



Understanding the Swaim Method

A Guide to How a Teacher's Prorated Salary Is Calculated in New York State

If you start, leave, or take unpaid time away from your teaching position partway through a month, your salary for that month is prorated — meaning it's adjusted to reflect the days you actually worked. New York State districts use a formula called the Swaim Method to calculate that adjustment fairly. Here's how it works.

What is the Swaim Method?

The Swaim Method is the standard formula New York school districts use to prorate a teacher's salary for a partial month of work. It comes from a 1978 ruling by the NYS Commissioner of Education (In the Matter of Swaim) interpreting Education Law §3101, and it is still the rule districts follow today.

The goal is fairness: because months have different numbers of working days, a simple day-count wouldn't treat every month the same. The Swaim Method accounts for that.

When would this apply to me?

This formula comes into play any time you don't work a full month — for example, if you resign or retire mid-month, start mid-month, are on an unpaid leave, or have unauthorized absences. It applies no matter the reason for the missed days.

What are the two key numbers I should know?

20 contractual days — a full working month is treated as 20 contractual days for pay purposes.

1/200th of your annual salary — this is the "daily rate" used for each day, whether you're being paid for days worked or losing pay for days missed. Twenty of these daily rates add up to one full month's pay ($20 \times 1/200 = \text{a full month}$).

How do I know which calculation applies to me?

It depends on whether you worked more or less than half of the working days scheduled that month:

- Worked half or fewer of the working days? You're paid 1/200th of your annual salary for each day you actually worked.
- Worked more than half of the working days? You're paid your full monthly rate (based on 20 contractual days), minus 1/200th of your annual salary for each day you did not work.

Let's walk through an example

Say a teacher earns an annual salary of \$60,000, and December has 16 scheduled working days.

If the teacher works all 16 working days:

Since all scheduled days were worked, they're paid a full month's salary, based on 20 contractual days:

$$20 \times (1/200 \times \$60,000) = 20 \times \$300 = \$6,000$$

If the teacher works 9 of the 16 days (more than half):

Full month's pay (based on 20 contractual days) minus a deduction for the 7 days missed:

$$\$6,000 - (7 \times 1/200 \times \$60,000) = \$6,000 - \$2,100 = \$3,900$$

If the teacher works 5 of the 16 days (half or fewer):

Paid only for the days actually worked:

$$5 \times 1/200 \times \$60,000 = \$1,500$$

Does it matter why I missed the days?

No. Whether the absence is a resignation, retirement, unpaid leave, or unauthorized absence, the same formula applies. The calculation only looks at how many working days were in the month and how many of them you worked.

What if I resign effective the last working day of the month?

If you complete every scheduled working day in that month, you're entitled to your full monthly rate (based on 20 contractual days) for that month, even if your resignation takes effect right at the end of it.

What if I resign at the very start of a month and work zero days?

If no working days are completed in a given month, no salary is due for that month under this formula.

Where does this rule come from?

It's grounded in Education Law §3101(3) and the Commissioner of Education's decisions In the Matter of Swaim (9 Ed. Dept. Rep. 23) and Decision No. 801 (1969). You can read the New York State Education Department's full explanation [here](#).

I still have questions. Who can I reach out to?

This guide is intended as a general, plain-language explanation. Questions about your specific paycheck should be directed to Cherie Martin (845) 838-6900 ext. 2019 / martin.ch@beaconk12.org.

