

Policy GCBA: PROFESSIONAL STAFF COMPENSATION

Status: DRAFT

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24D UPDATE EXPLANATION

Senate Bill 727 (2024) allows school boards to place certain teachers employed in "hard-to-staff schools" or "hard-to-staff subject areas" higher on the salary schedule to attract and retain teachers in those positions. A "hard-to-staff" school is one where more than ten percent of certificated positions were left vacant or were filled with a teacher who was not fully qualified in the prior academic year. A "hard-to-staff subject area" is a content area for which positions were left vacant or were filled with a teacher who was not fully qualified in the prior academic year. Schools that use this provision must report certain information to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

It is MSBA's position that this was always legal to do, and some districts are already placing teachers with particular certification higher on the salary schedule. It is unclear whether the new law impacts this practice—particularly if the certification does not technically meet the definition of "hard to staff." MSBA encourages districts to discuss this issue with their private attorney. This new language is not required in the district's policy, but it is a legal requirement.

Please note that Senate Bill 727 also dramatically modified the minimum teacher's salary required by law. Beginning in the 2025–26 school year, teachers must earn at least \$40,000. The amount will be modified by inflation in subsequent years, capped at three percent per year.

Beginning in the 2025–26 school year, any full-time teacher with a master's degree and at least ten years of experience will earn at least \$46,000. In 2026–27, they will earn at least \$47,000, and in 2027–28 they will earn at least \$48,000. In subsequent years, the minimum salary will be modified by inflation, capped at three percent.

The policy currently states that, "All full-time teachers will be paid at least the minimum teacher's salary as required by law." Therefore, a policy change is not necessary. That said, MSBA strongly encourages districts to plan carefully for implementing this important legislative change.

The district needs highly qualified employees to accomplish its education mission and must offer competitive compensation to attract and maintain experienced professional staff in the district. The board directs the superintendent or designee to annually research regional and statewide trends in employee compensation and consult with district employees to prepare competitive salary schedules and salary recommendations for the board to consider within the constraints of the district's finances. Only the board has the authority to increase an employee's regular compensation or grant employees an extra-duty position or stipend.

As required by law, teachers will be paid in accordance with a board-adopted salary schedule. All full-time teachers will be paid at least the minimum teacher's salary as required in state law. Noncertificated professional staff and certificated staff members other than teachers will be compensated in accordance with a board-approved salary schedule or will receive the amount of compensation approved by the board for particular positions or particular employees.

All Professional Staff Salary Schedules

The board is required to adopt salary schedules for the compensation of teachers and may use a salary schedule to compensate administrative and noncertificated professional staff. When creating a salary schedule, the board may recognize characteristics beneficial to the district, such as certification in high-need areas, in addition to traditional factors, such as experience and education. The regular teachers' salary schedule is based on contract days in the academic calendar as adopted by the board of education. Placement on the salary schedule must be supported by a college transcript showing full credit. Administration salaries are not included in the salary schedule.

The following rules apply to all district professional staff salary schedules unless determined otherwise by the board:

1. The board will make every effort to adopt salary schedules prior to the statutory deadline for issuing teacher contracts, but salary schedules and other compensation must be determined along with the district budget no later than June 30. Any board-adopted salary schedule will remain in effect and continue to operate until the board takes action to change or eliminate the salary schedule. The board of education reserves the right to adjust the schedule at any time it considers such adjustment advisable except that salaries in

teachers' contracts already signed would be honored.

2. The board may freeze the operation of the salary schedule when warranted by the financial condition of the district or for other relevant reasons, as determined by the board. Once a salary schedule is frozen, employees will not advance on the salary schedule until the board votes to authorize movement on the salary schedule. If the salary schedule is frozen for more than one year before the board authorizes movement, employees will advance to the next step for which they were eligible at the time the schedule was frozen unless the board determines that it is financially feasible to allow employees to move through all steps missed while the schedule was frozen. Alternatively, the board may adopt a new salary schedule that accurately reflects the salary associated with the appropriate years of service.
3. An employee may not advance more than one step vertically per year on the salary schedule unless such movement is allowed by the board-adopted rules and is uniformly applicable to that particular salary schedule or is otherwise approved by the board.
4. An employee cannot progress on the salary schedule after entering into a contract for a school year unless such movement is specifically authorized in the contract.
5. The district may recognize an employee's previous experience when placing that employee on the salary schedule. Verification of prior certificated service must be provided. The board delegates to the superintendent or designee the authority to set guidelines on which previous experiences qualify. In addition, the district may recognize military service or work experience that the district considers beneficial to the position. Employees are responsible for fully apprising the district of their relevant background experiences when first employed in the position. Once the employee is initially placed on the salary schedule, the district is under no obligation to review the placement.

Teacher Salary Schedules

1. Teachers are encouraged to obtain graduate hours for professional improvement and advancement on the teacher salary schedule as soon as possible. Graduate credit hours may be used to advance on a salary schedule if the courses are required as part of a graduate degree program, teaching endorsement program, to obtain dual-credit teaching qualifications, or is a course pre-approved by the assistant superintendent for academic services. The credit hours must be taken from a college or university that is recognized by the College Credit Committee of the Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City (CSDGKC) or from a college or university not on the approved list, if pre-approved by the assistant superintendent for academic services. If a teacher who is new to the district has already enrolled in a course or a degree program prior to beginning employment, the assistant superintendent for academic services will decide whether the district will recognize the credit earned. In certain cases, it might be possible for a staff member to obtain graduate credit at no cost or to be reimbursed later for such expense.
2. If a teacher who is new to the district has earned graduate credits prior to being employed by the district, the district will recognize those graduate credits for movement on the salary schedule if they are in an educational field from an accredited college or university.
3. Undergraduate hours will be accepted in the graduate hours column provided the teacher has a baccalaureate degree, the credit hours are taken from a college or university that is recognized by the CSDGKC, the courses are in an educational field, and the teacher has received prior approval of the assistant superintendent of academic services. The purpose of this item is to permit teachers to take undergraduate courses when they wish to do so for professional improvement only. No more than eight hours of undergraduate credit will be approved.
4. Inservice activities attended during the school day will be counted toward advancement on the salary schedule only if those inservice hours qualify an employee to be granted graduate credit hours in an educational field that has been approved by the assistant superintendent of academic services, are verified with a transcript from a college or university that is recognized by the CSDGKC or approved by the assistant superintendent for academic services, and are paid for by the employee.

Salary Schedule Placement for Hard-to-Staff Schools and Hard-to-Staff Subject Areas

The school board may differentiate placement of teachers on the salary schedule to increase compensation in order to recruit and retain teachers in "hard-to-staff schools" or "hard-to-staff subject areas."

A "hard-to-staff" school is one where more than ten percent of certificated positions were left vacant or were filled with a teacher who was not fully qualified in the prior academic year. A "hard-to-staff subject area" is a content area in which positions were left vacant or were filled with a teacher who was not fully qualified in the prior academic year. The district may annually review and revise the schools and subject areas that are considered "hard to staff," but no modification to these classifications will result in the demotion of a teacher.

If the district elects to place certain teachers higher on the salary schedule to fill positions in hard-to-staff schools or in hard-to-staff subject areas, the district will report information to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as required by law.

Credit for Externship

In accordance with law, participation in a certified teacher externship program will qualify for movement on the salary schedule to the same extent and in the same manner as other graduate-level course credit.

Compensation for Extra Duties

Additional duties, such as supervising activities, may be assigned to professional staff without additional compensation. In some situations and with board approval, the district may provide an employee with extra-duty compensation or a stipend to compensate the employee for performing additional duties. In those situations, the board will determine the amount of compensation, which may be set by adopting an extra-duty salary schedule or approving a specific amount for the position. Teachers' contracts will indicate base pay.

Employee Responsibility

Employees are responsible for verifying that their salary schedule placement, compensation rate and paychecks are accurate. Employees are required to notify the district within 30 days of receiving an inaccurate payment, and failure to do so could lead to discipline, forfeiture of amounts owed or deductions for excess pay received, as allowed by law.

Compensation Disbursement

In general, professional staff will be paid in equal installments over 12 months even if the employee's regular work schedule is less than 12 months. However, payment for extra duties that are seasonal or limited to a specific timeframe may be paid in the month the work was performed.

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Policy Reference Disclaimer: These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State References

§ 163.172, RSMo.

§ 168.025, RSMo.

§ 168.110, RSMo.

§ 168.126, RSMo.

Description

[State Statute](#)

[State Statute](#)

[State Statute](#)

[State Statute](#)

Federal References

29 U.S.C. § 206(d)

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[Federal Statute](#)

Cross References

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[PROHIBITION AGAINST ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION](#)

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[SALARY DEDUCTIONS](#)