LIFT

Leadership Initiative For Teachers

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2026
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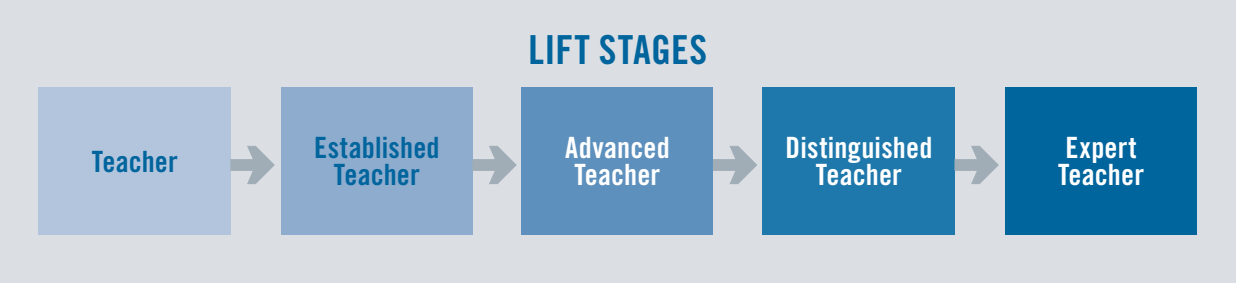
Introduction to LIFT

Traditionally, many teachers have found that the only way to advance in their careers is to leave the classroom. The Leadership Initiative for Teachers (LIFT) changes that.

LIFT is a five-stage career ladder that provides high-performing teachers with opportunities for advancement inside the classroom, as well as additional responsibility and increased recognition and compensation.

At its core, LIFT is about honoring teachers as professionals, and making DCPS a place where teachers at any point in their careers can continue to learn and grow in an environment where they are respected and appreciated.



LIFT Goals

Retain Top Performers

As teachers advance up the LIFT ladder, they will become eligible for additional career and leadership opportunities that will not require them to stop teaching. In this way, LIFT allows teachers to plan a long and rewarding career in DCPS, filled with new challenges and opportunities for growth.

Reward Experience

LIFT highlights the achievements of successful teachers who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to DCPS. The highest stage of the LIFT ladder is reserved for teachers who have dedicated many years to the district.

Broaden Recognition

LIFT honors and rewards not only Highly Effective teachers, but also those who have earned Effective ratings. These educators will be recognized for their performance, becoming eligible for additional compensation and, for those who qualify, differentiated observations.

Increase Career Stability

Teachers can only advance further on the LIFT ladder — they cannot move backwards. This aspect of LIFT brings an important level of stability to a teacher's career in DCPS.

Support for LIFT

Hundreds of teachers, school leaders, central office staff members, and other DCPS educators contributed to the development of LIFT during numerous focus groups and task force meetings. In addition, LIFT Ambassadors in each school introduced the career ladder to their colleagues and gathered feedback through focus groups and surveys. LIFT Ambassadors and their colleagues were instrumental in recommending improvements to LIFT, and we are deeply grateful for their input.

Numerous external sources were also consulted during the design process, including:

- Alliance for Excellent Education: *What Keeps Good Teachers in the Classroom? Understanding and Reducing Teacher Turnover*
- Achievement First: *Teacher Career Pathway*
- Aspire Public Schools: *The College Ready Promise – Aspire Teacher Guidebook*
- Department of Education: *RESPECT Project (Recognizing Educational Success, Professional Excellence and Collaborative Teaching)*
- National Education Association: *Three-Point Plan for Education Reform* and *Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching*
- Susan Moore Johnson and the Harvard Graduate School of Education Project on the Next Generation of Teachers: *Who Stays in Teaching and Why*
- TAP: *The System for Teacher and Student Advancement*
- Teach Plus: *Building a Teaching Profession that Recognizes Excellence: Reimagining the Step-and-Lane Pay Scale*
- TNTP: *The Irreplaceables: Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America's Urban Schools*
- YES Prep: *Continuum*

National Support for Teacher Career Ladders

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

"We need a different career continuum, one that places teaching at the top, [and] creates a career progression that supports teachers as they become increasingly expert... As teachers gain expertise, they should have the opportunity to move into leadership roles associated with their knowledge and skills. In addition to the tremendous benefits for beginning teachers, for example, mentoring programs also offer career advancement opportunities for teachers."

— Barack Obama, Former President of the United States

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

"Our goal is to support teachers in rebuilding their profession — and to elevate the teacher voice in shaping federal, state, and local education policy. Our larger goal is to make teaching not only America's most important profession — [but also] America's most respected profession."

— Arne Duncan, Former U.S. Secretary of Education

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

"Currently our education system acts as if a teacher is a teacher is a teacher. But teachers are not all the same; they have different interests, knowledge, skills, weaknesses, and strengths. They need more than a one-size-fits-all career."

— Dennis Van Roekel, Former NEA President

Basic Keywords

LIFT Stages: Overview

Teacher

Some teachers at this stage have prior experience in DCPS, while others are new to the teaching profession and have just successfully completed DCPS's rigorous and competitive selection process. Whether new or returning, all teachers at this stage are committed to leading their students to ambitious achievement and to continuing to refine their instructional practices.

Established Teacher

These teachers have proven their effective teaching skills and have led their students to solid achievement gains. Established Teachers also demonstrate an ongoing commitment to their own learning and improvement, and may begin to take on leadership roles within their schools or for the district.

Advanced Teacher

Teachers at this stage have been among the district's most effective for several years, and their students continually demonstrate strong achievement results. Many of these teachers have also taken on leadership roles within their schools or for the district.

Distinguished Teacher

Teachers at this stage are some of the district's top performers and have a record of exemplary student achievement. These teachers have consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of instructional best practices and may serve as models to colleagues who are still developing their skills.

Expert Teacher

Teachers at this stage are masters of their craft, honed in DCPS classrooms over the course of many years. Their students demonstrate exceptional learning gains each year, regularly exceeding even the most ambitious achievement goals. Many of these teachers also serve in various leadership roles within their schools and extend their reach by developing curriculum, mentoring colleagues, and participating in fellowships.

LIFT Opportunities and Benefits at a Glance

As teachers advance up the LIFT ladder, they will become eligible for an increasing number of opportunities and benefits, including differentiated observations, additional compensation, and a variety of leadership opportunities.

	TEACHER	ESTABLISHED TEACHER
IMPACT Observations	Two formal observations each year.	Two formal observations each year.
Compensation	Normal compensation	Normal compensation
Sample Leadership Opportunities**	**Positions:** Central Office opportunities, Chancellor's Teachers' Cabinet, DCPS Summer School, School Strategy & Logistics **Fellowships and Grants:** DonorsChoose.org, Fund for Teachers, Hope Street Group National Teacher Fellowship, Teacher Ranger Teachers, Washington Teachers' Union Teacher Leaders Program	*Established Teachers are eligible for all opportunities at the Teacher stage, as well as the following opportunities:* **Positions:** Common Core Reading Corps, Curriculum Writer, Early Childhood Grade Level Chair, Teacher Selection Ambassador **School Point of Contact Positions:** ACCESS Chair, Burst, Read 180 **Fellowships and Grants:** Teach Plus Policy Fellowship, Teachers for Global Classrooms Grant

† Only teachers in high-poverty schools will be eligible for additional compensation in the form of base salary increases. More than 75% of DCPS teachers work in high-poverty schools and will be eligible for this additional compensation. Teachers in all schools will still be eligible for annual bonuses.

** Beginning in 2015–2016, teachers who reached the Expert stage at a low-poverty school, and thus were ineligible for this additional compensation, can become eligible to earn this service credit and move to the PhD salary band if they move to a high-poverty school. For more information, see page 15.*

*** Opportunities that are available through partner organizations may have eligibility criteria that are distinct from what is presented above. However, DCPS will refer to LIFT stages when determining which teachers to nominate for external grants or other opportunities that require a school district recommendation.*

ADVANCED TEACHER	DISTINGUISHED TEACHER	EXPERT TEACHER
Two formal observations each year.	Two formal observations each year.	At least one formal observation each year. Teachers with a score of at least 3.0 on their first observation will not receive a second observation, unless requested by the teacher. Teachers with a score below 3.0 on their first observation will receive a second observation.
Teachers in high-poverty† schools are eligible for a two-year service credit.	Teachers in high-poverty† schools are eligible for a five-year service credit and will move to the master's degree salary band, if applicable.	Teachers in high-poverty‡ schools are eligible for a five-year service credit and will move to the PhD salary band, if applicable.*

Advanced, Distinguished, and Expert Teachers are eligible for all opportunities at the Teacher and Established Teacher stages, as well as the following opportunities:

Positions: Assistant Principal/LEAP Leader, Early Childhood Education Teacher Leaders, LEAP Leader-Instructional Coach, Principal

Fellowships and Grants: Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad, Math for America Master Teacher Fellowship, U.S. Department of Education School Ambassador Fellowship

For more information about the opportunities and benefits at each stage, please refer to the following pages:

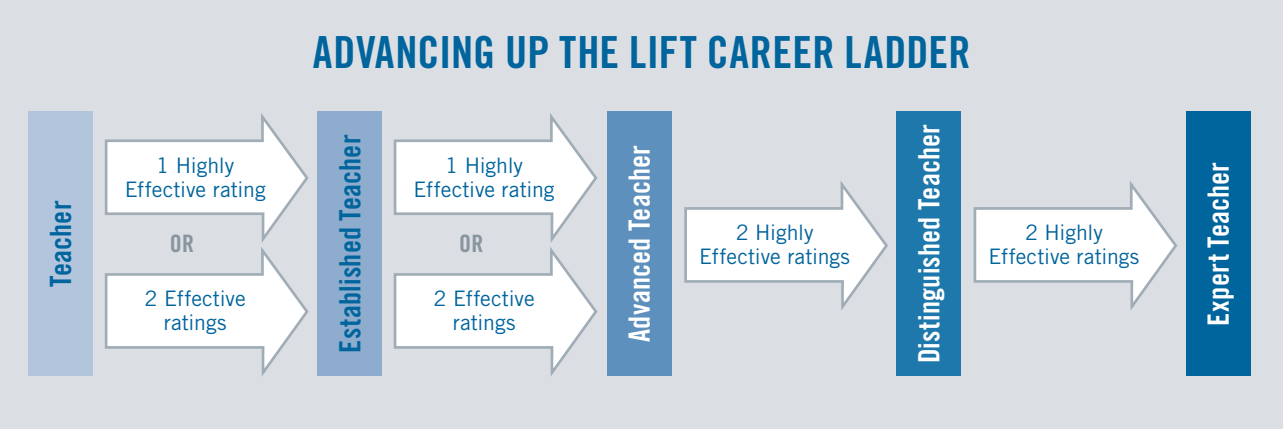
- Teacher stage, page 16
- Established Teacher stage, page 17
- Advanced Teacher stage, page 18
- Distinguished Teacher stage, page 19
- Expert Teacher stage, page 20

Advancing up the LIFT Ladder

Your advancement up the LIFT ladder is determined by your annual IMPACT rating. Once you've entered a particular stage, you will remain there until you earn the requisite Effective and/or Highly Effective ratings to progress to the next stage. You cannot move backwards along the ladder; you can only advance.

Please note that Developing and Minimally Effective ratings do not contribute to your advancement up the ladder.

Criteria to Advance up the LIFT Ladder



- Individuals at the Teacher stage who earn two consecutive Effective ratings or one Highly Effective rating will advance to the Established Teacher stage.
- Established Teachers who earn two consecutive Effective ratings or one Highly Effective rating will advance to the Advanced Teacher stage.
- Advanced Teachers who earn two consecutive Highly Effective ratings will advance to the Distinguished Teacher stage.
- Distinguished Teachers who earn two consecutive Highly Effective ratings will advance to the Expert Teacher stage.

Do I need to earn these ratings consecutively in order to advance up the LIFT ladder?

Yes. In cases in which two ratings are required to advance to the next LIFT stage, those ratings must be earned in two consecutive years.

For example, a teacher at the Established Teacher stage will either need to earn one Highly Effective rating or two Effective ratings *in a row* in order to advance to the Advanced Teacher stage. Similarly, teachers at the Advanced and Distinguished Teacher stages need to earn two Highly Effective ratings in a row to advance on the LIFT ladder.

Why do teachers need to earn Highly Effective ratings to reach the Distinguished and Expert Teacher stages?

Teachers who reach the Distinguished and Expert Teacher stages are eligible for significant benefits, including considerable base salary increases for those teachers working in high-poverty schools. Expert Teachers will also receive differentiated IMPACT observations. Therefore, these stages are reserved for the highest-performing teachers in the district.

Teachers who consistently earn Effective ratings also deserve meaningful recognition for their performance and experience. With LIFT, a teacher at the Teacher LIFT stage, who earns four years of Effective ratings while serving in a high-poverty school, will move into the Advanced Teacher stage and become eligible for a base salary increase and a wide array of leadership opportunities.

What happens to my LIFT stage if I move from a DCPS classroom to another leadership role (e.g., an Assistant Principal/LEAP Leader position), and then return to a teaching role in the future?

Your LIFT stage would be the stage you earned based on your IMPACT rating from your final year teaching in the classroom.

For instance, imagine that you are at the Advanced Teacher stage and you earn Highly Effective ratings in Year 1 and Year 2, qualifying you to move to the Distinguished Teacher stage for Year 3. However, you decide instead to serve as an Assistant Principal/LEAP Leader in Year 3. Regardless of your IMPACT rating in your non-teaching role, if you decide to return to the classroom in the future, you would return at the Distinguished Teacher stage.

What happens to my LIFT stage if I leave DCPS for another district and then return to a teaching role at DCPS in the future?

Teachers returning to DCPS after serving in another district will be placed at the LIFT stage earned based on their IMPACT rating from their final year teaching in the classroom. For instance, imagine that you are at the Advanced Teacher stage and you earn Highly Effective ratings in Year 1 and Year 2, qualifying you to move to the Distinguished Teacher stage for the following school year. However, you decide to serve in a different school district in Year 3. If you decide to return to the classroom in the future, you would return at the Distinguished Teacher stage.

Your Starting LIFT Stage

Teachers New to DCPS

Teachers who are new to DCPS (and current DCPS staff members who have moved into teaching positions after serving DCPS in other roles) will be placed according to their years of teaching experience:

- 0–1 years of experience: Teacher stage
- 2+ years of experience: Established Teacher stage

Example

Let's look at an example. Consider a teacher with four years of teaching experience in a neighboring school district who joins DCPS at the start of the school year. Because he has two or more years of experience teaching outside of DCPS, he will be placed at the **Established Teacher** stage at the start of the school year.

Why do experienced teachers enter DCPS at the Established Teacher stage?

Placement of experienced teachers at the Established Teacher level recognizes these teachers' prior experience and provides them with an opportunity to demonstrate their effectiveness in DCPS through a full set of IMPACT observations. However, like all Established Teachers, after one year of Highly Effective performance (or two consecutive years of Effective performance), these experienced teachers will progress to the Advanced Teacher stage, where they will be eligible for increases in base salary and other benefits.

Teachers Returning to DCPS

All teachers were placed at a LIFT level at the start of the 2012–2013 school year according to their prior IMPACT ratings. Teachers who earned an Effective or Highly Effective rating at the end of the 2012–2013 school year made progress toward the next LIFT level, according to the advancement rules outlined on page 10. Returning teachers can view their current LIFT level in mid-September by visiting the IMPACT database at http://impactdcps.dc.gov.

If I have not taught in DCPS since before the 2012-2013 school year, what is my LIFT level?

You will be placed at a LIFT level according to the IMPACT ratings you have earned in the past as a teacher.

- **Established Teacher:** Two years of IMPACT ratings at or above 250 **OR** one IMPACT rating at or above 350
- **Advanced Teacher:** Three years of IMPACT ratings at or above 300
- **Distinguished Teacher:** IMPACT ratings at or above 350 for the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 school years **OR** two years of IMPACT ratings at or above 350 and one other score at or above 300

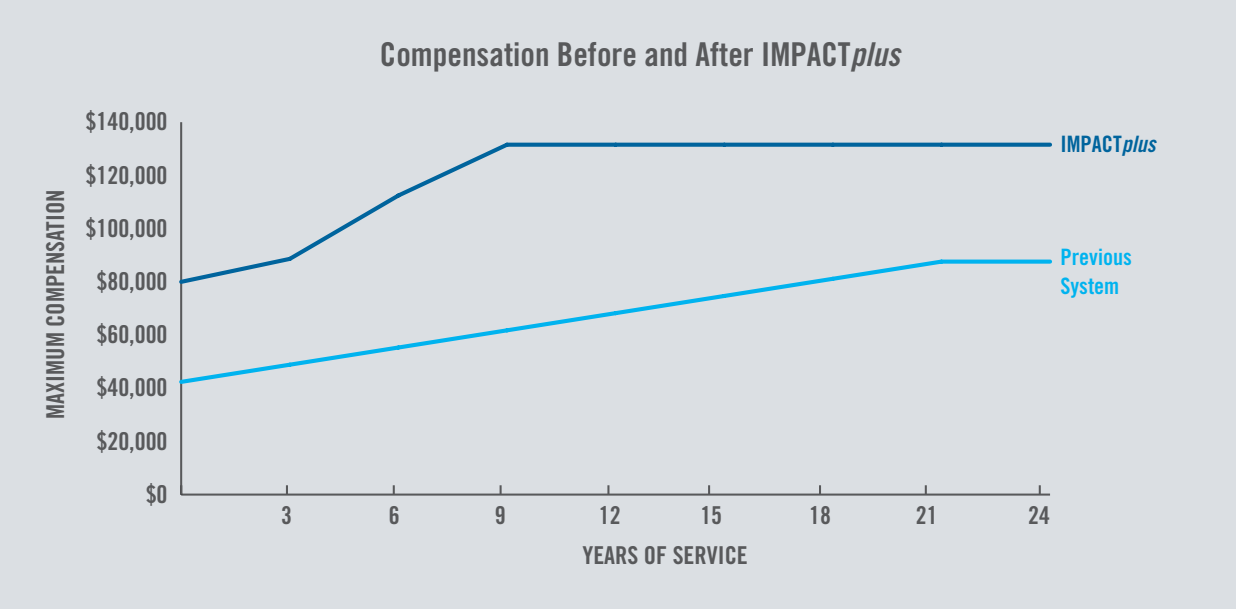
You can learn more about your LIFT level and how it was determined by emailing impact.dcps@k12.dc.gov or by calling the IMPACT/LIFT helpline at 202-719-6553.

Compensation: LIFT and IMPACT*plus*

We believe that teaching is the most important job in the world.

And while we recognize that teachers do not enter the field of education for monetary reasons, we think that they deserve to be compensated as true professionals.

This is why DCPS collaborated with the Washington Teachers' Union to develop IMPACT*plus,* a groundbreaking performance-based pay system that was introduced during the 2009–2010 school year. Through IMPACT*plus,* outstanding DCPS educators are now being paid what they deserve. In fact, thanks to annual bonuses of up to $25,000 and base salary increases of up to $27,000, some educators have seen their compensation more than double.



Just as in years past, all Highly Effective teachers will be eligible for annual bonuses. However, through LIFT, we have expanded the base salary component of IMPACT*plus* to reward more teachers in new ways.

- Teachers who earn consistent **Effective** ratings at high-poverty schools are eligible for **base salary increases of up to $9,000** at the Advanced Teacher stage.
- **Base salary increases are tied to LIFT stages** with increases at the Advanced, Distinguished, and Expert Teacher stages for teachers in high-poverty schools.

We know that teachers are driven by the difference that they make in their students' lives — not by annual bonuses or impressive salaries. But we hope that these changes not only demonstrate just how much DCPS teachers are valued, but also help us to continue attracting and retaining the outstanding teachers that our students deserve.

How will my compensation increase over time through LIFT?

All Effective and Highly Effective teachers will continue to earn the annual step increases outlined in the Washington Teachers' Union contract. However, at the Advanced, Distinguished, and Expert Teacher LIFT stages, teachers in high-poverty schools will earn significantly larger base salary increases.

IMPACT*plus*

How does IMPACT*plus* work?

IMPACT*plus* for teachers has two parts: an annual bonus and an increase in base salary.

PART 1: ANNUAL BONUS

How does the annual bonus work?

With a Highly Effective rating, you will be eligible for an annual bonus according to the chart below.

YOUR IMPACT RATING	YOUR SCHOOL'S POVERTY LEVEL	YOUR BONUS	YOUR ADD-ON IF YOU HAVE AN IVA COMPONENT SCORE	YOUR ADD-ON IF YOU ARE IN ONE OF THE CSI SCHOOLS	YOUR TOTAL POSSIBLE ANNUAL BONUS
Highly Effective	High	$10,000	Additional $5,000	Additional $10,000	$25,000
	Low	$2,000	Additional $1,000	n/a	$3,000

How do I know my school's poverty level and Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Low Performing schools status?

Each school's poverty level is listed on the IMPACT*plus* and LIFT page on Canvas. You may also contact the IMPACT team at 202-719-6553 or impact.dcps@k12.dc.gov.

What are the Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Low Performing schools?

OSSE determines the Comprehensive School designations based on a school's School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) Framework score. The schools that score in the bottom 5% in the city on the STAR Framework as compared to their peers are designated as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Low Performing schools, and this designation lasts for 3 years. For more information on CSI schools, please visit OSSE's website at osse.dc.gov/investmentinschools.

Why do teachers in high-poverty and Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Low Performing schools receive higher bonuses?

One of the goals of IMPACT*plus* is to help our highest-need schools attract and retain outstanding teachers. This is why we are offering higher bonuses to the individuals who serve in these schools.

Why do teachers who receive an IVA Component score receive higher bonuses?

Teachers in Group 1 and 1a who receive an IVA Component score are unique in that 40% of their IMPACT assessment comes from student achievement data. Given the challenges associated with such a rigorous measure, these teachers are recognized with higher bonuses.

How do I know if I am in Group 1 or 1a?

If you are not sure of your IMPACT group, please log into the IMPACT database at impactdcps.dc.gov. If you need assistance logging in, please contact the IMPACT team at 202-719-6553 or impact.dcps@k12.dc.gov.

PART 2: INCREASE IN BASE SALARY

How does the increase in base salary work?

Upon entering the Advanced, Distinguished, and Expert Teacher stages, teachers in high-poverty schools will be eligible for an increase in their base salary in the form of a service credit, meaning that they will be paid as if they had additional years in the system. The number of service credits offered depends on a teacher's LIFT stage and education level, as indicated in the chart below.

YOUR SCHOOL'S POVERTY LEVEL	YOUR LIFT STAGE	YOUR SERVICE CREDIT
High	Advanced	2 Years
	Distinguished	5 Years*
	Expert	5 Years*

** In addition to the five-year service credit, teachers at the Distinguished Teacher stage will move to the master's degree salary band if not already there, and teachers at the Expert Teacher stage will move to the PhD salary band if not already there.*

Why are base salary increases only available to teachers at high-poverty schools?

More than 75 percent of DCPS teachers work in high-poverty schools and may be eligible for base salary increases through LIFT. Furthermore, one of the goals of LIFT and IMPACT*plus* is to help our highest-poverty schools attract and retain excellent teachers. These schools serve large populations of students who need extra support and who face additional challenges outside of the classroom; teachers who are successful in accelerating these students' achievement deserve the greatest compensation.

Teachers in all schools will be eligible for the leadership opportunities and differentiated observations available through LIFT, and Highly Effective teachers in all schools will be eligible for annual bonuses.

For how many years do I need to teach in a high-poverty school in order to qualify for the base salary increase?

You must be teaching in a high-poverty school during the year in which you qualify for a service credit and during the following school year.

For example, imagine that you are at the Established Teacher stage during the current school year. If you earn a Highly Effective rating at the end of the year, you will begin the next school year at the Advanced Teacher stage. In order to qualify for the two-year service credit at the Advanced Teacher stage, your school in both the current and next school years must be high-poverty.

Note that if you earn the additional service credits during a year in which your school had a high-poverty status, but your school's poverty status changes to low-poverty the following year, you will still be eligible for the additional service credits if you return to that same school the following year.

If I reach the Expert stage at a low-poverty school, am I permanently ineligible for the base salary increase?

No. Formerly, upon reaching the Expert Teacher stage of the LIFT ladder, teachers were ineligible for the base salary increase (five-year service credit and promotion to the PhD band) if they served in a low-poverty school during their last year as a Distinguished Teacher or first year as an Expert Teacher. However, now, a teacher who reached the Expert Teacher stage at a low-poverty school, and so was not eligible for those increases, could become eligible for the base salary increase if he/she moves to a high-poverty school and subsequently earns two additional, consecutive Highly Effective ratings and then teaches in a high-poverty school in the following year. In this circumstance, the teacher would be awarded the base salary increase at the start of their third consecutive year in a high-poverty setting.

Please note that this rule applies only to teachers who entered the Expert Teacher LIFT stage immediately before or after teaching in a low-poverty school and so were not eligible for the service credits and education level promotion associated with that new stage. Teachers will not be offered a retroactive opportunity for the credits associated with the Advanced or Distinguished stages, and any teacher who was previously eligible for the service credits but declined them will not be offered a retroactive opportunity for the credits.

LIFT Stages: In-Depth View

The following section outlines the opportunities and benefits that are aligned with each LIFT stage and explains how you advance from one stage to the next. You will also find information about IMPACT observations at each stage, examples of available leadership opportunities, information about additional compensation at certain stages, and profiles of current and former DCPS teachers.

Teacher Stage

Some teachers at this stage have prior experience in DCPS, while others are new to the teaching profession and have just successfully completed DCPS's rigorous and competitive selection process. Whether new or returning, all teachers at this stage are committed to leading their students to ambitious achievement and to continuing to refine their instructional practices.

IMPACT Observations

Teachers at the Teacher stage will receive **two formal observations** from an administrator. For more information about IMPACT for teachers at this stage, please refer to the IMPACT guidebook.

Leadership Opportunities

Teachers at this stage are eligible to apply to join the Chancellor's Teachers' Cabinet.

Advancing to the Next Stage

A teacher will advance from the Teacher stage to the Established Teacher stage once she or he has earned two consecutive Effective ratings or one Highly Effective rating while at the Teacher stage.

Established Teacher Stage

Teacher → **Established Teacher** → Advanced Teacher → Distinguished Teacher → Expert Teacher

These teachers have proven their effective teaching skills and have led their students to solid achievement gains. Established Teachers also demonstrate an ongoing commitment to their own learning and improvement, and may begin to take on leadership roles within their schools or for the district.

IMPACT Observations

Teachers at the Established Teacher stage will receive **two formal observations** from an administrator. For more information about IMPACT for teachers at this stage, please refer to the IMPACT guidebook.

Leadership Opportunities

Teachers at this stage are eligible for a variety of leadership opportunities, including:

- Teacher Leadership Innovation (TLI) LEAP Leader
- Common Core Reading Corps
- Teacher Selection Ambassador

Advancing to the Next Stage

A teacher will advance from the Established Teacher stage to the Advanced Teacher stage once she or he has earned two consecutive Effective ratings or one Highly Effective rating as an Established Teacher.

Advanced Teacher Stage

Teachers at this stage have been among the district's most effective for several years, and their students continually demonstrate strong achievement results. Many of these teachers have also taken on leadership roles within their schools or for the district.

IMPACT Observations

Teachers at the Advanced Teacher stage will receive **two formal observations** from an administrator. For more information about IMPACT for teachers at this stage, please refer to the IMPACT guidebook.

Compensation

Upon entering the Advanced Teacher Stage, teachers in high-poverty schools will be eligible to move more quickly along the pay scale through the receipt of service credits. Advanced Teachers will be granted a two-year service credit, meaning that they will be paid as if they had two additional years in the system.

Example

Based on 2018–2019 DCPS Teacher Salary Scale

	STEP 4	STEP 7	
BACHELORS	$58,621	$65,416	
BACHELORS + 15	$61,216	$68,017	
BACHELORS + 30/MASTERS	$65,512	$74,054	*Salary in fifth year of teaching*
MASTERS + 30	$68,140	$76,678	
MASTERS + 60/PHD	$70,783	$79,317	

For example, let's imagine that at the end of the prior school year, your IMPACT rating qualified you to move to the Advanced Teacher stage. Let's also imagine that you just finished your fourth year of teaching in a high-poverty school, and that you have a master's degree. For the current school year — your fifth year of teaching — we would actually pay you as if you were in your *seventh* year (5 years + 2 year service credit). In this case, your salary would increase from $65,512 to $74,054 — a base salary increase of nearly $9,000.

Leadership Opportunities

Teachers at this stage are eligible for all DCPS leadership opportunities, including:

- Principal
- Assistant Principal/LEAP Leader
- LEAP Leader-Instructional Coach
- Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad

Advancing to the Next Stage

A teacher will advance from the Advanced Teacher stage to the Distinguished Teacher stage once she or he has earned two consecutive Highly Effective ratings as an Advanced Teacher.

Distinguished Teacher Stage

Teacher → Established Teacher → Advanced Teacher → **Distinguished Teacher** → Expert Teacher

Teachers at this stage are some of the district's top performers and have a record of exemplary student achievement. These teachers have consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of instructional best practices and may serve as models to colleagues who are still developing their skills.

IMPACT Observations

Teachers at the Distinguished Teacher stage will receive **two formal observations** from an administrator**.** For more information about IMPACT for teachers at this stage, please refer to the IMPACT guidebook.

Compensation

Upon entering the Distinguished Teacher stage, teachers in high-poverty schools will be eligible to move more quickly along the pay scale through the receipt of service credits.

The base salary increase will take two forms. First, teachers will move to the master's degree salary band if they are not already there. Second, they will be granted a five-year service credit, meaning that they will be paid as if they had five additional years in the system.

For example, let's imagine that at the end of the prior school year, your IMPACT rating qualified you to move to the Distinguished Teacher stage. Let's also imagine that you just finished your fifth year of teaching in a high-poverty school, and you do not have a master's degree. For the current school year — your sixth year of teaching — we would actually pay you as if you had a master's degree and were in your *eleventh* year (6 years + 5 year service credit). In this case, your salary would increase from $60,689 to $87,126 — a base salary increase of nearly $27,000.

Example

Based on 2018–2019 DCPS Teacher Salary Scale

	STEP 5	STEP 11	
BACHELORS	$60,689	$75,938	
BACHELORS + 15	$63,294	$78,546	*Salary in sixth year of teaching*
BACHELORS + 30/MASTERS	$68,140	$87,126	
MASTERS + 30	$70,783	$89,739	
MASTERS + 60/PHD	$73,417	$92,376	

Leadership Opportunities

Teachers at this stage are eligible for all DCPS leadership opportunities.

Advancing to the Next Stage

A teacher will advance from the Distinguished Teacher stage to the Expert Teacher stage once she or he has earned two consecutive Highly Effective ratings as a Distinguished Teacher.

Expert Teacher Stage

Teacher → Established Teacher → Advanced Teacher → Distinguished Teacher → **Expert Teacher**

Teachers at this stage are masters of their craft, honed in DCPS classrooms over the course of many years. Their students demonstrate exceptional learning gains each year, regularly exceeding even the most ambitious achievement goals. Many of these teachers also serve in various leadership roles within their schools and extend their reach by mentoring less-experienced colleagues.

IMPACT Observations

Teachers at the Expert Teacher stage will receive **at least one formal observation** from an administrator.

If the score from this observation is 3.0 or higher (on the 1.0 to 4.0 scale) the teacher will not receive her or his second observation, unless requested by the teacher. Eligible Expert teachers may choose to receive a second observation. After Cycle 1 ends, the teacher may log into the IMPACT database at http://impactdcps.dc.gov to indicate that he or she would like to receive his or her remaining observation. If the score from the first observation is less than 3.0, the teacher will automatically receive a second observation.

For more information about IMPACT for teachers at this stage, please refer to the IMPACT guidebook.

Compensation

Upon entering the Expert Teacher stage, teachers in high-poverty schools will be eligible to move more quickly along the pay scale through the receipt of service credits.

The base salary increase will take two forms. First, teachers will move to the PhD salary band if they are not already there. Second, they will be granted a five-year service credit, meaning that they will be paid as if they had five additional years in the system.

Example

Based on 2018–2019 DCPS Teacher Salary Scale

	STEP 6	STEP 12
BACHELORS	$62,771	$81,214
BACHELORS + 15	$65,377	$83,833
BACHELORS + 30/MASTERS	$70,783	$93,656
MASTERS + 30	$73,417	$96,287
MASTERS + 60/PHD	$76,052	$99,207

Salary in seventh year of teaching

For example, let's imagine that at the end of the prior school year, your IMPACT rating qualified you to move to the Expert Teacher stage. Let's also imagine you have a master's degree, and you just finished your sixth year teaching in a high-poverty school. For the current school year — your seventh year of teaching — we would actually pay you as if you had a PhD and were in your twelfth year (7 years + 5 year service credit). In this case, your salary would increase from $70,783 to $99,207 — a base salary increase of more than $28,000.

Leadership Opportunities

Teachers at this stage are eligible for all DCPS leadership opportunities.

Concluding Message

Whether you are just entering the teaching profession or have many years of classroom experience behind you, DCPS's Leadership Initiative for Teachers (LIFT) provides opportunities for you to shape your career as an educator. The LIFT career ladder has one central objective: to recognize the highest-performing DCPS teachers, and to extend their reach so that they may have long, fulfilling careers in service to D.C. students.

For our teachers who plan to make a career out of classroom teaching, LIFT provides ways for you to seek new experiences and opportunities that challenge and inspire you, while continuing to do the work in the classroom that you love. For those teachers who are excited to experience opportunities outside of the classroom, LIFT will help to provide a clear path to your next challenge. After all, it is our firm belief that both DCPS students and teachers alike will benefit from the continued support of school leaders, policy fellows, and Central Office staff members who were once successful DCPS teachers.

Whatever your professional goals may be, LIFT will enable you to clearly envision a future in this district. Through your continued dedication, we know that we will reach our goal of ensuring a bright future for all D.C. children.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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