



**Summary:**

These questions and answers are designed to assist employees and supervisors in understanding the various compensation initiatives for the 2025–2026 school year. The effective date of this guidance is July 1, 2025, and it will be updated as necessary throughout the school year. Nothing in this document supersedes local, state, and federal law, District policy, and administrative regulations.

This document is a supplement to the main compensation web page located at [www.atlantapublicschools.us/compensation](http://www.atlantapublicschools.us/compensation) and budget commission presentations located at <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/51829>.

Please refer to the table of contents below to locate questions by topic or use the Ctrl+F command to type in and navigate to a specific keyword.

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## 2025 - 2026 COMPENSATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Board approved step increases for all employees for the 2025 – 2026 school year. This decision reflects our commitment to recognizing and rewarding the hard work and dedication of our staff. We believe that these step increases will not only acknowledge your contributions but also motivate you to continue striving for excellence in your role. Your commitment to our organization is truly valued, and we are grateful for all that you do. To provide you with more information, we have compiled a list of frequently asked questions.

### ANNUAL PAY INCREASES

1. I was paid on step 29 last school year, and I am still on step 29 this school year. Will I receive a step increase?
  - a. Annual employees who were on step 29 are eligible for a \$1,000 Max Step stipend on the July 31<sup>st</sup> paycheck.
  - b. Less-than-annual employees who were on step 29 are eligible for a \$1,000 Max Step stipend on the September 15<sup>th</sup> paycheck.
2. I am an hourly employee, and the hourly rate has changed for my position. When does the new hourly rate go into effect?
  - a. The new hourly rate goes into effect on July 1, 2025. Therefore, the earliest annual part-time/hourly employees will see a new pay increase on their paycheck on July 31<sup>st</sup>.
  - b. A less-than-annual employee will see their new hourly rate increase on their August 31<sup>st</sup> paycheck.
3. When will I see my step increase?
  - a. Annual employees (working July 1 through June 30) will receive their new rate of pay on the July 31<sup>st</sup> paycheck.
  - b. Less-than-annual employees (working mid-to-late July) will receive their new pay rate on the August 31<sup>st</sup> paycheck.
4. When will I receive a Compensation Statement?
  - a. Employees should receive a Compensation Statement from the Compensation Department before the first paycheck of the fiscal year (for annual employees) or school year (less-than-annual). The Compensation Statement will have your current pay grade and step.
  - b. If you were hired after the first paycheck for your work schedule or have submitted prior work experience, you should receive an email from [compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us) that is inclusive of your position title, pay grade, certificate level (applicable positions only), work schedule, credit awarded, salary step, and salary.



## 2025 - 2026 COMPENSATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

5. What should I do if I believe my Compensation Statement is inaccurate?
  - a. If you believe that your Compensation Statement is inaccurate, you should send an email to [compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us).
6. When do I receive my first paycheck of the school year?
  - a. For annual employees, the first paycheck for the new fiscal year is July 31<sup>st</sup>, and the last paycheck for the year is July 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. For less-than-annual employees who worked at APS the previous school year, the first paycheck for the new school year is August 31<sup>st</sup>, and the last paycheck for the school year is August 15<sup>th</sup> of the following year.
  - c. New, less-than-annual employees hired for the school year receive their first paycheck on August 15<sup>th</sup>, and the last paycheck is August 15<sup>th</sup> of the following year. If you start in the first pay period of the school year, your annual salary will be divided into 25 paychecks.
7. Can I determine my salary for the next school year by using the current salary schedule?
  - a. Salary schedules for a new school year are established in alignment with the Board's adoption of the budget.

### STIPENDS

8. Will I receive a High Poverty School stipend?
  - a. Atlanta Public Schools has concluded the use of hiring and retention stipends that were introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While these incentives played a vital role during a challenging time, the District is now shifting its focus toward more sustainable approaches, prioritizing higher base pay and long-term compensation and benefits strategies that promote employee growth, retention, and excellence.
9. Will I receive a High Needs Subject Area stipend?
  - a. Atlanta Public Schools has concluded the use of hiring and retention stipends that were introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While these incentives played a vital role during a challenging time, the District is now shifting its focus toward more sustainable approaches, prioritizing higher base pay and long-term compensation and benefits strategies that promote employee growth, retention, and excellence.
10. Do stipends and one-time payments count towards TRS retirement?
  - a. Stipends and one-time payments are not part of base pay and do not count towards TRS.
11. How are stipends identified/labeled on pay stubs?
  - a. Stipends will be listed as "Stipend Pay."

### EXPERIENCE VERIFICATIONS

#### INCOMING

12. How long do I have to submit my experience verification forms after starting a new role?
  - a. Documents must be received within 90 days from your start date to receive retro pay. Documents that are submitted after the deadline will be processed non-retroactively.



## 2025 - 2026 COMPENSATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 13.** If my previous employer does not have a record of employment or no longer exists, how can I get my years of experience verified?
- Submit a notarized letter to the Compensation Department stating pertinent information (as indicated on the Verification of Experience Instructions document) regarding your prior employment. Along with the notarized letter, W-2 forms, check stubs, or an itemized statement of earnings that would assist in verifying the employment information should be provided.
- 14.** Suppose I am applying for out-of-state reciprocity for my certification; can I use the same verification form I had to complete for the GaPSC for my previous experience?
- The GaPSC Form will be accepted; however, processing of the form may be delayed if it does not contain all the necessary information to determine if the experience is creditable for salary purposes.
- 15.** Can I get credit for my experience as a substitute employee?
- Per the Georgia State Salary Guidelines, supply/substitute teaching experience shall not be recognized for advancement on the salary schedule.
- 16.** Why didn't I get credit for every year of my experience?
- Experience must be equivalent or relevant to your current position and is awarded based on one of the following tiers:
    - Tier 1: Equivalent Functional Experience – experience and credit are granted year-for-year up to the maximum step.
    - Tier 2: Relevant Industry Experience – one year of credit is granted for every two years worked up to the maximum step.
- 17.** Once my verification forms have been submitted to and received by the APS Compensation Department, how long will it take for my verification forms to be processed?
- Verification forms for current employees are typically processed within 45 days after the Compensation Department has received them. Please note that processing times may occasionally extend beyond two pay cycles due to high volume. A member of the Compensation Department will notify you via email once the process has been completed.
- 18.** When can I expect to see any retroactive pay after my verification forms have been processed?
- If retroactive pay is due, it may take up to two pay periods before it is seen on your paycheck.



## 2025 - 2026 COMPENSATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **OUTGOING**

- 19.** How do I submit a request to verify my employment and/or income with APS?
- APS uses Verifent to verify employment and income. The company requesting the verification must submit the request on your behalf. You can access the instructions for verification requests by clicking the following link: [Employment and Experience Verification](#).
  - If your former employer is unable to submit the verification via Verifent, the form may be emailed to [experienceverifications@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:experienceverifications@atlanta.k12.ga.us).
- 20.** How long does it take APS to process my verification request once it has been received?
- Verification requests will be processed within 5 to 7 business days from the date of receipt. Please note that processing times take longer during peak season.
- 21.** How do I submit a request for my sick leave balance to be transferred to another school district?
- APS uses Verifent for sick leave transfers. The district requesting the verification must submit the request on your behalf. You can access the instructions for verification requests by clicking the following link: [Employment and Experience Verification](#). The request/transfer must occur within 1 year of separation.
- 22.** What happens to my remaining sick leave hours that cannot be transferred to another district?
- The remaining balance can be transferred to the Teacher Retirement System of Georgia (TRSGA). Visit the TRSGA website to request a form: <https://www.trsga.com/>.

### **GENERAL COMPENSATION QUESTIONS**

- 23.** How do I access the APS Compensation Page?
- You can access the APS Compensation Page by clicking the following link: [www.atlantapublicschools.us/compensation](http://www.atlantapublicschools.us/compensation) or by going to: [www.atlantapublicschools.us](http://www.atlantapublicschools.us) >>> Departments and Services Directory >>> Human Resources >>> Compensation.
- 24.** How do I determine what my pay is for the school year?
- To determine your salary for the school year, select the salary schedule that matches your pay grade.
    - Employees paid according to certificate level** – Locate the number for creditable experience years that you were awarded in the second column. The first column will indicate your Salary Step. The following columns have the GaPSC Certificate level. Go across to the column with your current certification level. That is your salary for this school year.



## 2025 - 2026 COMPENSATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Employees paid on pay grades** – Locate the number for creditable experience years that you were awarded in the second column. The first column will indicate your Salary Step. The next columns have work schedules. Find your step and go across it until you come to your work schedule. That is your salary for this school year. The last column contains your hourly rate.
- **Employees with specific pay schedules** (*Bus Drivers/Monitor, Custodian, Information Technology, Nurse, Nutrition, Paraprofessional, Safety and Security, and Transportation Fleet*) – Locate the number for creditable experience years that you were awarded in the second column. The first column will indicate your Salary Step. The rest of the columns indicate positions/pay grades. Find your step and go across until you come to your position/pay grade. That is your salary for this school year.

**25.** Do you consider my education when calculating my salary?

- a. Certified positions (i.e., Teacher, Instructional Coach, etc.) are paid based on their certificate level as determined by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). In conjunction with the certificate level, salaries are determined by the years of verified experience.
- b. Non-certified positions are determined by years of verified experience.

**26.** What do I need to do to get on the appropriate pay scale once my certificate level is updated?

- a. A copy of the upgraded certificate should be sent electronically to the Compensation Department at [compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us) for processing. An email notification will be sent once the process has been completed.

**27.** Where do I find the hourly rates of pay for secondary assignments?

- a. The hourly rates of pay can be found on Compensation's [Supplemental and Secondary Assignments](#) page, under the Salary Schedule Link >>> 2025 – 2026 Secondary Assignment, One-time Payment & Hourly Schedule.

**28.** Why doesn't my annual salary on my compensation statement match box 1 of my W-2?

- a. Your annual salary is a gross dollar amount earned before taxes and deductions are taken out. Meanwhile, your Form W-2 shows your taxable wages reported after pre-tax deductions. Pre-tax deductions, for example, include employer-provided health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, and disability insurance.
- b. Additionally, W-2s are calculated based on a calendar year (January - December), and compensation statements are for a school year.



## 2025 - 2026 COMPENSATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 29.** Why does my contract have the same salary as my current salary instead of next year's salary?
- a.** Contracts are prepared every spring during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester before the school year is complete. Experience credit (step increases) for the current school year will not be applied to employees' pay until the new school year starts. Therefore, your contract for the upcoming school year will provide your current salary.
- 30.** Who do I contact for direct deposit changes?
- a.** Payroll at (404) 802-2209 or [paydept@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:paydept@atlanta.k12.ga.us).
- 31.** Who do I contact for benefits questions?
- a.** Email [benefitsdept@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:benefitsdept@atlanta.k12.ga.us) or visit their website: <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/1198>.

### COMPENSATION DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

Compensation Team Member	Contact Information	School Support	Department Assignments
<b>Christopher Carter</b>	<a href="mailto:compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us">compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us</a>	Douglass, Mays, North Atlanta, South Atlanta clusters  BEST Academy, CSK YWLA, Hank Aaron NBA	Finance, IT, Operations
<b>Silas Cook</b>	<a href="mailto:compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us">compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us</a>	Carver, Jackson, Midtown, Therrell, and Washington clusters  ACCA, AVA, Phoenix Academy	Nutrition, Schools, Teaching and Learning,
<b>Shakita Jordan</b>	<a href="mailto:compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us">compensation@atlanta.k12.ga.us</a>		Athletics, BOE, Communications, Human Resources, Performance, Policy, Superintendent, Strategy