BOE Agenda Item Executive Summary
Date: June 29, 2023

Topic: Certifying Special Education Teachers 2023-24 (Annual)

Background Information (History, Rationale, etc): To meet the demands for certified special education teachers, in 1999 a committee comprised of special education and human resources staff developed a plan of financial support for assisting teachers obtaining a special education endorsement. The support targets up to 70 individuals with a general education license annually who wish to pursue special education endorsement and/or licensure.

Upon completion of the program, participants have committed to repaying the debt by teaching students with special education needs in the Wichita Public Schools for a duration equivalent to the number of semesters financial assistance was received. Those who do not fulfill this employment obligation are required to reimburse the district for the portion of the funding provided that was not repaid through the employment agreement.

Local, state, and national data indicate that finding highly qualified special education teachers continues to be a top priority and this Forgivable Loan program has been a successful incentive in hiring viable candidates for difficult-to-fill special education vacancies. Since the inception of the program, 85% of participating teachers have successfully completed their coursework and have met or are meeting their service/financial obligations to the district.

The estimated cost impact from Special Education funds for 2023-24 is not to exceed $250,000.