



DCSD Salary Guide

Licensed Employees

2026 - 2027 School Year

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About DCSD's Licensed Compensation System

The Douglas County School District (DCSD) strives to offer a compensation system that is transparent, comparable to, and competitive with our surrounding school districts.

This compensation program will be reviewed, updated and improved regularly to assist us in attracting and retaining exceptional educators who are crucial to the ongoing growth and success of our students.

What would my initial DCSD salary be?

Your Initial DCSD Salary

When you are hired into a licensed position at DCSD, your initial salary placement is determined by three factors:

- The position's classification as General, Hard-to-Hire or Specialist/Extremely Hard-to-Hire
- The amount of applicable work experience you have (years of experience)
- Your education level

Position Classification

All licensed positions in DCSD are classified as either General, Hard-to-Hire or Extremely Hard-to-Hire (Specialist) based on availability of qualified candidates, hiring metrics, or industry trends. This classification is noted on the job posting for which you applied. The position classification corresponds to a specific salary schedule shown in Appendix A of this Guide.

- General (I): All licensed positions not identified as Hard-to-Hire or Specialist/Extremely Hard-to-Hire.
- Hard-to-Hire (II): Positions designated as Hard-to-Hire as identified in Appendix A
- Specialist/Extremely Hard-to-Hire (III): Positions designated as Specialist/Extremely Hard-to-Hire as identified in Appendix A

Please note: Based on our commitment to maintaining internal pay equity and compliance with federal and state equal pay laws, salaries offered are non-negotiable.

Years of Relevant Full-time Experience

At salary setting, new hires will receive a salary step for each year of applicable, licensed work experience (K-12) gained outside of DCSD, up to a maximum of seven (7) years. For rehires, credit will be given for all internal DCSD years of licensed experience, and up to seven (7) years of external, licensed experience. Please note that each lane holds a maximum number of years attainable, after which salary remains at the highest level available in that lane. Please ensure you have uploaded your most recent and complete resume with employer, position title, and full dates (month/year) of

employment. Please also indicate If the position was seasonal, part-time, or full-time; and the position's FTE (or average weekly hours worked).

Parameters for Years of Experience

- For licensed employees in their first year at DCSD, up to seven (7) years of experience will be used to determine your initial salary. Therefore, step 8 on the applicable salary schedule is the highest initial step.
- All prior DCSD licensed teaching experience will be considered and up to seven (7) years of external (non- DCSD) licensed experience. Please note: DCSD Charter School experience will be treated as external.
- Experience with multiple employers may be combined to make one year of service as long as a minimum of one full semester is worked within a school year, and the licensed employee is contracted for at least 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) - 20 hours or more per week in each position.
- Teaching experience completed only after conferment of a bachelor's degree is considered.
- Teaching experience at regionally accredited K-12 public, private and charter schools and at accredited higher education institutions will be considered, per the Colorado Department of Education's list of [Regionally Accredited Institutions of Higher Learning](#).
- Substitute and Adjunct position experience **does not** apply toward determining base pay.
- Unpaid Internships, self-employment, contracted work, and volunteer experience **do not** apply toward determining base pay.
- Only teaching and curriculum instruction experience with students, or direct work with students/clients in the industry (for non-teachers), will be considered.

Education Level

In addition to your position's classification and years of relevant work experience, your initial salary is also determined by your level of education — i.e., whether you have a Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, Doctoral Degree, or an Educational Specialist (Ed.S) Degree

If you have completed additional college/university semester hours* following your degree, you may also advance on the salary schedule. Graduate-level credits completed after the semester in which your most recent and highest degree was conferred will be accepted. At salary setting, candidates will be placed in salary lanes on the corresponding salary schedule, as follows.

- Bachelor's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree + 15 credit hours
- Bachelor's Degree + 30 credit hours
- Master's Degree
- Master's Degree + 15 credit hours
- Master's Degree + 30 credit hours
- Master's Degree + 45 credit hours
- Master's Degree + 60 credit hours
- Doctorate/Ed.S Degree

*One quarter hour is equal to 2/3 of a semester hour and will be applied accordingly.

Parameters for the Recognition of Education Degrees and Credits

- Full transcripts and key (all pages, front and back) must be provided for salary placement consideration.
- Only degrees/credits earned at [Regionally Accredited Institutions of Higher Education](#) as reflected on the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) website, will be considered.
- Individual Postsecondary Institutions further need to be accredited as found on the [US Department of Education DAPIP page](#). Transcripts provided must include this accreditation (usually found on the back page or “key”).
- Only graduate-level college/university academic credits earned after the semester of conferment of the most recent and highest degree will apply for the purposes of salary advancement. Please note: Dual degrees with the same semester of completion/conferment date will reflect a single degree (the highest level) and no further credits. Dual undergraduate degrees or additional undergraduate credits will not count toward advancement.
- Professional Development Credits (PDCs) will not count as education credits toward your initial base salary or for salary advancement unless there is a university academic transcript showing graduate-level credit attained (non-relicensure credit) from a regionally accredited institution. **Please note: There are occasions when even though an employee provides a transcript from an accredited college/university, the coursework taken is professional development and not academic (credit hours). In these circumstances, if it is clearly professional development coursework, the credits will not count toward salary advancement for the 2026-27 school year.**
- Although master’s programs may have a varying number of credit hours as offered by their specific university, all master’s degree attainment will be accounted for in the same manner = Master’s Degree + 0.
 - In instances of dual master’s degree attainment, additional credit recognition will only be made if the two degrees were conferred in different semesters. Example: Master’s Degree 1 conferred in May 2018 and Master’s Degree 2 conferred in December 2021. The placement lane will reflect Master’s plus the credit count from the second master’s degree program, for credits earned after the semester of completion of the first Master’s Degree.
- Active/practicing School Psychologists with an equivalent specialist degree will be placed as equal to an EdS/PhD.

Salary Setting Examples - External Hires / New to District (2026-27 SY)

Example 1

A Teacher being hired into a position designated as Hard-to-Hire has five (5) years of licensed work experience and a Master’s Degree, plus an additional 25 graduate course credits. The teacher’s base salary will be calculated as follows:

Position Classification/Salary Schedule: Hard-to-Hire

+

Experience Credit: Placement for the new year will be at Step 6 (5 steps awarded)

+

Education Credit/Lane Placement: Placement will be in the MA +15 lane

=

Initial Salary Placement: \$71,250 (MA 15, Step 6)

Example 2

A recent college graduate hired into a General teaching position has a Bachelor's Degree and no licensed work experience. The teacher's base salary will be calculated as follows:

Position Classification/Salary Schedule: General

+

Experience Credit: None - Placement for the new year will be at Step 1

+

Education Credit/Lane Placement: Placement will be in the BA lane

=

Initial Salary Placement: \$51,914 (BA, Step 1)

Example 3

A Psychologist hired into a position designated as Specialist/Extremely Hard-to-Hire, has 10 years of relevant external work experience and a PhD. The Psychologist's base salary will be calculated as follows:

Position Classification/Salary Schedule: Specialist / Extremely Hard-to-Hire

+

Experience Credit: Placement for the new year will be at Step 08 (7 Steps awarded)

+

Education Credit/Lane Placement: Placement will be in the PhD/EdS lane

=

Initial Salary Placement: \$93,343 (PHD/EDS, Step 08)

How will my salary increase at DCSD?

Your Base Salary Can Increase in the Following Ways:

Education-based, Horizontal Lane Advancement (HLA)

A horizontal lane advancement increase can be earned by achieving higher levels of education as follows:

- Bachelor's Degree + 15 credit hours
- Bachelor's Degree + 30 credit hours
- Master's Degree
- Master's Degree + 15 credit hours
- Master's Degree + 30 credit hours
- Master's Degree + 45 credit hours
- Master's Degree + 60 credit hours
- Doctorate/EdS Degree

See the ‘Parameters for the Recognition of Education Degrees and Credits’ as noted in the prior section. The same requirements will apply in the lane advancement process.

Current licensed employees who have completed enough additional graduate-level college/university credits or have completed a new graduate degree program after the semester of their current conferral will have the opportunity to submit a request for horizontal lane advancement throughout the 2026-27 school year.

Please review the HLA Program Information & Instructions posted on the [Compensation Page](#) of the DCSD website.

Annual Step Increase

Based on available funding and budgetary approval, licensed employees may be eligible to advance a step on their compensation schedule with each additional year of service.

Please note: Each lane on the licensed salary schedule holds a maximum number of steps (years) attainable. Individuals who have reached the maximum available step in their lane will remain on that step at the assigned salary of that cell.

Annual Salary Increase

Based on available funding and budgetary approval, annual salary increases may be provided. Increases are typically applied to the licensed salary schedule as a percentage increase. Approved annual increases will be assigned at the beginning of each school year. The effective date (July 1st or August 1st) is based on your position's pay rate type. Licensed employees will be notified annually of their cell placement, licensed employment contract and any applicable increases via Workday, prior to the end of the school year.

Please note: Individuals identified as having salaries over their designated cell on the licensed salary schedule will not be eligible for a base salary increase.

Additional information for Licensed Employees

Position Changes

Licensed employees who voluntarily apply for transfer into a different licensed position within the district need to be aware of the classification of the new position. Salary placement will always be determined by the new position classification and corresponding salary schedule. This could mean a decrease or increase in their current salary.

Example: *A psychologist (Specialist/Extremely Hard-to-Hire position classification) with a MA+60 and 5 years of experience in 2025-26 decided to move into a 3rd grade Elementary teaching position (General position classification) for 2026-27.*

Their current placement on the Specialist/Extremely Hard-to-Hire schedule would be MA+60,

step 6. While the years of service (5) and educational attainment (MA+60) remain unchanged, the schedules differ, resulting in a lower salary for the individual after the transfer. Their placement on either schedule would be MA+60 Step 6. On the Specialist/Extremely Hard-to-Hire schedule their salary would be \$85,847.00 and their salary on the General schedule would be \$71,708.00.

Please Note: For employees who involuntarily change positions after the start of the school year (which would shift them to another schedule), the designated salary remains the same (i.e., no reduction of salary from shifting schedules) through the remainder of the school year. In the following year, they will be moved to their current position's assigned schedule.

Split Position Classifications

Licensed employees working in a split position (i.e. two or more partial FTE assignments) will have multiple jobs in Workday that will each have a position classification. The salary for these assignments will be determined by the position classification and FTE for each job.

Example: *A teacher with 10 years' experience and an MA has a 0.5 FTE assignment as a secondary math teacher (Hard-to-Hire position classification) and a 0.5 FTE assignment as an English teacher (General position classification). Their education attainment and years of experience will be the same for both positions but the salary for each will be different. Their placement on the Hard-to-Hire schedule would be MA step 11 (\$77,126.00). Their placement on the General schedule would also be MA step 11 (\$71,034.00). The salary cell amount in each position would be prorated based on the 0.5 FTE assigned, and combined as their total annual salary.*

Applying the Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

If you are assigned an FTE other than 1.0, working either a part-time or extended-time schedule, you can determine your salary by taking the assigned salary schedule cell amount and multiplying it by your FTE.

Example: *A teacher on the General Schedule in Lane BA+15, Step 3, has an annual salary (at 1.0) of \$56,178. Their position has a scheduled FTE of 0.5. Multiplying \$56,178 x .5 = \$28,089, which will be the adjusted annual salary for that assignment.*

What additional incentives can I earn?

Tuition Assistance Program

To incentivize and support gaining an advanced education, the district offers benefit-eligible employees access to Tuition Assistance through its annual program, subject to the availability of funding.

Reimbursement for satisfactory completion of pre-approved coursework is as follows:

- Up to \$2,000 per school year
- Up to \$6,000 per rolling five-year period

Program Information & Instructions is posted on the [Compensation Page](#) of the DCSD website. We encourage employees to apply as early as possible as this funding is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Additional Pay - Schedules A & B

Employees may receive additional pay when they work additional duties that are outside the scope of their regular responsibilities or job description.

Pay information for these additional roles and responsibilities can be found in Schedule A & B, as posted on the [Compensation Page](#) of the DCSD website. For additional information regarding these assignments, please speak with your Supervisor / Department Head / Principal.

Questions

Licensed employees or employment candidates who have questions about their compensation should first speak with their supervisor or hiring manager. If you still need HR support, please email us at compensation@dcsdk12.org. You may also find resources on the [Compensation Page](#) of the DCSD website.

Nondiscrimination Notice

In compliance with Titles VI & VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and Colorado law, the Douglas County School District RE-1 does not unlawfully discriminate against otherwise qualified students, employees, applicants for employment, or members of the public on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services. Discrimination against employees and applicants for employment based on age, genetic information, and conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth is also prohibited in accordance with state and/or federal law. Complaint procedures have been established for students, parents, employees, and members of the public. To address complaints alleging sexual harassment under Title IX, contact our Equal Opportunity Director/Title IX Coordinator.

Outside Agencies

Complaints regarding violations of Title VI, (race, national origin), Title IX (sex, gender), Section 504/ADA (handicap or disability), may be filed directly with the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 1244 Speer Blvd., Suite 310, Denver, CO 80204. Complaints regarding violations of Title VII (employment) and the ADEA (prohibiting age discrimination in employment) may be filed directly with the Federal Office of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 950 17th St., Suite 300, Denver, CO 80202, or the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, 1560 Broadway, Suite 110, Denver, CO 80202.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY DIRECTOR & TITLE IX COORDINATOR:

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Appendix A

2026-27 Licensed Position Classifications

Licensed position classifications are reviewed on an annual basis to determine if changes are needed. Position classifications are primarily based on the availability of candidates by examining local, state and national candidate pools as well as college preparation program data. Certain position classifications may be a result of special skills and experience needed and are not necessarily based solely on candidate availability. Positions not listed as Hard-to-Hire or Specialist/Extremely Hard-to-Hire are placed on the General Salary Schedule.



Hard-to-Hire

- Adaptive Physical Education
- All Career and Technical Education (CTE) Positions
- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Coordinator - International Baccalaureate
- Counselor
- Dean
- English Language Development – (ELD/ELL)
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Foreign Languages
- Future Educator Pathway
- Gifted Education – Center Based
- Home Service
- IEP & Assessment Specialist
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- Intervention Specialist - Math – Secondary, SEL, Behavior, G/T
- Literacy Specialist
- Mathematics - Secondary
- Mild-Moderate Needs
- Moderate Needs Interventionist
- Professional Learning Specialist (PLS)
- Science – Secondary
- STEM – HS

Specialist/Extremely Hard-to-Hire

- Assistive Technology
- Audiologist
- Autism Specialist
- Behavior Specialist/Analyst
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH)
- Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) & (ECE)
- Health, Wellness & Prevention (Team Lead)
- Nurse
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Psychologist
- Severe, Affective & Significant Support Needs
- Social Worker
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Student Support Program
- Visual Impairment, Orientation & Mobility