
Certificated Compensation & Frequently Asked Questions (CEA Only)

Links to CEA Salary Schedules/Hourly Rates:

Teachers (including psychologists, counselors, etc.): [Teacher Salary Schedule 2025-2026](#)

Building Substitutes: [Building Substitute 2025-2026 Rates](#) (Page 118 of CEA Master Agreement)

Tutors: [Tutor 2025-2026 Rates](#) (Page 109 of CEA Master Agreement)

Full-Time Hourly Professionals: [Full-Time Hourly 2025-2026 Rates](#) (Page 93 of CEA Master Agreement)

Latchkey Teachers: [Latchkey 2025-2026 Rates](#) (Page 114 of CEA Master Agreement)

CEA Master Agreement: [Master Agreement 2025-2028](#)

Definitions & Frequently Asked Questions: Teachers (including regular teachers, TOSAs, psychologists, counselors, etc.)

Definitions and Information:

Pay Grade: Also referred to as your degree level, pay level, track, or column. Your pay grade is based on your highest degree level. The teacher salary schedule is comprised of five pay grades/degree levels:

- Bachelor's Degree
- Bachelor's Plus (e.g. "150 Hours and Bachelor's Degree")
- Master's Degree
- Master's Plus (e.g. "Master's Degree +30 Semester Hours")
- Ph.D.

Steps/Years of Experience: Steps correspond to a teacher's years of experience. When hired, teachers can receive credit for up to 10 years of previous experience provided it meets the criteria outlined in the CEA Master Agreement. Once hired, teachers will advance to the next step each year provided they worked 120 days during the previous school year.

*Per the MOU dated February 12, 2026, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, teachers employed as less than 1.0 FTE (excluding those in an hourly position) will hold either half-time contract teaching positions (equivalent to .5 FTE) or job share teaching positions. Teachers in these positions (half-time and job share) must work 120 days for 2 years to advance to the next step (120 days within each year).

Years of Experience Credit: Up to 10 years of public schools teaching experience can be credited toward placement on the teacher salary schedule, provided the experience was full-time and a valid state license/certification was held. Full-time is defined as at least 7 hours per day for 120 days during the school year. Administrator experience cannot be credited.

Teachers can also receive credit for active military service in the armed forces, teaching experience in accredited armed forces and U.S. State Department Dependency Schools, and teaching experience in the Peace Corps and VISTA.

Physical therapists, school social workers, nurses, occupational therapists, and speech therapists can receive credit for previous private employment or self-employment experience, provided it was at least 8 months' full-time employment or self-employment in a 12-month period.

Teachers Hired on or After July 21, 2025:

In addition to the above provisions, teachers hired on or after July 21, 2025 (the start date of the 2025-2026 school year for year-round schools) can receive credit for non-public schools teaching experience, provided it was full-time and a valid state license/certification was held. Full-time is defined as at least 7 hours per day for 120 days during the school year *or* an average of 840 hours per year. Additionally, credit may also be given for public or non-public early childhood program experience. These provisions only apply to teachers hired on or after July 21, 2025.

Minimum Salary Threshold: Per the CEA Master Agreement, the District will not compensate teachers below a certain salary, specifically the rate of Step 3 at the Bachelor's degree level. As such, steps that have a corresponding rate that falls below this will be paid at the rate of Bachelor's, Step 3.

Specifically, the salary amount for Steps 0-3 at the Bachelor's pay level and Steps 0-2 at the Bachelor's Plus level are paid at the Bachelor's-Step 3 rate.

Negotiated Credit: New teachers with no prior experience and a bachelor's degree (or bachelor's degree plus 150 semester credits, e.g. "Bachelor's Plus") are placed on a *negotiated credit*, essentially crediting them with 1 year of experience on the salary schedule. Placement on a negotiated credit at the Bachelor's pay level is automatic, even for those qualifying for the Bachelor's Plus pay level, as it is financially advantageous. When teachers advance to a higher pay level (e.g. Bachelor's Plus, Masters, etc.), the negotiated credit is removed, and their step placement is adjusted to reflect actual years of service.

Once teachers reach Step/Year 15, transitioning to the Bachelor's Plus pay level becomes more beneficial. As of the 2025-2026 school year, Total Rewards will automatically process the change to the Bachelor's Plus pay level once a teacher reaches Step/Year 15, provided they were eligible for the Bachelor's Plus when initially hired. A letter will be sent to the teacher notifying them of the salary adjustment and board date. Teachers who were not eligible for the Bachelor's Plus pay level when hired, but later become eligible, will need to apply for an educational increase to remove the negotiated credit and transition to the Bachelor's Plus pay level.

Frequently Asked Questions:

If I'm a current or former CCS employee moving to a teacher position, can my prior CCS experience be counted toward my placement on the teacher salary schedule?

Depending on the position held, you may be eligible to receive credit for your prior CCS experience. While classified experience, such as an Instructional Assistant, and administrator experience cannot be counted, certain certificated experience may be eligible:

- **Tutor:** Yes, you can receive up to 5 years of credit for prior CCS Tutor experience, provided you worked a minimum of 600 hours during each school year. *External tutoring experience cannot be credited.*
- **Part-Time Hourly:** No, part-time hourly experience cannot be credited toward placement on the teacher salary schedule.
- **Full-Time Hourly Professional:** Yes, you can receive up to 5 years of credit for CCS Full-Time Hourly Professional experience, provided you worked a minimum of 120 days during each school year.
- **Latchkey:** No, latchkey experience cannot be credited toward placement on the teacher salary schedule.

How do I request an educational increase?

To request an educational increase, please complete the Educational Increase Application and submit the completed form and official transcripts to Compensation@columbus.k12.oh.us. A member of the Compensation team will review the documents and follow up with you to confirm your new salary and board date or to explain that you have not met the requirements. Click [here](#) to access the educational increase application form.

For an educational increase, how can I send HR my official transcripts?

Official transcripts can be sent to Compensation@columbus.k12.oh.us. If ordering the transcripts electronically, we recommend having them sent to your personal email address, rather than to Compensation. Official transcripts can also be scanned and emailed to Compensation@columbus.k12.oh.us. However, photocopies will not be accepted.

If I apply for an educational increase, when would my new salary be effective?

The effective date of the new salary is the date that the form and transcripts were submitted to Compensation.

What are the requirements for an educational increase to each of the pay/degree levels beyond the Bachelors?

While each has varying requirements, all levels require that the degree and credit hours be earned through an accredited university. To check if a university is accredited, we recommend using the [Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs](#) or the [Higher Learning Commission Directory of Institutions](#).

Please note, as of January 2026, the District will not accept credits earned through Idaho State University's Albion Center for Professional Development. Credits must have been earned prior to January 2026 to be counted for educational increases. Credits earned after this date will not be accepted.

The degree/pay levels and respective requirements can be found below.

- **Bachelor's Plus** pay level

- Must have earned a minimum of 150 semester credit hours through an accredited university.
- Credits earned toward the completion of your degree are included in this count.
- No restrictions to the area or field of study.
- Official transcript(s) showing the number of semester credit hours or quarter hours earned are required.
- **Master's pay level:**
 - Must have earned a master's degree through an accredited university.
 - No restrictions to the area or field of study.
 - Official transcript showing the degree conferral date is required; letters from university counselors or registrars listing the conferral date cannot be accepted in lieu of the official transcripts.
- **Master's Plus pay level:**
 - Must have earned 30 graduate-level semester credit hours beyond the master's degree.
 - Credits earned *prior* to the conferral date of the master's degree cannot be counted toward the required 30.
 - Credits must be for graduate study in the field of education or generally related to your area of certification.
 - Official transcript(s) showing the number of semester credit hours or quarter hours earned are required; the transcript(s) must include the course title and date in order to verify the above requirements.
- **PhD pay level:**
 - Must have earned a doctoral degree through an accredited university.
 - The degree must be related to the field of education or generally related to your area of certification.
 - Official transcript showing the degree conferral date is required; letters from university counselors or registrars listing the conferral date cannot be accepted in lieu of the official transcripts.

What is the maximum step?

The maximum step refers to the last step in the pay grade. This is the maximum salary a teacher can earn for a particular degree level. Once a teacher advances to the last step, they've reached the maximum step. The maximum step is Step/Year 31.

What happens when you reach the maximum step?

Once you reach the maximum step, you will remain on that step. Each year, however, you will still receive the across-the-board increase, also referred to as a cost-of-living increase, negotiated.

How can I request a review of my step placement?

Certificated staff may request a review of their step placement by emailing Compensation@columbus.k12.oh.us. Please include your name, employee number, and reason for the request in your email.

Hourly Positions (including Tutor, Part-Time Hourly, Full-Time Hourly Professional, & Latchkey)

Definitions and Information:

Steps/Years of Experience: For *Tutors* and *Full-Time Hourly Professionals*, steps correspond to the individual's years of experience as defined in the CEA Master Agreement.

Tutors: "Years of Experience" is defined as the number of *consecutive* years under contract as a CCS tutor. As such, all Tutors are placed at Step/Year 0 when hired. Each year, Tutors will advance to the next step provided they worked a minimum of 600 hours during the previous school year. The Tutor salary schedule consists of 10 steps, although Steps 9 and 10 have the same rate of pay.

Full-Time Hourly Professionals: The CEA Master Agreement provides guidelines for determining years of teaching experience for full-time hourly professional employees. When hired, employees can receive credit for up to 5 years of external experience, provided it meets the criteria outlined in Section 904.05, and all full-time previous CCS teaching experience is counted. Once hired, employees will advance to the next step each year provided they worked a minimum of 120 days during the previous year. The Full-Time Hourly Professional salary schedule consists of 7 steps.

Part-Time Hourly and *Latchkey* teachers, in turn, do not receive steps. Instead, employees are paid at a single hourly rate.

Years of Experience Credit: Of the hourly positions, only Full-Time Hourly Professional is eligible to receive credit for previous years of experience. All full-time previous CCS teaching experience is counted, and a maximum of 5 years of external experience can be counted provided it meets the criteria outlined in Section 904.05 of the Master Agreement. CCS substitute teaching experience is also eligible, provided it was for 120 days or more per year.

Per Section 904.05, up to 5 years of external full-time public schools teaching experience, provided it was for 120 days or more per year, and relevant work experience, provided it was for 12 months per year, can be credited. Relevant work experience with or without a degree can be counted if it is above and beyond the position's certification requirements. Military service and teaching in federally funded programs such as Concentrated Employment Programs, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and Manpower Development and Training can also be credited.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Does obtaining a higher degree level increase my rate of pay?

No. As a Tutor, Full-Time Hourly Professional, Part-Time Hourly teacher, or Latchkey teacher, your pay is not based on degree level. As such, advancing your degree will not change your rate of pay.

What is the maximum step?

The maximum step refers to the last step in the pay grade or salary schedule. This is the maximum hourly rate a person can earn for a particular job. Once you advance to the last step, you've reached the maximum step.

Tutor: Maximum step is Step 10, however, Steps 9 and 10 have the same hourly rate.

Full-Time Hourly Professional: Maximum step is Step 7.

What happens when you reach the maximum step?

Once you reach the maximum step, you will remain on that step. Each year, however, you will still receive the across-the-board increase, also referred to as a cost-of-living increase, negotiated.

How can I request a review of my step placement?

Certificated staff may request a review of their step placement by emailing Compensation@columbus.k12.oh.us. Please include your name, employee number, and reason for the request in your email.

Please note, since Part-Time Hourly and Latchkey teachers do not receive steps, the review will consist of verifying that the hourly rate in MUNIS reflects the current rate of pay in effect.