



# Teacher Pay

## 2020-21 Teacher Pay FAQs

On January 22, 2021, during the 1st Extraordinary Session of the 112th General Assembly, the Tennessee General Assembly passed an **Appropriations Bill** (SB7009/HB7020), which included critical pay increases for Tennessee teachers during an unprecedented school year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### General Questions:

**1. Why are these funds listed as “non-recurring” in the appropriations legislation?**

Any additional appropriations added within a fiscal year are always listed as non-recurring. Funds with recurring purposes will be added during the regular budget cycle for the following fiscal year.

**2. Does the current appropriations legislation actually change the unit cost of the instructional positions component?**

No. However, the calculation is based on the equivalent to a 2% increase to the unit cost of the instructional positions component in the BEP formula. The reason the actual unit cost is not formally changed from this increase is because the state is covering both the state and local share for this increase in FY21.

**3. Can you explain what the 2% covers?**

The 2% is based on the funding available for the instructional salaries component of the BEP. This does not necessarily equal 2% of what districts are spending on educator salaries, as many districts hire additional staff beyond what the BEP covers. The additional funding provided should not be described as a “2% salary increase.”

**4. Does dating the funds back to Jan 1. mean we only get half the funds?**

No. Funds provided to districts will reflect this increase for the period of January 1 to June 30, and full funding for that period is being provided.

**5. Am I required to change my salary and compensation schedule at this time?**

This is a district decision. Districts are required to document how funds are being distributed and share this information along with their salary and compensation schedule. This may or may not be a change to a district’s standard salary schedule.

**6. How does this impact charter schools?**

Charter schools will continue to be funded following the average per pupil funding provided to the district (per TCA 49-13-112(a)). As these funds will



increase that average funding, charters will experience increased funding as a result.

7. **If we gave an increase at the beginning of this school year, even though the state did not, can we use these funds to offset those increases?**

No. These funds are intended to provide new increases for teachers and certified personnel.

8. **How does this impact teachers funded outside of the BEP formula?**

Districts have discretion in determining how to distribute these funds to teachers. The allocations support increased funding to teachers, regardless of whether those teachers are funded within or outside the BEP. Districts may opt to distribute a share of what they receive to all teachers within the district or develop other strategies for disbursement.

9. **How can I use my BEP summary spreadsheet to explain how funds are awarded?**

In general, the increase will equate to an increase to the instructional salaries component of the BEP and the relevant benefits (social security, Medicare, and retirement) in the instructional benefits categories. However, due to other components within the BEP being tied to these values, districts will likely see increases in other categories as well. It is important to note that these funds are being awarded outside of the BEP formula. While the BEP summary spreadsheet may assist in understanding the allocations, it does not dictate spending requirements on these funds. Districts may want to share the total amount of funding provided to the district and then transparently post how those funds were allocated.

10. **Will this become recurring next year?**

The Governor has signaled he will propose a 4% increase in recurring funding for the instructional salaries component of the BEP in his FY22 budget. This will be released in mid-February.

11. **NEW 2/17 Can we use the funds to also give bonus to classified personnel?**

No. The increase in state funds may only be used for salary increases to teachers and other certified personnel. ESSER funds may be used to provide increases to classified personnel provided the increases are tied to COVID-19 related responsibilities.

12. **NEW 2/17 Are nurses included in the 2% increase?**

Yes.

13. **NEW 2/17 Can ESSER funds be used to provide bonuses to non-certified personnel?**

Yes. ESSER funds may be used to provide increases to certified or non-certified personnel provided the increases are tied to COVID-19 related responsibilities.

14. **NEW 2/17 Can these funds be used to pay federally funded teachers?**

Yes. The additional salary funds may be used to pay federally funded teachers.

15. **NEW 2/17 For federally funded teachers, if we pay the bonus out of federal funds, how do we handle that in our accounting?**



The federally funded teachers may be paid in one of two ways. First, they may be paid directly from the General Purpose Fund. Second, if they are paid from a federal fund source, the payments should be moved to General Purpose via journal entries. State funds should **not** be recorded as part of federal fund 142. Please be sure to monitor implications for your district supplement not supplant test if state funds are used for federally funded positions.

16. **NEW 2/17 If our district already had plans to provide bonuses this spring, may these funds be applied to that bonus?**

Yes. The intent of the legislature is that these funds be used to increase teacher compensation for their efforts this year. The district should consider messaging to stakeholders if these funds are going to be applied to previously committed or announced increases.

17. **NEW 2/17 May we use these funds to pay a stipend rather than a bonus?**

Yes. The district has flexibility in how it will utilize these funds to increase teacher compensation.

18. **NEW 2/17 Should charter schools be required to post their use of these funds on their websites?**

Yes. Any entity receiving these funds should be transparent in how they are being used in FY21.

19. **NEW 2/17 Do all nurses receive the bonus, or only RN's who are funded in the BEP?**

All certified staff are eligible to receive increases through these funds, whether their position was covered in the BEP or not.

20. **NEW 2/17 Does the increase have to be spent in FY21?**

Yes. Districts should issue these increases in FY21 and will be required to report how the funds were utilized on the Salary Transparency report for FY21.

21. **NEW 2/17 Are the liabilities (benefits) included in the district allocation?**

Yes. The amount of the salary portion may be determined by dividing the total allocation by 1.1751.

22. **NEW 2/17 If this is a bonus for all teachers, can this be prorated for part-time teachers (1/2 of the bonus amount)?**

Yes. Districts have discretion to determine which of the eligible roles receive increases and in what value, provided the full funding is used for this purpose.

23. **NEW 2/17 We have a few employees that are on the certified scale (i.e. Technology and Coordinated School Health) but are not licensed teachers nor are they instructional. Are they eligible?**

The additional salary funds are intended for the licensed instructional positions that are funded in the instructional component of the BEP and for nurses.

24. **NEW 2/17 Does this increase apply to contract nurses?**

This is a local decision. The terms of the contract would apply.



25. **NEW 2/17** If a teacher is on paid leave and there is an interim teacher in the classroom, do we pay both or just the one that is scheduled to work?

Districts have discretion to determine how to handle teachers on paid leave and interim teachers.

26. **NEW 2/17** Can we provide a bonus to support staff that have gone above and beyond using ESSER 2.0 funds?

Yes. ESSER 2.0 funds may be used to pay bonuses if the bonus is directly tied to a COVID-related activity.

27. **NEW 2/17** Can we use ESSER 2.0 funds to enable bonuses/stipends to be paid to above BEP funded and classified?

Yes. ESSER 2.0 funds may provide for bonuses/stipends to any staff provided they are tied to COVID-related response efforts.

28. **NEW 2/17** Which positions are included in teachers and other certified personnel?

All positions funded in the instructional component of the BEP are included, as well as nurses. The full list of the positions in the BEP may be accessed [here](#).

29. **NEW 2/17** Do we include LPN's?

Yes. All positions funded in the instructional component of the BEP are included, as well as nurses.

30. **NEW 2/17** Are directors of schools included?

No. These funds are intended for positions funded in the instructional component of the BEP. Directors of schools are not funded in this component.

31. **NEW 2/17** Should we include Coordinated School Health and Pre-K positions?

This is a local decision. These positions are correlated to positions funded in the instructional component of the BEP or as a nursing position and are therefore eligible for the funds.

32. **NEW 2/17** Do we record the revenue in the BEP revenue code – 46511?

Yes. Payments should be coded so that they are easily identifiable for the salary transparency survey reporting at year-end.