

MELROSE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Melrose, Massachusetts

**PROFESSIONAL UPGRADE PROCESS FOR TEACHERS**

**Commonly Asked Questions**

**What are teacher upgrades?** The Melrose Public Schools professional upgrade process serves several purposes. It is a tool to help you organize records of your professional activities, college courses, and seminars on a yearly basis. It can help to make your state re-certification process easier, as many of these credits can go toward state re-certification. At the Melrose School District level, the accumulation of relevant college credits and Professional Development Points contributes to salary increases. Salary increases are granted at Bachelor's, BA15, BA60/MA, M15, MA30, MA45, MA60; and when a teacher attains Doctoral status.

**Do I need prior approval?** The Melrose School Department offers professional growth and enrichment opportunities at the school and district level. These "in-house" programs do **NOT** require pre-approval forms. In-house programs have been approved by Administration.

Outside seminars and college courses of study, must be pre-approved by both the School Principal and Superintendent. A Grade of "B" or better is required for upgrade credit.

***NOTE: Course Approvals/Tuition Reimbursements – Please see Professional Development Guidelines and Updated Forms for information. A copy of the signed Course Approval form should be included with your completed upgrade submission form.***

**How do in-service programs work?** Contents of all in-service ("in-house") programs are approved by the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of PPS and Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning. PDPs are determined by the number of hours the program runs. During the class, an attendance sheet will be available for participants to sign. Following the class, the Curriculum Office will use this list to prepare Certificates of Completion which will be available on ASPEN. Teachers are responsible for their own certificates until the yearly upgrade process, when they are submitted for credit. PDPs issued by Melrose Public Schools or a print out of your ASPEN page are accepted as proof.

**When do the upgrades take place?** Once a year, usually in May, a form listing your current standing will be sent to teaching staff. Completed submission forms (found on the Melrose Schools website under STAFF – see *Professional Development Guidelines and Updated Forms*) This should be returned to the Administrative Office **before** June 30th. These are processed over the summer and early fall. An extended deadline of September 12th is available in two circumstances: All courses must be **completed** by June 30<sup>th</sup> AND **listed** on the Professional Upgrade Submission form. **Grades** from courses or transcripts that will enable a teacher to go from Bachelor to Masters level may be added to your submission package up to Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> **All courses or transcripts should be finished by June . No course work completed after June 30<sup>th</sup> will be accepted for this year's upgrade.** Salary upgrade adjustments will be made for all staff at the same time. **Reminder:** Even though you do not receive a certificate or degree until the summer, you must list this course/certificate/degree on your Upgrade Submission Form. Please list all PDPs from any summer institute and pdps taken prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> on the submission form also.

**How do I submit activities for credit?**

**Keep all certificates of completion, and course transcripts until the yearly upgrade time.** When submitting programs for credit, **please** sort them in **chronological order** and list them in this order on the Upgrade Submission Form. This helps to avoid duplications. Attach copies of transcripts and approved PDP certificates for each submission in the same order as listed. Please see the Curriculum Office if you have not received a PDP certificate for an in-house program. If your college is unable to provide the official transcripts by September 12th, please submit the transcript for credit with next year's upgrade. No credits will be given without the proper certificates or copies of official transcripts attached.

**If you expect to receive your degree (in hand) by Sept. 12, please note “NEW Master’s Degree” - on your submission form.**

**Can I submit courses taken prior to my official start date at the Melrose Public Schools?**

**No.** Previous college degrees and experience are taken into consideration at your time of hire and are reflected in your hire step.

**What happens when I receive my Master’s Degree?** Submit your transcript with the regular upgrade package in June. Please note the Master’s Degree upgrade on form. (If there is a delay in receiving this transcript, you will be allowed an extension until Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> for the transcript.) Your professional status will go to M-0 and new credits will be added after that.

**Should I send in certificates as soon as I receive them?** **No!** Please hold your certificates and transcripts until the yearly update. (Please send in copies. Keep originals for your own files.) **Any credits you receive after our submission deadline of Friday, June 30th should be held in your own file until the next year’s upgrade process.**

**How are Credits Counted?**

*Some examples:*

*College courses: 3 credits /45 PDPs, 1 credit/15 PDPs. Copy of official transcript must be submitted.*

*In-Service PDP certificate of completion issued by Asst. Superintendent of Teaching & Learning to attendees. Number of PDPs to be determined by the Superintendent’s Office and Asst. Superintendent of Teaching & Learning.*

<i>*Cooperating Teacher</i>	<i>15 PDPs</i>	<i>Certificate must be submitted</i>
<i>*Peer Assistance/Review</i>	<i>15 PDPs</i>	<i>“</i>
<i>*Mentoring</i>	<i>15 PDPs</i>	<i>“</i>

***\*These and other examples are listed in the Recertification Guidelines for Mass. Educators, which is available from the Department of Education.***

**What happens after the forms are submitted?** All submissions are reviewed by the Personnel Secretary (Julia Anderson). Submissions should be listed in chronological order with appropriate certificates/ASPEN page attached. When credits have been calculated and certificates verified, a letter will be sent to you (late Autumn) notifying you of any change in professional status. A list is submitted to Marianne Farrell, Director of Finance and Administrative Affairs for determination of salary increases. **Salary increases are awarded after all teachers’ files have been reviewed.**

**How are pay rates and salary increases determined?** When school starts in September, a teacher’s salary is paid according to the teachers’ contract and your “step” level, which reflects years of service. Another salary adjustment is made following the upgrade process, if applicable. This adjustment is based on new professional standings and is paid retroactive to first paycheck. Any other stipends or salary adjustments are according to teachers’ contract.

**Are salary steps and credits the same thing?** No. Salary steps are determined by the number of years a teacher is employed at the Melrose Public Schools. Sometimes a teacher is hired at a higher step due to previous experience. Professional credits are determined by activities that a teacher pursues, such as post-graduate courses and professional seminars. For example, a teacher’s standing might be B-21 Step 4, meaning Bachelor’s degree, 21 professional credits, and four years of employment.

**If I submit a transcript for tuition reimbursement, does that automatically count toward professional upgrade?**

No. Tuition reimbursements will be handled through the Business Office. Another copy of the transcript will need to be submitted with your upgrade package, as well as a copy of the course approval. (A grade of “B” or better is required.)

**\*As a reminder, please keep copies of supporting documents for your own file.**