

## **GENESEE OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES**

These guidelines are intended to guide the Genesee Intermediate School District administrators on the implementation of the Genesee Opportunity (“GO”) program, which is designed to provide recent Genesee County high school graduates and GED recipients with a stipend to pursue job training or postsecondary education.

### **I. OPERATING MILLAGE**

On August 2, 2016, Genesee County voters approved the District’s proposal to assess .25 mills (\$.25 on each \$1,000 of taxable value) for twenty (20) years, 2016 to 2035, inclusive, for the purpose of funding lifelong education, adult education, community education, training, and enrichment, and for other operating purposes.

Funds collected from the millage shall be deposited into the District’s General Fund and designated for use on the GO program. The District shall use the funds collected from the millage to implement the GO program and, at the discretion of the Superintendent, for other operating purposes of the District.

### **II. INTENT OF THE PROGRAM**

The GO program is designed to invest in the future of Genesee County by investing in its students. In order to enter a competitive workforce, students will need to complete job training, certifications/licensure or a postsecondary degree. Pursuing such endeavors immediately after high school graduation has proven to significantly improve the probability of completion. Accordingly, the GO program will provide recent Genesee County high school graduates with a stipend to get a jump-start on the job training or postsecondary education.

### **III. MARKETING THE PROGRAM**

The District shall engage in a marketing campaign intended to inform Genesee County high school graduates about the GO program and to encourage such individuals to apply for a GO stipend. At a minimum, the District shall market the program online and in coordination with guidance and career counselors at Genesee County high schools. Marketing materials may include information on eligibility for the GO stipend, the amount of the stipend, and how and where the funds may be used.

### **IV. ELIGIBILITY FOR STIPEND**

In order to be eligible for a GO stipend, an applicant shall satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. Graduate from a Genesee County high school or registered home school program in Genesee County or obtained a GED.
2. Reside in Genesee County or on property that is taxed by the Genesee County School District;
3. Enroll in an eligible training program or post-secondary educational institution; and
4. Submit an application post-marked or received by the District by the due date.
5. Stipend amount will be prorated based on the number of semesters attended in a Genesee County high school (8 semesters=100% award). See proration percentages on next page.
6. Attendance is dependent upon state certified pupil count records in MSDS and residency status.

Applications for a GO stipend may be submitted beginning in the applicant's senior year of high school and ending eleven months following the applicant's graduation from high school or completion of GED. Applications received after the deadline shall not be considered. The exception will be if a graduate from the class of 2016 has already incurred eligible expenses and will not incur any new eligible expenses, the stipend may be used on a reimbursement basis upon approval and appropriate documentation.

## **V. APPEALS PROCESS**

The District shall make an initial determination of each applicant's eligibility based on the information contained in the application and other information available to the District. The District shall notify each applicant whether his or her application is accepted or denied. If an application is denied, the District shall clearly state the reason or reasons for its determination in the notice provided to the applicant.

In the event an applicant chooses to appeal the award decision, the appeal would need to be submitted within thirty (30) calendar days of date on the letter. In order to file an appeal, the applicant shall submit the attached appeals form, along with supporting documentation, to the GO Appeals Officer, Mrs. Mary Behm or designee, via U.S. mail or hand delivery to the following address:

Mrs. Mary Behm, GO Appeals Officer  
Genesee Intermediate School District  
2413 West Maple Avenue  
Flint, Michigan 48507

The supporting documentation submitted with the appeals form shall specifically address the District's stated reason or reasons for denying the application, and may include, but shall not be limited to, the types of documents specified on the appeals form. The GO Appeals Officer shall have thirty (30) calendar days to review the appeal, make a determination on the applicant's eligibility, and notify the applicant of the determination.

In the event the applicant is not satisfied with the determination of the GO Appeals Officer, the applicant shall have thirty (30) calendar days to file a second level appeal, by submitting the appeals form and supporting documentation to Superintendent Dr. Lisa Hagel, via email to lhagel@geneseeisd.org or via U.S. mail or hand delivery to the following address:

Dr. Lisa Hagel, Superintendent  
Genesee Intermediate School District  
2413 West Maple Avenue  
Flint, Michigan 48507

The Superintendent may designate another District employee or an outside law firm to manage the second level appeal. The Superintendent, or her designee, shall have thirty (30) calendar days to review the appeal, make a determination on the applicant's eligibility, and notify the applicant of the determination. The determination of the Superintendent, or her designee, shall be final.

Relief on appeal or in a subsequent proceeding shall be limited to the amount of the GO stipend available to eligible students in the applicant's graduating class. Relief shall not include interest accrued during the pendency of the appeal or subsequent proceeding.

## **VI. USE OF STIPEND FUNDS**

GO stipend funds shall be used to pay for tuition, certification, testing, or other mandatory education or training costs at an eligible training program or postsecondary educational institution. Such a training program or postsecondary educational institution may be in-state or out-of-state. In order to be eligible, a training program or postsecondary educational institution shall satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. Be licensed, as required by law;
2. Be accredited, as appropriate; (see website for accreditation link)
3. Enter into a written agreement with the District for the distribution of GO stipend funds.

GO stipend funds shall not be used for any of the following:

- Application fees.
- Housing or meals.
- Books or course materials.
- Courses in any of the following:
  - o Hobbies or recreation.
  - o Physical education.
  - o Theology or religion.

The District shall retain the exclusive authority over the use of GO stipend funds, including whether funds may be used for a particular course or purpose and whether a training program or postsecondary education institution is eligible for the distribution of funds.

Once GO stipend funds are distributed on behalf of a student, they cannot be refunded or reapplied for another purpose or at another training program or postsecondary educational institution on behalf of that student. All funds shall be used within 12 months following the student's graduation from high school. Any funds not used by the deadline shall be retained by the District for continued implementation of the GO program.

## **VII. DISTRIBUTION OF STIPEND**

GO stipend funds shall be disbursed directly to the eligible training program or postsecondary educational institution attended by the student, pursuant to a written agreement between the District and the training program or postsecondary educational institution. Funds shall be disbursed after the drop-add deadline to ensure the student is enrolled in the course, program, or test for which the funds are intended. Under no circumstances shall funds be disbursed directly to a student after July 2017.

If a graduate receives scholarship funds from a program or district which is located in a Promise Zone area, Genesee Opportunity funds are to be utilized as last dollar scholarships to be paid to the institution.

Stipend dollars in General Fund including carry-over percentages is to remain sufficient and within limits to ensure student stipends are never less than the previous year stipend.

**VIII. CALCULATING AMOUNT OF STIPEND**

The District shall calculate the amount of the GO stipend for each graduating class based on the taxes collected and the number of eligible students, recognizing that these figures may vary from year to year. The calculation shall allow the District to maintain sufficient reserves to ensure continued implementation of the GO program. To the extent possible, the District shall calculate the stipend amount for each graduating class at least one (1) year in advance of graduation to allow students time to coordinate financial aid.

Semesters will be calculated based on the Fall and Spring MSDS certified counts.

- 1 semester = 12.5%
- 2 semesters= 25%
- 3 semesters= 37.5%
- 4 semesters= 50%
- 5 semesters= 62.5%
- 6 semesters= 75%
- 7 semesters= 87.5%
- 8 semesters= 100%

**IX. REPORT TO SCHOOL BOARD**

The Board of Education (the “Board”) may be provided with an annual report identifying, for the preceding year, the efforts made to market the GO program, the number of eligible students, the number of participating students, the number and type of training programs and postsecondary educational institutions at which funds were expended, the amount of the stipend, and any other information requested by the Board.

**GENESEE OPPORTUNITY APPEALS FORM**

I wish to appeal the determination of the Genesee Intermediate School District that I do not meet the eligibility criteria to receive a Genesee Opportunity (“GO”) stipend.

My appeal is based on the failure to satisfy the following eligibility criteria (please check all that apply):

- Could not verify graduation from a high school or registered home school program in Genesee County.
- Could not verify residence in Genesee County or on property that is taxed by the District.
- Could not verify enrollment in an eligible training program or post-secondary educational institution.
- Could not verify submission of an application post-marked or received by the District by the due date.
- Calculation of eligible semesters
- Other

Contrary to the District’s determination, I satisfy all of the eligibility criteria listed above. In support of my appeal, I have attached the following documentation to rebut the District’s stated reason or reasons for denying my application (please check all that apply):

- To prove that I graduated from a high school or registered home school program in Genesee County:
  - Final high school transcript with month, day, and year of graduation.
  - Letter from school administrator stating month, day, and year of graduation.
  - Copy of high school diploma.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_.
- To prove that I reside in Genesee County or on property taxed by the District:
  - Copy of lease agreement.
  - Copy of utility bill.
  - Copy of property tax statement.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_.
- To prove that I have enrolled in an eligible training program or post-secondary educational institution:
  - Student identification number.
  - Copy of tuition or fee statement.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_.
- To prove that I submitted an application by the due date:
  - Certified mail receipt post-marked by the due date.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_.
- To prove that I am eligible for additional semesters
  - Letter from school administrator stating applicant’s entry/exit date for each school attended
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that this appeal must be filed with the District within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of my denial letter, or from the date of the initial appeal as applicable. I further attest that all of the information contained herein is true, and I acknowledge and understand that the District retains sole discretion to determine whether I am eligible to receive a GO stipend.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
DOB

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State and Zipcode

**For office use only**

**Date received** \_\_\_\_\_

**1<sup>st</sup> Appeal** \_\_\_\_\_

**2<sup>nd</sup> Appeal** \_\_\_\_\_