

# **Classroom Teacher and Other Instructional Personnel Salary Increase Allocation**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **DISTRICT'S/CHARTER'S SHARE OF RECURRING MAINTENANCE ALLOCATION**

**Q1. Can districts/charters use their allocation amount from the previous year as their maintenance allocation for 2025-26?**

A. No. Each district/charter is allocated 6.67 percent of its Base Funding from the 2025-26 Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) Conference Calculation for its 2025-26 maintenance allocation.

**Q2. What if the district's/charter's share of the maintenance allocation exceeds the cost to maintain the salary increases provided in previous years?**

A. Any remaining funds from the maintenance allocation will be combined with the district's or charter's share of the current year's growth allocation.

**Q3. What if the district's/charter's share of the maintenance allocation is not sufficient to cover the cost to maintain the salary increases provided in previous years?**

A. Other funding sources must be used to cover the shortfall. The growth allocation in 2025-26 may not be used to maintain salary increases that were provided in previous fiscal years.

**Q4. Will maintenance allocation funds be distributed to districts before plans are reviewed by the Florida Department of Education (department)?**

A. Yes. Districts will begin receiving their maintenance allocation funds with the first FEFP distribution of the year and will continue to receive them with each subsequent payment. The department will withhold growth allocation funds until the submission of a board-approved and union-ratified plan that has been determined by the department to be compliant with the law. Districts should ensure that their charter schools are receiving their appropriate share of this funding at the start of each year.

## **DISTRICT'S/CHARTER'S SHARE OF THE 2025-26 GROWTH ALLOCATION**

### **Q5. How should the growth allocation be used?**

The growth allocation, or 0.54 percent of a school district's or charter school's 2025-26 FEFP Conference Calculation Base Funding, shall be used for 1) increased personnel compensation costs, or 2) to provide salary increases to either full-time classroom teachers with at least two years of full-time teaching experience in a Florida public school and other instructional personnel as defined by s. 1012.01(2)(a)-(d), F.S.

### **Q6. What are examples of increased personnel compensation costs?**

Some districts have experienced rising costs in employee benefits as a result of the salary increases provided in past years, particularly in areas such as health insurance and retirement contributions. The portion of these increased benefit costs incurred by your district in the current fiscal year compared to the previous fiscal year may be covered using the growth allocation. These costs should be reported under the appropriate benefit categories in the plan template.

### **Q7. Why does the statute direct school districts to use Salary Increase Allocation funds to raise the minimum base salary for full-time classroom teachers, but proviso language in the 2025 General Appropriations Act says these funds cannot be used on teachers with less than two years of full-time teaching experience?**

Districts will need to rely on both the statute and the proviso language; however, when there is a conflict, the proviso will control the use of the funds. This means that, in the 2025-26 fiscal year, growth allocations may not be used to increase the minimum base salary for teachers with less than two years of full-time teaching experience in a Florida public school.

If school districts or charter schools intend to increase their minimum base salary for full-time classroom teachers, it must be done so with a combination of Salary Increase Allocation funds and other funds, where the Salary Increase Allocation funds are used only on teachers with more than two years of full-time teaching experience in a Florida public school.

For example, assume a district intends to increase the minimum base salary for all full-time classroom teachers from \$47,000 to \$47,500. There are two teachers set to make \$47,000 at the beginning of the 2025-26 fiscal year. One of those teachers (Teacher A) has been teaching in a Florida public school for 5 years and the other (Teacher B) is a brand new teacher with no prior teaching experience. In this situation, the district could provide Teacher A with a \$500 salary increase from Salary Increase Allocation funds, however the \$500 salary increase to Teacher B would need to come from another fund source other than the Salary Increase Allocation.

**Q8. Can growth allocation funds be used to provide salary increases to paraprofessionals or substitute teachers?**

A. No. These funds may only be used to provide salary increases to full-time classroom teachers and other instructional personnel as defined in s. 1012.01(2)(a)-(d), F.S.

**Q9. Can pre-kindergarten teachers be included in salary increases provided from the growth allocation?**

A. Yes, provided the teacher is categorized as a full-time classroom teacher as defined in s. 1012.01(2)(a), F.S., and provides instruction in a program funded by the FEFP. A full-time classroom teacher in a Voluntary Prekindergarten Program authorized by ss. 1002.61 or 1002.63, F.S., is eligible only if the teacher is providing exceptional education services to students with disabilities.

**UNEXPENDED FUNDS**

**Q10. Can funds be held and used for salary increases in the following fiscal year?**

A. No. Salary Increase Allocation funds are intended to be used for salary increases for eligible staff in the current fiscal year only and can only be used for expenditures incurred during that fiscal year. If there are any remaining funds at the end of the fiscal year and the district is unable to use them in accordance with their distribution plan, they should be returned to the department. However, these funds are appropriated to be used entirely for salary increases and every effort should be made to ensure that no remaining funds are available. Fund returns are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may not be approved.

**Q11. How should a charter school return any unexpended Salary Increase Allocation funds?**

A. Charter schools should return any unexpended Salary Increase Allocation funds to their sponsoring school district so that the funds may either be included in the district's plan or returned by the district to the department. See Q9 for additional information regarding remaining funds.

**ADMINISTRATION**

**Q12. What information needs to be included in a distribution plan for it to be compliant with the Salary Increase Allocation law?**

A. The department has provided the required templates to be used for school district or charter school distribution plans. Using these templates will ensure that all necessary information is included for the department to determine the plan's compliance with the law.

**Q13. Can a district or charter school use its own template for its distribution plan?**

A. No. If the provided templates are not used, the plan will need to be resubmitted.

**Q14. What reporting requirements are in place for the Salary Increase Allocation?**

A. The reporting requirements in 2025-26 remain the same as for the prior year. Districts and charter schools are required to meet the following deadlines:

- October 1, 2025 – Submit a compliant Salary Increase Allocation distribution plan to the department.
- August 1, 2026 – Submit a final expenditure report and salary schedule to the department.

**Q15. What if a district/charter school’s plan is not finalized by the October 1 due date?**

A. If a plan has not been both approved by the district school board (or charter governing board) and ratified by the teacher’s union, a statement must be submitted to the department detailing what steps have been taken in this process and when the entity anticipates the submission of a board-approved and ratified plan. Failure to submit a school board-approved plan by the October 1 deadline may result in a request for the superintendent and school board chair to attend a State Board of Education meeting to explain the delay.

**Q16. Can charter schools combine allocations for the purpose of submitting a single distribution plan?**

A. Yes, provided the charter schools are in the same school district and operated by the same charter management company.

**Q17. If a charter management company has grouped several of its charter schools’ plans in the same district together, should a plan for each school be submitted?**

A. No, only one version of the plan is necessary. The provided plan template will allow the management company to include the school numbers grouped together in that plan.

**Q18. Should a staff member who was terminated or voluntarily separated from the district or school be entitled to back pay of salary increases?**

A. Yes. A staff member would be entitled to the portion of the salary increase he or she would have received if the raise had gone into effect at the beginning of the year. For example, a staff member who was earning \$40,000 before the Salary Increase Allocation increase and who was entitled to \$45,000 after the Salary Increase Allocation increase, but was either terminated or resigned after the first three months of the year, would be entitled to a payment of \$1,250 (assuming that this staff member was being paid over a 12-month period).

**Q19. How should the salary increases be distributed to teachers and instructional staff if the funds were withheld until later in the year?**

A. Once Salary Increase Allocation funds are released to a district or charter school, it is recommended that the district or charter school catch up the salaries to the point where they would have been if the funds had been available at the beginning of the year.

**Q20. Can school districts or charters recalculate their allocation throughout the year?**

A. Salary Increase Allocation amounts are established in the 2025-26 FEFP Conference Calculation. The department recommends that school districts not change allocations for charter schools after this point.

**Q21. How should school districts determine when to send growth allocation funds to their charter schools?**

A. It is at the district's discretion whether to send growth allocation funds to a charter school before or after its plan has been submitted and determined to be compliant with the law. However, maintenance allocation funds should be distributed from the first payment of the year throughout the remainder of the fiscal year, as those funds are not contingent upon the submission of a distribution plan.

**Q22. What if the district is ready to submit its approved plan, but only some or none of the approved charter school plans have been submitted to the district?**

A. The district should submit its district school board-approved Salary Increase Allocation plan to the department. As the district receives the governing board-approved Salary Increase Allocation plans from its charter schools, it should submit them immediately to the department.

**Q23. What if the charter school submitted an approved plan to the school district, but the district is not ready to submit its Salary Increase Allocation plan?**

A. The district should submit approved charter school plans to the department as soon as they are received, regardless of the status of the district's Salary Increase Allocation plan.

**Q24. After receipt of the growth funds from the district, are charter schools required to pay teachers?**

A. Charter schools are encouraged to pay the growth funds only after notification from the department that the charter school's plan is compliant with law. In the event that a school begins implementing a plan that is not compliant, it is the charter school's responsibility to recover any funds from its teachers/staff after it amends its plan to comply with the law.

**Q25. How should districts/charters determine if a teacher is eligible for funds from the growth allocation.**

A. It is up to each school district and charter school to establish a policy that allows them to comply with all requirements set in law.

## **COMMONLY USED TERMINOLOGY**

Total Allocation – The total amount of a district or charter school’s Salary Increase Allocation, equivalent to 7.21 percent of Base Funding.

Maintenance Allocation – Portion of the district or charter school’s Salary Increase Allocation for the purposes of maintaining prior year increases, equivalent to 6.67 percent of Base Funding.

Growth Allocation – Portion of the district or charter school’s Salary Increase Allocation for the purposes of providing salary increases to eligible staff in the current year, equivalent to 0.54 percent of Base Funding.

Maintenance Cost – The amount necessary for a district or charter school to maintain the salary increases provided in previous years. This cost may exceed or be less than the entity’s maintenance allocation.