

VI. EARLY RETIREMENT

This provision shall be applicable for the 2020-21 through 2024-25 fiscal years and shall apply to employee classifications as noted herein.

6.1 Eligibility

- A. Early retirement benefits under this provision shall be available to members of employee classifications noted herein who are at least age 57 and who retire from employment after providing at least 15 years of service to the District or who retire after providing 30 years of service with the District regardless of age. Employees are only eligible for this benefit if they voluntarily resign from regular employment on or before June 30, 2025.

An applicant under this provision must be an eligible employee who has served the Cochrane-Fountain City School District. Eligibility is determined by a combination of age and years of service. Any employee is eligible who is a member of the employee classifications with fifteen (15) years of local experience that has reached age 57. In addition, staff members who have served the Cochrane-Fountain City School District for thirty (30) years or more shall be eligible, regardless of age.

- B. “Full-Time” for the purpose of this policy is defined as regularly scheduled to work 30 or more hours per week, during the agreed upon yearly term of employment, such as 260 or 180 days. “Part-Time,” therefore, for the purpose of this policy is defined as regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week. For purposes of determining eligibility for benefits, the eligible employee cannot have retired on or before **November 18, 2020 (the date of Board approval)**. For purpose of applying this early retirement provision, the eligible employee must be eligible and retire from the District before July 1, 2025.
- C. Employee classifications are as follows:
1. A Teacher must be a regular, degree-holding teacher who has served full-time in the School District.
 2. District staff must be a salaried employee classified as a Supervisor or Business Office Specialist who has served full-time in the School District.
 3. Hourly staff include Secretary, Custodians, Food Service Staff and Paraprofessionals who have served full-time in the School District.
 4. Part-time includes employees classified as Teachers, Custodians, Secretaries, Supervisors, Paraprofessionals, Food Service or Transportation employees that served the School District in a capacity less than full-time; however, based upon their age and/or years of service qualify for the early retirement benefits as noted in this Section 6.1 Eligibility.
- D. The school year during which 30 years of service is attained or the school year in which the employee reaches age 57 with 15 years of service shall be the first year of

eligibility. An application would need to be made according to the timelines identified below in the school year prior to the retirement becoming effective.

- E. Unusual circumstances involving eligibility for retirement benefits will be left to the discretion of the Superintendent with the approval of the Board.
- F. The HRA is a retirement benefit and shall apply only to eligible employees who were actively employed by the District as of **November 18, 2020** and shall not be retroactive to any employee who retired prior to the date that this benefit provision was adopted by the Board of Education. The policy shall not apply to any discharged or terminated employee, employee who previously retired from the district, or to any employee who was employed with the District on **November 18, 2020** but who separates from service with the District before becoming eligible to receive the retirement benefits, nor to any employee who retires after June 30, 2025.

6.2 Application

All applications for early retirement benefits under this provision must be filed with the Superintendent, no later than February 1 of the year prior to the school year in which retirement is to begin. The Superintendent shall make recommendations to the Board for the approval or denial of any application for early retirement benefits at the regular March Board meeting.

6.3 Limitation

- A. This provision shall be limited annually to four (4) teachers, one (1) District staff, one (1) hourly staff, and two (2) part-time employees. In the event that more than the noted number of employees by classification make application for benefits under this provision, employees shall be selected on the basis of seniority within the District based upon years of service. Only those employees who are or will be eligible to retire and receive the early retirement benefit in the upcoming school year may submit their application no later than February 1 of the current school year.
- B. If more than the noted number of employees apply, those who are not selected because they lacked sufficient seniority based upon years of service will be placed on a list for the following year. Carry-over requests from the previous year will be the first requests considered in the subsequent year. This super-seniority status by virtue of request will be the first requests considered in the subsequent year. This super-seniority status by virtue of request date shall only apply to this section of the Handbook.
- C. **Eligible employees who are selected for this early retirement benefit must complete their regular term of employment for the school year in which they retire. Failure to complete the regular term of employment for the school year in which they retire, will result in revocation of this benefit.**

6.4 Benefits

- A. Upon application and approval under this provision, an eligible employee may receive a one-time contribution to the District's Post Employment Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) Plan. These funds may be used for reimbursement of qualified medical expenses and/or insurance premiums in retirement.

Amount of contribution is determined as follows:

Employment Category	Teachers	District Staff	Hourly	Part-time
\$ / year of service	\$750	\$250	\$125	\$75
Maximum Benefit				
2020-2021	\$22,500	\$7,500	\$3,750	\$2,250
2021-2022	\$18,000	\$6,000	\$3,000	\$1,800
2022-2023	\$13,500	\$4,500	\$2,250	\$1,350
2023-2024	\$9,000	\$3,000	\$1,500	\$900
2024-2025	\$4,500	\$1,500	\$750	\$450

**The sick leave benefit still exists but is covered in a different part of the Handbook*

6.5 Termination of Benefits

- A. Payments under this program shall be automatically terminated if a participant received any unemployment compensation benefit from the District's account.
- B. The Post Employment HRA continues to reimburse qualified medical expenses and/or insurance premiums until the earlier of: exhaustion of the Post Employment HRA balance or death of the former employee when there are no surviving dependents to according IRC Section 105 (h) eligible for reimbursements.

6.6 Recall Limitations

- A. Employees electing to retire under this Program shall retain no reemployment rights with the District, nor any other rights or benefits provided them within this Program except those specified within this voluntary retirement provision.
- B. Note that should the Employee receiving these retirement benefits become an active employee of the District, such benefits may be suspended during this period of re-employment.
- C. Further details are noted in the Post-Employment HRA Plan document.

6.7 Reservation of Rights

The District intends to contribute to this Program for the period as noted herein, but understands that the benefits outlined in this program will extend into the future and are subject to a variety of tax laws, insurance obligations and other requirements that change from time to time. Accordingly, the District reserves the right to amend or terminate the Program at any time in the future.