LAKE COUNTY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

2026 TSIA / Salary Increase FAQ

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What is the TSIA raise?	TSIA stands for Teacher Salary Increase Allocation. This is state money set aside for salary increases for certain teachers. For 2026-27, the state added money specifically for teachers with 10 or more years of Florida public school teaching experience. This was created by the Legislature. It is not a local District plan, a union plan, or something created at the bargaining table.
Who created the rules for this money?	The State of Florida created the rules. The eligibility language comes from Tallahassee. LCEA and the District did not create the eligibility requirements.
Who qualifies for the TSIA experienced teacher money?	Based on the state budget language, the money is for full-time classroom teachers and certified prekindergarten teachers as defined by the state and funded through FEFP (state formula) who have at least 10 years of full-time teaching experience in a Florida public school. The state language also caps the increase at $3,000. Educators who are newly employed and start working for LCS before the start of the 2026 - 2027 school year do not qualify for the TSIA money. New educators, however, may be eligible for other salary increases or negotiated salary supplements such as the referendum supplements which our union has proposed (up to $4500 for 21+ year veterans regardless of employment history).See our proposals HERE
Does every teacher with 10 or more years qualify?	No. This is the biggest misunderstanding. The state did not say every educator with 10 or more years qualifies. The state wrote narrower language. In Lake County, only about one-third of teachers (32%) are expected to receive any compensation from this money. Almost two-thirds of teachers are left out (68%).
Are support professionals included?	No. ***The state provided no additional TSIA funding for education support professionals***. That means paraprofessionals, clerks, bookkeepers, custodians, bus aides, maintenance employees, and other support professionals are left out of this funding.
Are school counselors, media specialists, and other support instructional staff included?	The state language is tied to full-time classroom teachers and certified prekindergarten ESE teachers, *as defined by the state*. Florida law separates classroom teachers from other instructional personnel categories, including student personnel services, librarians/media specialists, and other instructional staff. That distinction matters here. CLICK to see the full job code list for eligibility. 26.07.02 TSIA Eligibility List
What does "classroom teacher" mean under Florida law?	Florida Statute 1012.01(2)(a) defines classroom teachers as staff members assigned the professional activity of instructing students in courses in classroom situations. That definition is applied through state reporting and funding rules. That is why we cannot simply classify every instructional employee as a "classroom teacher." It does not automatically include every instructional employee who provides instruction or works with students.
What about educators with 9 years experience in FLor less?	The TSIA guidelines specify that the funds can only go to educators who have at least 10 years of full-time teaching experience in a **FLORIDA PUBLIC SCHOOL.** This means educators with less than 10 years experience in a Florida public school are left out. Any compensation for this group of educators or any other group left out must come from the general fund outside of TSIA funds.
Is LCEA trying to stop eligible teachers from receiving the money?	No. If you meet the state's eligibility requirements, you should receive the money. LCEA is not trying to stop eligible teachers from being paid.
Then why is LCEA speaking out?	Because the state wrote a plan that divides educators and leaves thousands of people behind. *The problem is not that some teachers are included. The problem is who the state chose to exclude*.

Do eligible teachers deserve the raise?	Yes. Teachers who qualify deserve the raise. Experienced classroom teachers carry enormous pressure.They deserve to be acknowledged and paid more. The truth is so do all instructional staff. Many experienced classroom educators and instructional staff have experienced salary compression. The way the TSIA rules are written, if they just recently changed job codes, even if they have 10+ years in the classroom or in the district, they would be excluded.
Should eligible teachers feel guilty about receiving the money?	No. If you qualify, you should receive the money. You earned it. But receiving the money does not require anyone to pretend the plan is fair. Many deserving educators, our colleagues and our friends, were excluded by the state.We can stand in solidarity as a collective with our colleagues because ALL means ALL and we all deserve a better life!
Why does LCEA keep talking about the people who were left out?	Because they are our members too. A union represents all of its members, including the members who receive this money and the members who receive nothing from this funding. We can stand in solidarity as a collective with our colleagues because ALL means ALL and we all deserve a better life!
Is this "union talk"?	Yes. This is exactly what unions are supposed to do. A union speaks up when the state tries to divide workers, when some members are protected and others are left behind, and when public officials create a plan that asks coworkers to see each other as competitors instead of colleagues.We can stand in solidarity as a collective with our colleagues because ALL means ALL and we all deserve a better life!
Can LCEA negotiate this money for everyone instead?	No. The state restricted how this money can be used. LCEA cannot simply take money the state designated for eligible teachers and spread it to employees who are not eligible under the state language.
Can LCEA negotiate the best possible outcome for eligible teachers?	Yes. That is what we are doing. LCEA will bargain in good faith and fight for the best possible outcome within the limits created by the state. Our union is member-driven and member-led. All decisions and what is presented at the table is determined by members. We use member surveys and one-on-one conversations with our fellow educators to inform decisions. All members are welcome to attend any event or meeting our organization holds including bargaining committee meetings. Members who attend the committee meetings work together to develop the proposals to present at the bargaining table.
Why not finalize the agreement immediately?	We do not want to finalize an agreement without making informed decisions that are member-driven. As we present initial proposals at the table and the district responds, we need to decide how we will respond as an organization.
Does the $3,000 cap mean every eligible teacher gets $3,000?	No. The state language caps the increase at $3,000. A cap is not a guarantee. The final amount depends on the allocation, the number of eligible employees, and the final approved distribution plan. Currently, it appears the actual amount will be considerably less than the $3,000 cap. LCS received $2.1 million in state CTSIA funding (including FRS and taxes),
Will this count toward retirement?	Yes. This is salary and will be paid as salary, so it counts toward retirement.
Who should members be angry with?	Tallahassee. The unfairness was not created by teachers who qualify. It was not created by the educators who were excluded. It was not created by our union or the District at the bargaining table. **The Governor and Legislature wrote the language**. The legislature created a soundbite, not meaningful compensation.

What is LCEA's position?	Teachers who qualify should receive the funding, and veteran educators deserve fair compensation. Your frustrations are valid, and your bargaining team and fellow union members stand with you. The state's plan is still unfair and leaves out 300 LCS veterans. This is why we are fighting for all veterans to receive a salary increase. Every educator who serves students, supports schools, and helps make public education possible is worth a raise, instructional staff and support professionals alike. While some members will receive increases through TSIA, many veterans could be left behind if compensation is limited to TSIA funds alone. We will continue bargaining in good faith and advocating for the fair compensation all educators have earned and deserve. No matter what, some of us will receive an increase through the TSIA state statute**.** See our proposals HERE
What happens next?	LCEA will continue bargaining with the District and will update members as soon as information is available. Please attend the July 21 bargaining session and the next School Board meeting on July 27, and share the RSVP with your colleagues: RSVP HERE: CLICK HERE Some educators will receive pay increases through TSIA funding this fall. Even if an agreement is reached on TSIA tomorrow, **these increases will not be paid out until after September 15th and bargaining unit contract ratification (which is scheduled for the end of September). Most likely the soonest they will be in paychecks is the end of October or beginning of November.** The District has indicated support for our proposal to distribute TSIA increases based on years of experience, reflecting member feedback. Our goal remains securing additional General Fund dollars for both TSIA-eligible members and those not covered by TSIA, while also obtaining stronger guarantees regarding referendum funds. We are still negotiating these details. While the District's position has been shared publicly, their statements at one session do not always remain at the next. Statements and actions have not always been consistent. That is why we are seeking firm commitments. If compensation remains limited to TSIA funds, many veteran educators and approximately 68% of bargaining unit members could be left behind. We must continue bargaining in good faith, maintain pressure, and advocate for fair compensation for all members.
How do I verify if I qualify?	**We highly recommend all educators contact their Human Resources specialists assigned to their worksite to confirm their years of experience documented with the district as well as their job position to make sure they qualify for the funds. If their years of experience is not correct, send in documentation to correct this ASAP!**
New to LCS	Educators newly hired by LCS and beginning employment after the 2025 - 2026 school year are not eligible for CTSIA/TSIA funds. Bargaining priorities, as identified by more than 60% of LCS educators, emphasized directing available resources toward veteran educators who have remained in the district and have been most affected by salary compression. As a result, proposals were designed to make these educators as whole as possible.

Can members reject the TSIA agreement to get a better agreement or include more groups?	**No.** Rejecting the agreement would not make excluded employees eligible. The eligibility rules were written by the state, not LCEA or the District. If restricted TSIA money goes to ineligible employees, it could be clawed back, and those employees could be required to pay it back. LCEA has some flexibility to bargain how payment is structured within the eligible group, but we cannot add employees who do not meet the state's eligibility requirements.
Why are you asking me to do something?	Our union is only as strong as our engaged members. If only 10% are participating, then we only get 10% of what we want and we risk not representing the full membership or bargaining unit priorities. Apathy and frustration has been created by years of misinformation campaigns, divisive policies, poor working conditions, inadequate salary increase, and past union failures. It is understandable that veteran LCS educators especially feel distrust and don't believe engagement will make a difference. They have suffered the longest and seen a lot of defeats. The truth is past local active union members either did not know better or didn't know how to implement strategies to win big. Things are different now. Now that we know better, we must do better. The stakes are also higher than ever so we cannot afford not to. We do not win what we deserve without member engagement. This is why every survey and interaction we always ask, "What are "YOU" willing to do?" This is the difference between strong and weak unions. This is the difference between getting what we deserve and continuing to just take the scraps we are given. The sooner more of us realize this the sooner we will get what we deserve. We have built 5 years of knowledge about what it takes to win and we have put that into practice and developed professional development courses for our members. No one is born being a good union organizer or leader. No union just starts off as a strong organization. It is learned through collective member knowledge and built over time.
What can I do?	There are three things YOU can do right now: 1. **Watch your email and LCEA's media channels** for updates such as Facebook and YouTube. We will share information as soon as we have it. 2. **If you are not already a member, join LCEA** and add your voice to this work:https://www.lcea.org/ 3. **If you are already an LCEA member, consider getting involved.** a. We're asking that you attend June 21st bargaining and the next school board meeting as well as share this RSVP with colleagues in YOUR circle. RSVP: CLICK HERE b. Send an email to your school board member. See their contact information and talking points HERE