



To: Dr. Terrell Yarbrough, Superintendent
Josh Aurand, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations
Harlem School District #122 Board Members

From: Patti Lawrence, CTE Coordinator
Shayna Walenga, Work-Based Learning Teacher/Coordinator
Dr. Michelle Erb, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Date: April 5, 2024

Subject: Paid Student Internships

As part of our internship program, students have the invaluable opportunity to gain hands-on experience while receiving monetary compensation. The majority of our external partners pay their interns. As a district, we have the opportunity to support students in the Information Technology (IT) and Education pathways by providing internships in the Harlem School District.

We are requesting approval to pay our student interns minimum wage while the students are in the capacity of their internship role. Some of our students have transportation restrictions and by Harlem offering internship opportunities, this would assist in breaking down the barriers. By allowing us to compensate our students, it would allow us to be competitive with other community partners.

These interns will need to go through our onboarding process through Human Resources, which includes a background check, TB test (if working in a building with an Early Childhood Program), and completion of the appropriate paperwork. The District will cover the cost of the background check and TB test, if required. Since some of the positions are covered in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, job descriptions were created since there are workday requirements as part of these positions, which our interns would not be required to complete. The job descriptions have been shared with the Union for feedback and will be posted on our website.

These positions will not replace staff. They are for the purpose of providing educational experiences to our students, and this feeds into our grow-your-own program and our Teacher Vacancy Grant.

Updates

When initially presented the Board had a few questions. The information below are the answers to the questions.

I reached out to Beloit regarding concerns about filing unemployment as well as whether they are a student or employee first. Beloit said that the student cannot file unemployment because

it is tied to a class, which is outlined in our agreement. Once the terms of the internship are complete, if we or any of our partners choose to hire the student, then the student would be able to file for unemployment like any other employee. The interns are aware that they are students first and would follow student discipline, if an incident would occur. Beloit stated that if they were scheduled to work at one of the partner's businesses, they would not keep them in ISS as those partners are counting on the student. If behaviors continue, they will contact the employer and share their concerns. If there are issues after that, the student may lose their internship opportunity.

Our attorneys confirmed that our students would not be able to file for unemployment since they will make less than the \$1600 threshold. We have also added a sentence to the sign-off form stating that they understand that they are students first and must follow school expectations and consequences.

Regarding placements, we are using our industry partners as much as possible. We have a few students who have transportation barriers that would prevent them from being in the program that we need to work through. Our Harlem IT positions are one way we can help those IT students continue to participate when they have the transportation barrier. Aaron Guske said he could not support more than 2 students per semester.

Regarding transportation barriers in other areas, we are still working on solutions to help those students. With our education students, Harlem is the best placement in the area for our students to get a quality experience. We also consider this as part of the "grow our own" program. We talk about how they can continue to work here after graduation and become a para while continuing their education. In this area, we could support more students; however, our goal is still to allow them the opportunity to be outside the school district when possible.

Below, you will find the student placements for the 23-24 school year.

1st Semester Placements- (Obtained through Elevate at Workforce Connection)

Fidelity Real Estate
Embroid This
Special Olympics
Goodwill Industries
Burpee Museum
IMA Automation
Ring Containers

2nd Semester Placements - (Obtained through Harlem CTE Coordinator)

Olson Park- Education Placement

Burpee Museum- Used Elevate for this one

Harlem IT Department

Fastenal

PBC Linear

Trotter Manufacturing

Lastly, Mrs. Lawrence and Mrs. Walenga interviewed over 135 students who had shown an interest in participating in the internship program next year. Of those interviewed, 89 met the requirements and have accepted an internship placement for the 24-25 school year. The other 46 students either did not meet the requirements or declined the internship placement due to schedule conflicts with school extra-curricular activities.

Here is a breakdown of the pathways for the students:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources- 3
- Arts & Communication- 5
- Finance & Business Services- 4
- Health Science & Technology- 29
- Human & Public Services- 15
- Information Technology- 10
- Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology & Trades- 23