

Board Policy #: [INSERT]
Adopted/Ratified: 02/22/2022
Revision Date: 03/22/2022



Compensation Policy

Effective July 1, 2022

Dedication to Non-discrimination

It is the policy of The Cottonwood School (“Cottonwood” or the “School”) to create an environment in the hiring and compensation processes that is beyond reproach. We do not discriminate on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, such as hair texture and hairstyle, including but not limited to braids, locks, and twists); color; gender (including gender identity, gender expression, and transgender identity, whether or not the employee is transitioning or has transitioned); sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and medical conditions related to such); sex stereotype (including an assumption about a person’s appearance or behavior, gender roles, gender expression, or gender identity, or about an individual’s ability or inability to perform certain kinds of work based on a myth, social expectation, or generalization about the individual’s sex); religious creed (including religious dress and grooming practices); marital/registered domestic partner status; age (forty (40) and over); national origin or ancestry (including native language spoken and possession of a driver’s license issued to persons unable to prove their presence in the U.S. is authorized by federal law); physical or mental disability (including HIV and AIDS); medical condition (including cancer and genetic characteristics); taking of a leave of absence pursuant to the Family Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”), Pregnancy Disability Leave (“PDL”) law, Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), California Family Rights Act (“CFRA”), the Fair Employment and Housing Act (“FEHA”), or laws related to domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking; genetic information; sexual orientation; military and veteran status; or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. Our practices reflect our belief that we are treated with the same set of rules, evenly applied, and carefully scrutinized to ensure impartiality.

Important Information

This summary does not alter the at-will nature of the employment relationship, and nothing in this summary shall limit the School’s right to terminate employment at-will or limit the School’s right to transfer, demote, suspend, administer discipline, and change the terms and conditions of employment at its sole discretion. This includes, without limitation, the School’s right to modify the compensation of any employee at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause.

The School Board adopts this compensation schedule through June 2023 only. Circumstances may change, and this compensation schedule may be subject to revision if budgetary circumstances change. Past or future compensation cannot be calculated, assumed, or predicted on the basis of this schedule or any information contained herein. Compensation of any employee may also be adjusted at any time based on operational needs of the School.

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The Executive Director shall recommend compensation for all School staff, consistent with the budget approved by the School Board. An employee's regular compensation is paid on a semi-monthly basis in accordance with the School's payroll practices and policies.

The School reserves the right to change, suspend, revoke, terminate, or supersede provisions of this compensation schedule at any time. To the extent any of the provisions herein differ from the terms of an employee's employment agreement as they relate to changes in compensation, the terms of the agreement shall prevail.

Compensation Philosophy

A compensation philosophy is a statement that defines what an organization offers and chooses to reward via its compensation system. The School's compensation philosophy places emphasis on equity, transparency, excellence, and commitment. The following five key values are the foundation for all School compensation structures and practices.

We offer...

- Comprehensive compensation packages for all staff, including base salary and benefits. Certain employees may also be eligible for stipends, as set forth herein.
- A dynamic culture and vibrant community of colleagues united by a shared dedication to students, a commitment to innovation, and a strong growth mindset.
- Unique career pathways, growth and development opportunities, and leadership roles that encourage staff to challenge themselves.
- Equitable compensation, regardless of any protected consideration under federal, state, or local laws, ordinances, or regulations.
- A transparent and clearly communicated compensation system, so that staff understands what factors may determine individual compensation and how and when potential changes to compensation will occur.

We recognize and reward...

- Exceptional performance and contributions that enable excellent student outcomes.
- Commitment of staff who contribute to the long-term success of our students and our organization.

For teachers...

- Given the role they play in providing educational services, teachers are particularly critical to the success of our mission. As such, we offer teacher compensation to attract and retain talented educators, and we especially recognize and reward:
- Exceptional teacher performance that leads to growth and excellence for students
- Commitment of teachers who develop deep, high-quality educational experience (within or outside of the School) and assume critical leadership responsibilities.

CERTIFICATED COMPENSATION

Teacher Definition

For purposes of this schedule, a Teacher is defined as a person who has a valid credential or

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certificate that allows them to teach a specific subject matter or specifically authorizes them to provide services in special education. Teachers may also include employees who are noncredentialed if they possess a valid Certificate of Clearance and obtain a credential by July 1, 2025, as required by applicable laws.

Salary Placement Guidelines

Upon hire, each employee's salary placement will be calculated based on his or her cumulative years of experience and postgraduate units earned. If the placement on the salary scale is below the individual's current salary, the Executive Director, at his or her sole discretion, may exceed that existing salary by placing the individual on the next level above their current salary. It should not be assumed, however, that this will happen for all potential employees. The starting salary of one employee may exceed the salary of another in the same position based on education and years of experience. Determinations of creditable years of experience is a matter within the sole and unreviewable discretion of the Executive Director, based on compliance with the below factors:

Creditable Years of Experience

The School has the option to grant one (1) year for each one (1) year of approved creditable teaching or for relevant professional experience up to five years.

One (1) year of creditable professional or teaching experience will be granted for full-time employment, which is employment for 100% of an institution's normal work schedule during the school year

A partial year of creditable professional or teaching experience can be granted for up to a year of part-time employment, which is less than 100% of an institution's normal work schedule during the school year if the percentage of the year worked is at least 60%. Creditable professional, or teaching experience may be earned in:

- California and US public, charter, and private elementary and secondary schools
- Accredited foreign public, charter, and private elementary and secondary schools
- California, US, and foreign accredited universities and colleges
- Non-public special education contract schools for special education teachers
- Other regionally accredited educational institutions
- Creditable teaching experience is experienced as a teacher in one of the institutions outlined above.

Credential/Certification

Teachers holding a valid and active credential (i.e., preliminary, clear, lifetime) California teaching certificate at the time of hiring/rehiring will generally be compensated in accordance with the applicable teacher salary table (B Basis, C Basis, or Special Education) for certificated teachers.

The School does not hire teachers with a bachelor's degree who do not hold a clear teaching credential. However, it is possible this could happen in hard-to-fill positions. Staff holding an alternative certification (intern, emergency, or preliminary credential) are rated on the same

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salary teacher table as certificated teachers.

A teacher is eligible to advance to the proper pay scale level once they meet the requirement for that specific pay scale level and group based on their creditable years of service and post BA units, if applicable.

- For any given school year, teachers must submit any successfully completed post-BA units no later than October 31 in order for the units to apply to the teacher's salary in that school year. Any proof of successfully completed post-BA units submitted to the School after October 31 will not result in an adjustment to compensation until the following school year.
- Any increase in pay resulting from an advancement on the pay scale based on the successful completion of post-BA units will not take effect until after the School's receipt of sufficient documentation supporting the advancement. Pay increases for post-BA units will not be paid until proof of those units has been submitted. Pay may be retroactive to the first of the month in which the units were provided to HR for analysis.
- Teachers who hold a Doctoral degree are entitled to additional compensation of \$5000 stipend in addition to their current annual salary on the Salary Table. The stipend is not included in their annual salary and may be processed separately from regular earnings.
- National Board Certificate (NBC) holders are entitled to a \$2,500 stipend in addition to their current annual salary on the Salary.
- Stipends will be paid as set forth in the Stipend Chart below.

Supplemental Duty Stipends

- Stipends are assigned and approved by the Executive Director or designee at the beginning of the school year or semester or as otherwise noted in the chart below.
- Teachers who perform the supplemental duties outlined in the stipend chart of the salary schedule are eligible to receive the corresponding stipends as indicated and only if assigned/awarded to the teacher by the Executive Director or designee. The number of stipends awarded under each category and/or the periods of service during the school year are at the sole discretion of the Executive Director or designee.
- Supplemental duty stipends are authorized for the specific year assigned and are not renewed for future years unless specifically authorized for those years. This means additional duties such as New Teacher Trainer, SPED Lead Teacher, etc., are assigned on a year-by-year basis and are not guaranteed responsibilities that carry over from year to year.
- Supplemental pay will cease when there is no need for the duty, the employee becomes ineligible or as otherwise determined in the sole discretion of the School.
- The School, in its sole discretion, may choose not to offer certain stipends.
- Stipend amounts and requirements will be reviewed periodically and may be modified from time to time at the sole discretion of the School.
- Supplemental duty stipends are prorated and will be paid as set forth in the below Stipend Chart once the Supplemental duty has started.

Part-time Teachers

- Part-time/Full-time Status: Compensation for part-time teachers is outlined in the salary information below. Estimated hours for part-time teachers each week includes a maximum of ten (10) hours per week for approved non-instructional activities (recruiting, planning, grading, parent conferences, etc.) and one (1) additional hour per week per enrolled student. This allotted time should be sufficient to complete each part-time teacher's duties. Part-time teachers who require additional hours to complete job duties must reach out to the supervisor for written permission before working such time. All time worked will be compensated at the part-time teacher's hourly rate or overtime if applicable. Part-time teachers will work 15-20 hours in the three (3) weeks prior to the start of the school year in preparation for the start of the instructional year. This includes mandatory training and meetings. They will log these hours in the timekeeping system as they do their teaching hours. This time will be in addition to typical compensation for their new school year teaching responsibilities.
- Part-time teachers must accurately record and timely submit records of all time worked and observe all lunch and rest breaks as outlined in the School's employee handbook. Part-time employees may not work overtime (i.e., over 8 hours in a workday or 40 hours per workweek) without written authorization from their direct supervisor.
- When a caseload of 20 students is reached, employees may be rated in and placed on a salary table and given health care benefits contingent upon the teacher's expected maintenance of a caseload at the norm of 28 students for full-time teachers. Carrying a caseload of less than 28 students over a course of three (3) consecutive months may result in a return to part-time status.

CLASSIFIED COMPENSATION

Experience and Placement

Each classified employee will be placed on the salary schedule based on a number of factors including the typical rate paid for similar types of work at the time of hire as determined by comparisons with like positions in similar schools.

Role/Salary Placements

All positions are classified according to the corresponding role and/or salary placements based on the required set of skills, education, effort, and responsibility of the job assignment as indicated in the specific job description. All positions may be reclassified as necessary by the Executive Director or designee. Some hard-to-staff positions may be compensated out of the salary schedule as approved by the Executive Director.

Advancements on Pay Scale

An advancement on the pay scale is the placement of an employee from a position in a lower salary placement to a position in a higher salary placement and will be determined on the same basis and factors articulated herein.

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Lateral Transfer

A lateral transfer is the movement of an employee from one position to another within the same salary placement. The employee may continue to progress in the same salary placement as experience in the position is accumulated. Prior experience will not be re-evaluated for purposes of placement or advancement in the new salary placement.

Partial Assignments

In cases where a classified employee has been given multiple assignments (e.g., a SPED coordinator with partial ESL duties), the employee will be placed on the salary schedule (or salary placement) with the higher salary.

Reassignments

Employees approved to voluntarily transfer to a position in a lower placement on the salary scale, if applicable, will be placed in the new salary placement, and the salary will be calculated as it is in the new placement or schedule. When an employee is reassigned for any reason to a position in a lower salary placement, the employee's salary will be lowered during the next payroll cycle, or when determined by the Executive Director to avoid disruption so long as it is not earlier than the next payroll period.

Rehires

A former employee who returns to a position similar to the role held prior to separation will be placed on the salary scale as follows:

- The converted grade and step of individuals who separated employment will be identified for appropriate entry placement on the salary scale.
- All applicable work experience earned outside of The Cottonwood Schools, subsequent to separation, may be identified and used for credit as equivalent experience in accordance with the creditable years of service as described herein.