FY 2026-27 Advanced Course Teacher Legislated Bonuses FAQ

This FAQ is for bonuses to teachers who teach students who passed advanced courses defined as Advanced Placement exams, International Baccalaureate exams, and Cambridge exams. This document will be updated as additional questions are received. Bonuses in this document pertain to the continuation budget from legislation in SL 2026-41 (SB257) Section 7A.4.(a).

If you have further questions, contact the Division of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education at NCDPI: Beth.Cross@dpi.nc.gov, Ap.ib@dpi.nc.gov, or Sneha.Shahcoltrane@dpi.nc.gov

For questions on NCVPS teachers, contact NCVPS Outreach and Support: Mia.Murphy@ncpublicschools.gov

A. Responsibilities

DPI Shall:

- Determine the total number of exams by entity meeting the score eligibility - based on the College Board, International Baccalaureate, and Cambridge reports.
- Allot funds in PRC 0048 to each PSU (including Charter School in PRC 0048) based on the total number of exams multiplied by $50 (plus social security). This is an estimated allotment and should be in excess of what is needed.
- PRC 0048 is also used for CTE and Principal Bonuses. It is extremely important that PSUs use correct account codes (noted in this document below), when coding these bonuses, so we are able to accurately report to the General Assembly on each bonus type.

LEAs Shall:

- Determine the individual teachers who are eligible.
  - The PSUs should have the necessary information to make this determination - the AP Coordinator, IB Coordinator, and Cambridge coordinators in those districts have the information (they have individual accounts through their online report access) and should provide it to their Finance department.
  - NCDPI does not receive teacher names related to these programs. Please see the contact information below should you have difficulty in obtaining your qualified staff and they will assist you.
- Validate that the teacher is still working in the same LEA, charter school, regional school or lab school until at least January 1, 2027 or has met the retirement criteria in SL 2026-41 Section 7A.4.(b)(7)b.
- Calculate the bonus amount for each teacher.
- Ensure the bonus does not exceed $3,500 (not including social security).
- Pay the teacher the bonus in January to the appropriate account codes at the school level:
  - Bonus payment: 1X-52600-0048-01800
  - Social Security: 1X-52600-0048-02110

Note:

1. IB Theory of Knowledge is not eligible.
2. IB-DP tests that are for courses that span over 1 year and have multiple teachers – both teachers are eligible.

B. Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are bonuses subject to retirement?

   No, bonuses are not subject to retirement.

2. How much bonus pay may a teacher earn for student exam scores in AP or IB or Cambridge courses?

   Based on student performance on the exams for AP (3 and above) or IB (4 and above) or CIE (E or better), a teacher may earn $50 per exam up to $3,500 if she/he is still teaching in the same district in the following school year.

3. Does the teacher have to be teaching an advanced course to be eligible for the bonus?

   No. This requirement was eliminated in SL 2017-57.

4. If the student is enrolled in an honors course and takes the AP exam, does the teacher receive a bonus payment for the exam result?

   No. The teacher shall only be awarded a bonus payment for students who are enrolled in the advanced course. Advanced course is defined in the legislation as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Cambridge AICE (Cambridge International) program.

5. If a teacher teaches both AP and IB courses and has students' exam scores qualify in both classes, can they earn a $3,500 bonus for each AP and IB course separately?

   No. A teacher may only be awarded a TOTAL of $3,500 for this combined AP/IB/CIE bonus program in any given school year.

6. If a student receives a qualifying score from a course exam for which she/he took the course and the exam score report includes sub-scores, can the teacher receive a bonus for the sub-score in additional to the main score?

   No. A teacher can only receive a bonus for the primary qualifying exam score for the course the student took. The sub-scores do not qualify for a bonus. This occurs with at least AP Calculus BC and AP Music Theory.

7. Are teachers in Charter Schools eligible to receive this bonus pay?

   Yes. This bonus pay applies to teachers in all public schools, which includes LEA schools, charter schools, regional schools and lab schools.

8. What is the DPI procedure for allotting funds to each LEA?

DPI will:

- Determine the total number of exams by entity meeting the score eligibility - based on the College Board, International Baccalaureate and Cambridge reports.
- Allot funds to each entity based on the total number of exams multiplied by $50 (plus social security). This is an estimated allotment and should be in excess of what is needed.

9. Do NCVPS Teachers get paid this bonus?

Yes. The North Carolina Virtual Public School teachers who are also employed with your district or charter are eligible for the bonus. Based on changes in SL 2021-180, NCVPS will administer payment for PSU employed teachers who work contractually for NCVPS. PSUs do not need to account for NCVPS teacher in their payment processes.

10. If a teacher retired effective January 1, 2027 do they qualify for this bonus provided they meet all the other criteria?

Per SL 2026-41 Section 7A.4.(b)(7), an eligible teacher or eligible career and technical education teacher must meet one of the following criteria:

a. Remains employed teaching in the same qualifying public school unit, or, if an eligible advanced course teacher is only employed by the North Carolina Virtual Public School program, remains employed teaching in that program, at least from the school year the data is collected until January 1 of the corresponding school year that the bonus is paid.
b. Retired, between the last day of the school year in which the data is collected and January 1 of the corresponding school year in which the bonus is paid, after attaining one of the following:
    1. The age of at least 65 with five years of creditable service.
    2. The age of at least 60 with 25 years of creditable service.
    3. Thirty years of creditable service.

DPI defines “last day of the school year” as the last day of school with students.
This would include a teacher who retired with an effective retirement date of January 1st provided they meet the requirements of (b) above.

11. If a teacher remains employed by the PSU by January 1, but is not in a teaching position, are they still eligible for the bonus?

No, per SL 2026-41 Section 7A.4.(b)(7)a., the teacher must remain in a teaching position to be eligible for the bonus.

12. When does this bonus need to be paid?

There is no date stipulated required for payment. We would request if possible that all bonus payments be paid by January 31, 2027 to ensure they are reflected accurately in the report due to the General Assembly in early March.

13. Are part-time or contract employees eligible to receive the bonus?

Part-time employees may qualify for the bonus; however, contract employees are not considered “employed by the public school unit” and would not be able to receive the bonus.