

## **Frequently Asked Questions about salary requirements for Georgia's Pre-K Teachers**

*This document was designed to support teachers in understanding the changes to salary and compensation for lead and assistant teachers beginning in school year 2016 -2017. Please note this document is to provide guidance only. Specific salary questions and employee policy should be directed to the teacher's employer.*

### **General Budget Questions:**

#### **Where can I find more information on teacher credential requirements for Georgia's Pre-K Lead and Assistant teachers?**

- To find specific information on lead teacher credentials, refer to sections 12.3 – 12.5 in Georgia's Pre-K Program 2016 – 2017 School Year Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines. For information specific to assistant lead teacher, credentials refer to section 13.3

#### **Where can I find information pertaining to teacher salary for Georgia's Pre-K Lead and Assistant teachers?**

- For specific information on lead teacher salaries, refer to section 12. 6 – 12.8 in Georgia's Pre-K Program 2016 – 2017 School Year Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines. For assistant teacher salary requirements, refer to section 13.4 in Pre-K Guidelines.

#### **If a Pre-K teacher is already paid above the salary minimum, is the program required to increase lead or assistant teacher salary?**

- To meet the grant budget requirements, a Pre-K program must meet the minimum salary requirements for each lead and assistant teacher. For lead teachers, the requirement is 90% of the individual teacher's base salary and 100% of the individual teacher's supplemental compensation. Assistant teacher salary is paid at a rate of \$15,561.66 regardless of years of experience. For assistant teachers, the requirement is 100% of the salary.

#### **Are Pre-K programs required to provide benefits to Pre-K teachers?**

- DECAL does not require Pre-K programs to provide benefits to teachers; however, the funding formula does allocate benefit funds to programs. Examples of benefits include health insurance, life insurance, flexible benefits such as dental and vision, dependent child care and the employer's portion of federal and state taxes.

### **Lead Teacher Questions:**

#### **How do the Pre-K budget changes impact lead teacher salary?**

- Beginning in the 2016 -2017 school year, the lead teacher salary will have two components: base salary and supplemental compensation. Base salary is based on the teacher's verified credential(s). Supplemental compensation is based on the teacher's creditable years of experience.
  - **Base Salary:** DECAL requires Pre-K providers to pay lead teachers a minimum base salary based on the teacher's verified credentials. Providers are required to pay lead teachers a minimum of 90% of the total salary funded by Bright from the Start. Salaries are negotiated between the provider and the teacher. Providers have the ability to set base salary levels as long as the minimum salary requirement is met.

- **Supplemental Compensation:** DECAL will provide supplemental compensation for all lead teachers. Supplemental compensation includes a 3% increase in base salary for each two years of creditable years of experience up to 20 years. Supplemental compensation is cumulative and is based on the teacher's history as a Georgia's Pre-K lead teacher and/or history as a certified lead teacher in a K-12 public school. Providers are required to pay teachers 100% of supplemental compensation. This supplement should be part of the lead teacher's salary and should be paid in a manner consistent with the base salary (weekly, monthly, etc.). The supplement may not be used as a salary bonus. It is not acceptable to hold the salary supplement and pay mid-year or at the completion of the school year.

#### **What are *Creditable Years of Experience*?**

- For Georgia's Pre-K Program, Creditable Years of Experience are defined as all years taught as a lead teacher in a Georgia's Pre-K Program (public or private) with an approved credential and/or all years taught as a certified lead teacher in a K-12 public school. A teacher must have taught for at least 6 months of the school year (60% of the year) to receive credit for one full year.

#### **What if the lead teacher did not work a full year in Georgia's Pre-K and/or a full year as a certified teacher in a K-12 public school? Does any time worked count toward Creditable Years of Experience?**

- To receive credit for a year, the lead teacher must have worked at least 6 months of the school year (60%) to receive a *Creditable Year of Experience*.

#### **What if the years taught in Georgia's Pre-K and/or a K-12 public school were not consecutive? If a teacher left and then came back, does *Creditable Years of Experience* start over?**

- *Creditable years of experience* do not have to be consecutive.

#### **If a teacher taught in a public school in another state, do those years count toward *Creditable Years of Experience*?**

- Years of experience taught in another state will count toward *creditable years of experience* if the teacher held a valid, in-field state education certificate related to the field of employment and was under contract during the period in which the experience was earned.

#### **How will *Creditable Years of Experience* be determined and who will be responsible for verification?**

- Programs will be responsible for developing written processes and/or policies regarding verification of *Creditable Years of Experience* for their program. Teachers are responsible for providing directors with information/documents to verify their teaching experience. Teacher contracts, PANDA roster information, and teacher history data are examples of what can be used to verify a teacher's creditable years of experience. Bright from the Start will conduct audits and reviews to verify creditable years of experience reported by grantees.

**When determining *Creditable Years of Experience*, should programs only count the years the teacher worked at their present program?**

- When determining a teacher's creditable years of experience, a program should count the years at their program as well as the years the teacher taught in another Georgia's Pre-K Program (public or private) with an approved credential and/or all the years taught as a certified teacher in a K-12 public school.

**What is the difference between a Certified Level 4 and a Certified Level 5?**

- Teachers at Level 4 hold a minimum of a Bachelor's degree and have completed requirements for Georgia teacher certification. Teachers at Level 5 hold a minimum of a Master's degree and have completed requirements for Georgia teacher certification.

**If a teacher has a Master's degree but does not hold Level 5 certification, does that teacher qualify for the Level 5 salary?**

- A teacher with a Master's degree but not a Level 5 certification does not qualify for the Level 5 certification salary. To qualify for the Certified Level 5 (Master's), the teacher must hold Level 5 certification.

**My program already receives a Training & Experience (T & E) supplement for my teaching experience prior to the 2011 – 2012 school year. My T & E was capped at the end of the 2010 – 2011 school year. Will my program continue receiving a T & E supplement for me? Am I eligible for the new supplemental compensation?**

- Public school grantees with Pre-K lead teachers that are currently receiving a capped T & E supplement will continue receiving the T & E supplement for those teachers. These teachers are eligible for the new supplemental compensation. However, because they have already been compensated for previous years taught (T & E compensation), the new model will apply to their history after the 2010-2011 school year.

**If a teacher has a Level 6 certification, at what level will they be paid?**

- Teachers with Level 6 certification (Specialist) will be paid at the Certified Level 5 (Master's). Teachers with a Level 7 (Doctorate) will be paid at the Certified Level 5 (Master's).

**How can lead teachers determine an estimate for their 2016 – 2017 salary?**

- The lead teacher salary estimator found on the Pre-K website under Pre-K Updates is a tool designed to help programs estimate an individual lead teacher's salary. Teachers or directors can input the teacher's information and receive an estimate of the teacher's salary. The estimator is not intended to provide an exact salary amount.