

All about teacher pay



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It's budget season and without full funding from Mecklenburg County, CMS will be making some difficult budget cuts. The CMS budget is complicated. CMS receives funding from multiple sources, each with different rules. CMS employs over 9,000 certified teachers. Understanding how they are paid sheds some light on the CMS budget and our county budget request. So...

More than you ever wanted to know about CMS teacher pay

Who sets the teacher pay scale?

The NC General Assembly establishes the state budget that defines teacher pay scales. These pay scales are the same across the state. Here's a [sample pay scale](#) for certified teachers.

Teachers get their state rate - plus, if the county funds it, a little extra. This extra pay is called the local supplement.

Why a supplement? Cost of living varies widely. So CMS uses county dollars to supplement teacher pay. The average teacher supplement is about \$7,000/year. When the CMS budget request includes a 10% increase in the county supplement, that represents an average increase of \$70/month over 10 months.

Where do the dollars come from?

All 9,000 teachers in CMS receive paychecks from CMS. Salary dollars

originate primarily from three sources – state, federal and county funds.

Whatever the funding source, all teachers receive base pay + supplement and the same benefits.

- **State dollars** provide the base pay for most CMS teachers
- **Federal dollars** provide the base pay + supplement for staff – for example additional teachers in Title 1 schools (which serve lots of low-income families)
- **County dollars** provide the base pay + supplement for extra teachers in high-needs school (where there is concentrated poverty, many English language learners, etc.) as well as the supplement for teachers paid with state funds.

Teacher allotments or dollars?

This gets a little complicated but hang in there.

- The state calculates the NUMBER of classroom teachers it will allot to CMS based on student enrollment. Whatever that number is, that's how MANY teachers CMS can pay with state dollars. It doesn't matter how high or low on the pay scale, the state will pay for the position. Since the state allocates "positions" rather than dollars for teachers, the district receives no financial benefit nor obligation for salaries varying from an average salary estimate by the state.
- County and federal allocations, though, are for "dollar amounts," not for any specific numbers of teachers.

Why is this important?

CMS wants to fund as **many** teachers as possible. To maximize our dollars, CMS pays the teachers with the **highest salaries** in state allotted positions. This allows us to stretch county and federal dollars to hire more staff.

Why should CMS match the pay raises granted by the state for local and federally funded teachers?

It's the only fair thing to do. Remember that we use our state allotment for our highest paid teachers. If we didn't match the pay increases for all, only the highest paid teachers would get raises.

What happens when the state health insurance and pension costs increase?

When benefit costs increase, those expenses are covered in the **state** allotted positions. However, CMS must increase the budget to cover those expenses in **county** and **federally** funded positions. If we can't increase the budget, one

alternative is to hire fewer teachers and reallocate the remaining dollars to cover the increase cost of benefits.

What happens if the state raises teacher pay?

Timing is everything. The planning for the upcoming CMS budget year (starts July 1) began last fall. When CMS submitted its budget request to the county, it included funds to match the announced state pay raises for locally funded positions. There is currently talk in the legislature of increasing educator pay. While this is certainly needed, CMS may face a significant challenge in identifying funds to match the state pay raises for our locally funded positions.

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