

Palacios Independent School District “Grow Your Own” Teacher Certification Student Program

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

Purpose

The Palacios Independent School District (PISD) “Grow Your Own” Teacher Certification Student Program provides tuition and other support to a high school senior or a former graduate with better than average grades and a sincere commitment to teaching so that they can earn college degrees leading to teacher certification in locally identified shortage areas.

Eligibility

The “Grow Your Own” teacher training student program is open to graduating seniors and former graduates who have completed the application requirements outlined in Section 1. Consideration will be given to applicants seeking certification in:

- Mathematics (secondary),
- Science (secondary),
- Bilingual (all level),
- Spanish (secondary),
- Technology Applications (secondary),
- Computer Science (secondary),
- or Special Education (all level).
- Former graduates must have a minimal of 30 college credit hours with a 2.5 grade point average.
- Former graduates must have graduated from PISD within the past five years.

Agreement

PISD will enter into a legally binding agreement with selected students. Under this agreement, selected students will take course work needed for a college degree in education. The program will be limited to 4 total participants with no more than one student being selected each year. The district retains the right to limit the number of students working toward certification in any specific field.

Students will be selected in the spring to begin the program during the fall semester after selection. The education degree can be from any accredited college but students will not be reimbursed for fees that exceed the tuition and fee schedule set by Victoria College/University of Houston @ Victoria for comparable hours. After graduation, the student must teach in PISD for 3 years.

SECTION I—APPLICATION AND SELECTION

- A. To complete the application process and be considered for the program, the applicant must submit the following documents, in accordance with deadlines and submission requirements as specified by the superintendent or designee:
- Copy of high school transcript;
 - SAT/ACT or other entrance test scores;
 - Passing scores on the THEA (if applicable);
 - Copy of college transcripts (if applicable), indicating a minimum of 30 college credit hours and a cumulative grade point average of 2.5;
 - Letter of recommendation and approval from Palacios High School principal (sent directly from principal to superintendent or designee);

- Letter of approval from prospective hiring principal (if different from high school principal, sent directly to superintendent or designee);
 - Letter of recommendation from two teachers (sent directly from teachers to superintendent or designee);
 - Letter of recommendation from active community or civic leader (sent directly from community member to superintendent or designee);
 - Brief personal biography;
 - 200-300 word essay on “Why I Want to Become a Teacher in PISD”.
- B. Recommendation letters are confidential and applicants agree they will not seek access to them.
- C. A screening committee appointed annually by the superintendent will evaluate the applicants and their credentials according to a matrix, interview each applicant, and rank the applications according to their score on the matrix. The applicant with the highest score will be selected. The committee’s decision shall be the final step before board approval. Board approval will be required before applicant is formally accepted into the program.

Should the applicant with the highest score choose not to enroll in the Grow Your Own student program for any reason, the applicant with the next highest score will be considered for entering the program. With committee and Board approval, the second ranked applicant will be accepted into the program.

SECTION II—DISTRICT CONTRIBUTION AND ASSURANCES

- D. PISD agrees to pay/provide for costs or materials as specified below. Students must submit a “notification of enrollment course work” and textbooks and laboratory fee form to the PISD personnel office before enrollment in order for PISD to pay these amounts in advance:
- all tuition costs and required fees not to exceed the tuition and fee schedule set by Victoria College/University of Houston @ Victoria for comparable hours.
 - all required textbooks for the courses leading toward degree at the community college or state college or university selected by the student. Textbooks remain the property of PISD for use by subsequent participants in the program unless the student reimburses PISD the full cost of the textbooks at the end of the semester in which the book is purchased.
 - the first administration of any required entrance examinations.
 - all required laboratory fees for courses leading toward degree at the state college or university selected by the student.
 - the fees for the first administration of required ExCET tests for certification.
- E. After a student successfully completes 24 hours of course work toward the degree, PISD will pay a \$75 per course stipend for the successful completion of each additional course.

SECTION III-STUDENT CONTRIBUTION AND ASSURANCES

- F. Selected students agree to pay for:
- Fees for university graduation activities;
 - Late registration fees (if applicable);
 - Parking fees;
 - Transportation to and from sites where courses are taught;
 - THEA required remediation courses;
 - Retaking courses;
 - All other costs.

- H. Additionally, the selected student agrees to the following:
- Applicants for Bilingual certification must be proficient in English and Spanish at the time of application.
 - The student must qualify for regular admission into the college or university and declare education as the major and declare acute shortage area as specialized area of study.
 - Student's schedule of classes must be approved each semester by the superintendent or designee.
 - If the student withdraws from a course or earns a grade below "C" in a course, the student must reimburse PISD for full tuition, textbooks, and any other PISD incurred costs relative to the course.
 - The student must maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.5.
 - The student must take a minimum of 12 hours of course work each semester, or 30 hours per year including each summer session, until the degree and certification plan are successfully completed. Upon written request, a student who is unable to enroll in 12 hours during a semester because the necessary courses are not offered or under other special circumstances subject to the superintendent's discretion may be permitted to enroll in fewer than 12 hours.
 - If a student is unable to register and take course work at all during a semester, he or she must request a semester furlough and receive superintendent or designee approval for the furlough. A student may receive no more than 3 furloughs during the program. Any request for additional furloughs must be submitted to the PISD board of trustees.
 - A student must complete the degree and certification program within 5 years, unless an agreed exception is reached by PISD and the student. No more than one extra year may be added to the program.
 - A completion time line will be developed and agreed upon, prior to beginning the program, between PISD and the student.
 - A student selected for the program must be a current student and have attended Palacios High School two full school years (including the year of submitting the application).

SECTION IV: OBLIGATIONS UPON COMPLETION

- I. Upon completion of degree and certification plan, the student shall:
- Complete student teaching in PISD (if applicable)
 - Accept any full-time teaching position that may be offered by PISD for at least 3 years.
 - Comply with all SBEC/TEA/SBOE and PDAS guidelines, achieving a minimum of "proficient" in appraisal performance ratings.
 - Meet all requirements of professional growth and other duties required of PISD teachers.
- J. Upon student's completion of degree and certification plan, PISD shall:
- Review the selected student's record and consider offering a one-year probationary contract upon written verification of degree/certificate completion.
 - Comply with all SBEC/TEA/SBOE and PDAS guidelines.
 - Offer additional contracts, subject to satisfactory performance by selected student.
 - Inform the student in writing of the full amount expended by PISD in connection with the student's participation in the PISD "Grow Your Own" teacher certification student program.
- K. By applying for and accepting the benefits of the PISD "Grow Your Own" teacher certification program, student agrees to repay to PISD all sums PISD expended on student in connection with the program according the terms of this Section and Section V: TERMINATION.
- L. If student fails to comply with or complete the requirements of the "Grow Your Own" program, student shall repay all funds PISD expended on student in connection with the program in installments agreed upon by PISD not to exceed a term of 24 months.

- M. Upon obtaining a college degree and teaching certification pursuant to the “Grow Your Own” program, student will repay the amounts expended by one of these methods:
- Student is expected to accept a teaching position with PISD, if offered, and will receive credit against amounts due for each semester that student serves as a full-time teacher in PISD. For each full semester that the student teaches in PISD, student will receive credit for 1/3 of the total college expenses paid by PISD. Full credit will be achieved when student has been a teacher in PISD for 3 years. If student for any reason fails to repay the obligation by working in PISD for 3 years to receive full credit, including a decision by PISD to terminate or non-renew a contract, student must pay the balance of any amounts due in installments agreed upon by PISD not to exceed a term of 24 months.
 - If student declines PISD’s offer of a teaching position at any time during the 3 years following completion of the program, student shall repay the balance of all funds PISD expended on student in connection with the program in installments agreed upon by PISD not to exceed a term of 24 months.
- N. If no teaching position is offered upon completion of the program, student has no obligation to repay until such time an offer is made. If the PISD does not offer student a teaching contract within 3 years, student will be released from any obligation to repay funds.

SECTION V: TERMINATION PROVISIONS

- O. PISD has the right to terminate the “Grow Your Own” program at the end of any regular semester or summer session for any reason. If PISD terminates the program before a student completes the degree and certification requirements, the student is released from any obligation to repay funds expended on student in connection with the program.
- P. PISD has the right to terminate the student’s participation in the “Grow Your Own” program for any of the following reasons, and student must repay to PISD all amounts expended on student in connection with the program:
- PISD removes the student from the program based on student’s failure to comply with any of the covenants or conditions of this agreement or any of the guidelines, requirements or regulations relating to the program, including maintaining satisfactory evaluations in student’s current job assignment in PISD.
 - PISD determines in its sole discretion that student is not making adequate progress or if student’s performance in the “Grow Your Own” program is not acceptable.
- Q. Student has the right to terminate student’s participation in the “Grow Your Own” program at any time for any reason. If student terminates participation, student must repay amounts expended on student in connection with the program under the following provision:
- A student who withdraws from the program must pay all amounts expended by PISD for student’s participation in the program within 30 days of withdrawal.

SECTION VI: PROGRAM LIMITATIONS

- R. PISD establishes the “Grow Your Own” teacher certification student program in order to fulfill its needs for certified teachers in areas of local shortage. A student’s admission to and completion of the program according the terms set out in this Agreement does not create a property interest in employment or in any other benefit and is not a guarantee that PISD will employ the person as a teacher for any period of time. If a student is offered and accepts a contract for teaching in PISD, PISD retains its right to make all subsequent decisions regarding employment, including termination or non-renewal in accordance with PISD policies.
- S. Operation of the “Grow Your Own” teacher certification student program is contingent on the availability of funds and is within the sole discretion of the PISD board of trustees.

SECTION VII: STUDENT'S CONTRACT/ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have read the foregoing requirements. By my signature below, I initiate application to the "Grow Your Own" program. I understand that this application process will not be complete until and unless I submit the documents specified in Section I. If accepted to the program, my signature below is acceptance of all the terms and conditions for participation, including the responsibility to repay amounts.

STUDENT NAME: _____

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY ATTENDING: _____

DEGREE/CERTIFICATION: (CHECK ONE)

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| _____ Mathematics (secondary) | _____ Science (secondary) |
| _____ Special Education (all level) | _____ Spanish (secondary) |
| _____ Technology Applications (all level) | _____ Bilingual (all level) |
| _____ Computer Science (secondary) | |

Applicant's Name(Printed)

Date

Applicant's Signature

Date

Signature of Superintendent

Date