade report or transcript and proof of payment documents into a PDF file
2. Go to My Info>My File Library to upload the PDF - use the "friendly name" box to name them in the following format:  
    LastName FirstInitial - Semester YYYY - Brief Course Name
3. Go to Learning Plan, find the course, and click on the blue Manage button and choose Mark Complete. This will bring up the original course request form.
4. Go to the bottom section, Supporting Documentation (My File Library Upload). The two proof files you uploaded for the course should appear in this section. Check the box next to each file.
5. Press SUBMIT to send the form to Human Resources for Final Approval.

After you Submit the course for Final Approval, you can go to My Learning Plan to see when your credits and tuition reimbursement<sup>1</sup> have been approved.

---

<sup>1</sup> Please remember that tuition checks are not actually sent until July for non-recommended courses, or December and June for Highly Recommended courses.

## Appendix B: My File Library


- Adding a File to the File Library
- Attaching Files to Forms
- Archiving & Un-Archiving Files

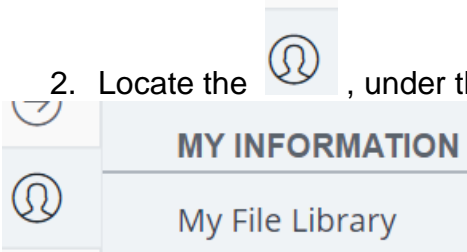


**(Please Note: If you need to attach a file to a form for submission, it should be in the My File Library BEFORE you submit the form. Most industry standard file types can be uploaded into the My File Library section.)**

### USER STEPS

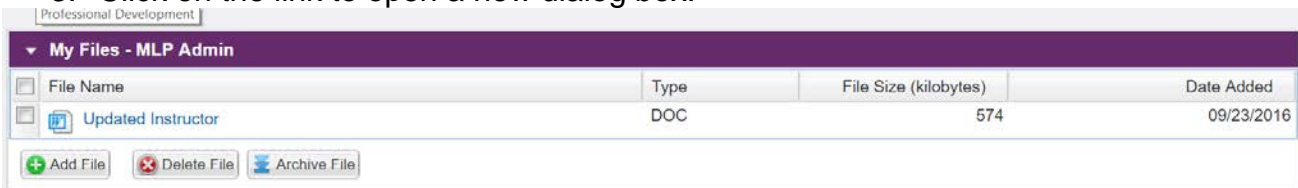
1. Adding a file to the **My File Library** is easy and may be necessary to finalize forms that require documentation.

2. Locate the  , under the “**My Info**” section on the left is the “**My File Library**” link.



The screenshot shows a sidebar menu with a header 'MY INFORMATION' and a sub-item 'My File Library' which is highlighted with a light blue background.

3. Click on the link to open a new dialog box.



The screenshot shows a dialog box titled 'My Files - MLP Admin' with a table of files. Below the table are three buttons: 'Add File', 'Delete File', and 'Archive File'.

File Name	Type	File Size (kilobytes)	Date Added
Updated Instructor	DOC	574	09/23/2016

4. You will see “**My Files-your name**” with a list of files you may have uploaded, the type of file and name, the size and date of the uploaded file.

5. To add a personal file to your **My File Library**, click on the “**Add File**” button and the new dialog box opens.

My Files - MLP Admin

Upload File

### Upload Files

1. Click the button below to select a file  
 No file chosen
2. Enter a friendly name for this File  
(optional, maximum 50 characters):
3. Click the upload button:

- Click the “Browse” button if you have it saved on the computer you are working on or if you have it saved on a flash drive.
- Enter a name (under 50 characters) related to the file that you will upload.

Professional Development

My Files - MLP Admin

File Name	Type	File Size (kilobytes)	Date Added
<input type="checkbox"/> Updated Instructor	DOC	574	09/23/2016

- Click “Upload” button and it will appear in your “**My File List**” in about three-five seconds. Be patient and refresh your browser if it does not appear in the list.

*(Please Note: You may upload standard files, e.g. Microsoft Word, PDF, Mac files, etc.)*

6. Once you have the document you will need in your **My File Library**, click the form you need to add this documentation to and then check off the file in the file list to attach it to this form, as shown below.

Professional Development

My Files - MLP Admin

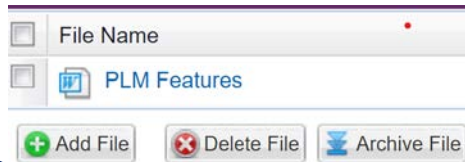
File Name	Type	File Size (kilobytes)	Date Added
<input type="checkbox"/> Updated Instructor	DOC	574	09/23/2016

7. In this example, I have added the documentation that I need to attach, **first**, in the **My File Library**. Next, I checked off the corresponding checkboxes to attach to this submission and complete the form and save.

*(Please Note: See the “view” button. If you named more than one document the same name, you can view documents before you attach to make sure that you select the correct one. If it is not the correct document, you can de-select it and choose another one.)*

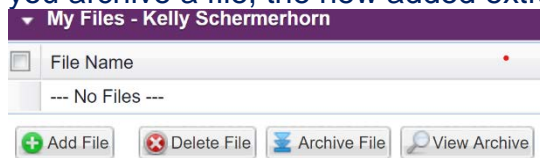
8. Once the form is completed and submitted, the approvers on the form will now see the original submission and any attached forms that were checked off by the End User.

### ARCHIVING FILES IN YOUR MY FILE LIBRARY you no longer want to see:

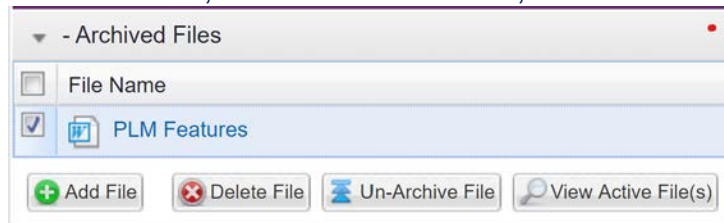


My Info icon>My File Library link>

\*\*check off the file(s) you would like to archive and then click “archive file” button  
And the file will archive (you may have to refresh the screen to have it “hide” and this is now, once you archive a file, the new added extra button will appear to “view archive”



To un-archive, “view archive” button, check off the file(s) and then “un-archive” file button



, the file will re-appear in the My File Library for that user.