

New York State Grants for Mathematics, Science, and Technology

Teachers in Religious and Independent Schools Program

2020-2021 School Year

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

1. Please define what is meant by secular and non-secular instruction.

For purposes of this program, the term “secular” means instruction that is not related to or does not involve religious or spiritual matters; and non-secular means instruction relating to or involving religious or spiritual matters.

2. Please define technology.

The study of technology, for the purpose of the MST Grant, is defined as: an opportunity to teach students how knowledge, tools, and skills in math and science can be applied to solve practical problems and extend human capabilities. Using a Keyboard or MS Word in isolation, would not qualify as the “T” in MST.

ELIGIBILITY

3. Who is eligible for reimbursement?

Nonpublic, not-for-profit schools, with the exception of approved private special education schools (‘853 schools’), are eligible to apply to the Department for reimbursement of the salaries of eligible teachers. Education Law §3037 defines eligible teachers as individuals who are:

- A. Employed by a nonpublic school;
- B. Teaching mathematics, science, or technology in any grades from three (3) through twelve (12) using curricula that support the New York State Learning Standards; and
- C. Either,
 - (a) certified to teach in New York State pursuant to Education Law §3004 (<http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/lawssrch.cgi?NVLWO>); or
 - (b) hold a Master’s degree or Ph.D. in Mathematics, Science, Technology, or Education; or
 - (c) hold a Bachelor’s degree in Mathematics, Science, Technology, or Education **and** is currently enrolled in a Master’s or Ph.D. program in Mathematics, Science, Technology, or Education within five (5) years from the later of April 10, 2017 or the employment start date with the nonpublic school.

D. Provided, however, that the nonpublic school teacher must not also provide non-secular instruction in any capacity within the nonpublic school.

4. What grade levels are eligible?

Nonpublic schools may seek reimbursement for the salaries of eligible teachers who teach courses in mathematics, science, or technology in any grades from three (3) through twelve (12) using curricula that support the New York State Learning Standards.

5. Are 853 Schools eligible for reimbursement through the MST grant?

No, 853 schools are funded through a rate-setting process which supports their operational costs.

6. Are for-profit schools eligible for reimbursement through the MST grant?

No, only nonpublic, not-for-profit schools are eligible to apply to the Department for reimbursement.

7. Is a teacher with an initial certificate who is not currently enrolled in a Master's program an eligible teacher?

Yes, if the teacher meets the criteria for an initial certificate in accordance with Part 80 of the Regulations of the Commissioner and meets the other eligibility requirements, the teacher is eligible as an individual certified to teach in NYS pursuant to Section 3004 of the Education Law.

8. When does the certification have to be valid?

When choosing the eligibility category for certified teacher, the teacher must hold a current valid certification with an expiration date that is no earlier than June 30, 2021 to be considered eligible.

9. Are there any subcategories of mathematics, science, technology or education in which a Master's or Ph.D. would qualify an individual as an eligible teacher? (i.e. library science, biology, engineering, special education)

Yes. As long as the individual meets all the other eligibility criteria and such degree is within the broader categories of mathematics, science, technology or education (e.g., a degree in physics or special education).

10. Can we seek reimbursement for a teacher who will be certified as of September?

So long as the teacher is certified at the time they are providing instruction, is employed by the school during the 20202021 school year, has a certificate with an expiration date that is no earlier than June 30, 2021, and fits all the other eligibility criteria, the school can apply for reimbursement. If a school is seeking reimbursement for a teacher who is not currently certified, they must meet the other options for eligibility. See response to Question # 2.

11. If a teacher has a Bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, has a Master's degree in Education is this sufficient to be considered as a math, science or technology teacher?

Yes. An eligible teacher may be categorized as one of the following:

- a. certified to teach in New York State pursuant to Section 3004 of Education Law (<http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/lawssrch.cgi?NVLWO>); or
- b. holds a Master's degree or Ph.D. in Mathematics, Science, Technology, or Education; or
- c. holds a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics, Science, Technology, or Education and is currently enrolled in a Master's or Ph.D. program in Mathematics, Science, Technology, or Education within five (5) years from the later of April 10, 2017 or the employment start date with the nonpublic school; and

Teaches Mathematics, Science, or Technology in any grades from three (3) through twelve (12) using curricula that support the New York State learning standards; and

Is employed by a nonpublic school.

12. If a teacher holds a Master's degree in Mathematics, Science, Technology, or Education from an international higher education institution and does not meet any of the other eligibility options, is the teacher an eligible teacher?

Education Law §3037 provides that a teacher who holds a Master's degree or Ph.D. in Mathematics, Science, Technology, or Education may be an eligible teacher. However, the statute does not address whether or not such degree must be from an accredited institution within the United States. Therefore, the SORIS will undertake a review of the foreign credentials in the same way as the New York State Education Department Office of Teaching Initiatives reviews such credentials for the purpose of seeking certification.

An eligible teacher is categorized as one of the following:

- a. certified to teach in New York State pursuant to Section 3004 of Education Law (<http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/lawssrch.cgi?NVLWO>); or
- b. holds a Master's degree or Ph.D. in Mathematics, Science, Technology, or Education; or
- c. holds a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics, Science, Technology, or Education and is currently enrolled in a Master's or Ph.D. program in Mathematics, Science, Technology, or Education within five (5) years from the later of April 10, 2017 or the employment start date with the nonpublic school;

13. The application page requires the nonpublic school to certify that the teacher does not provide non-secular instruction in any capacity. Are teachers who provide non-secular instruction eligible for reimbursement?

No. Education Law §3037 prohibits reimbursement for the salary of an otherwise eligible teacher who provides instruction in mathematics, science or technology if such teacher also provides non-secular instruction in any capacity.

14. May a nonpublic school seek reimbursement for an eligible teacher who teaches religious studies outside of his/her employment with the nonpublic school?

Education Law §3037 prohibits reimbursement to the nonpublic school for otherwise eligible teachers who provide instruction in mathematics, science or technology if such teachers also provide non-secular instruction in any capacity. However, if a nonpublic school teacher engages in non-secular activities outside of their employment with the nonpublic school, such employee is still eligible as long as they do not provide any non-secular instruction in any capacity in relation to their employment with the nonpublic school seeking reimbursement.

15. If a teacher teaches math, science and/or technology as well as one class of religious studies, can he or she be reimbursed or is he disqualified?

Education Law §3037 prohibits reimbursement to the nonpublic school for otherwise eligible teachers who provide instruction in mathematics, science or technology if such teachers also provide non-secular instruction in any capacity. However, if a nonpublic school teacher engages in non-secular activities outside of their employment with the nonpublic school, such employee is still eligible as long as they do not provide any non-secular instruction in any capacity in relation to their employment with the nonpublic school seeking reimbursement.

16. If a teacher works in the public school system and then after they complete their teaching day in their public school, they come over to the non-public school to teach MST eligible courses, are they eligible for reimbursement for their non-public teaching salary?

Yes, as long as the teacher meets the eligibility criteria.

17. Does the program permit reimbursement for the salaries of teachers teaching specialized subjects within the general subject areas of mathematics, science and technology (e.g. engineering, computer science)?

Yes, specialized courses that fit within the broader subject areas of mathematics, science, and technology are eligible for reimbursement.

18. Will the time spent at home for preparations for the lesson, or checking the tests be considered in reimbursement?

No. Reimbursement is calculated based on the percentage of time the teacher teaches mathematics, science and/or technology courses during the school day.

19. Is there a minimum number of students that have to be in a class?

No, provided that the course meets the required standards.

20. Are schools automatically eligible if we follow the criteria?

Each submission will be reviewed by the SORIS staff for eligibility. Please note that, if the total eligible reimbursements requested exceed the \$30 million appropriation, then each applicant will only be reimbursed in an amount equal to the percentage each such applicant represents to the total of all applications submitted.

21. Would a submission of curriculum and course descriptions a school plans to teach for another school year, be accepted for eligibility?

No, the curriculum needs to correspond with the courses taught in the 2020-2021 school year.

REIMBURSEMENT

22. How many teachers can be reimbursed from each school?

Education Law §3037(2)(c) does not limit the number of teachers that can be reimbursed. However, Education Law §3037(2)(c) provides that, in the event that the total eligible reimbursements requested exceed the \$30 million appropriation, each applicant will only be reimbursed in an amount equal to the percentage each such applicant represents to the total of all applications submitted. Schools whose eligible teacher salaries exceed their reimbursement amount must support those expenses on their own and will not receive additional reimbursement.

23. If a teacher teaches in more than one nonpublic school, does each school submit an application if requesting reimbursement for the same teacher?

Reimbursement requests pertain solely to the school that is submitting the application for reimbursement of its own eligible teachers.

24. Do math, science and technology teachers who teach such subjects remotely "qualify" for reimbursement if the instructor otherwise meets the eligibility criteria?

Education Law §3037 does not prescribe the manner in which the instruction must be delivered. However, please note that nonpublic schools are only eligible to seek reimbursement for the salaries (or a portion thereof) of such eligible teachers employed by the school.

25. How will reimbursements be calculated and how will we know the total amount of our reimbursement?

In accordance with Education Law §3037(2)(b), reimbursements will be calculated based on NYSED's data regarding average comparable teacher salaries and personal services, per subject area, of public school teachers in the school district in which the nonpublic schools are located, multiplied by the percentage of full-time equivalent secular instructional hours completed in the nonpublic school day per subject area (mathematics, science, and technology).

If the total reimbursements requested exceed the \$30 million appropriation, then each applicant will only be reimbursed in an amount equal to the percentage each such applicant represents to the total of all applications submitted.

Reimbursement request forms received by NYSED by Monday, August 2, 2021 will be reviewed by NYSED staff.

NYSED will calculate the total approved requests and proportionate shares, the totals will be posted to the SORIS website and a notification will be sent out via the nonpublic school listserv.

26. Will each school who applies receive the full amount requested?

In the event that the total reimbursements requested exceed the \$30 million appropriation, Education Law §3037(2)(c) provides that each applicant will only be reimbursed in an amount equal to the percentage each such applicant represents to the total of all applications submitted. Schools whose eligible teacher salaries exceed their reimbursement amount must support those expenses on their own and will not receive additional reimbursement.

27. Is the grant reimbursement based on the current year or for the coming school year?

Reimbursement is for teacher's salaries who were employed during the 2020-2021 school year and taught mathematics, science and technology courses.

28. When will the schools be notified of the total reimbursement?

Reimbursement request forms received by NYSED by Monday, August 2, 2021 will be reviewed by NYSED staff. Approved requests will be compared against NYSED data regarding teacher salaries, and after NYSED calculates the total approved requests and proportionate shares, the totals will be posted to the SORIS website and a notification will be sent out via the nonpublic school listserv.

29. How will the comparable salaries be computed for a nonpublic high school located in a school district without a high school?

Reimbursements will be calculated based on NYSED's data regarding average comparable teacher salaries and personal services, per subject area, of public school teachers in the school district in which the nonpublic schools are located, however that district is configured.

30. If the reimbursements have to be prorated due to the requests exceeding the \$30 million allocation, will the prorated payment be per teacher or per school?

In the event that the applications for reimbursement under this section exceed the appropriation available for this program, then each teacher applicant shall only be reimbursed an amount equal to the percentage that each such applicant represents to the total of all applications submitted.

31. If the average comparable public-school teacher salary in the public school district is higher than the nonpublic school teacher salary, will the school be reimbursed the public school average or the actual salary we paid?

Reimbursement for eligible teachers shall be the average comparable teacher salary and personal service, per subject area, of public school teachers in the school district in which such nonpublic schools are located, multiplied by the percentage of full time equivalent secular instructional hours completed in the school day per subject area.

SUBMISSION

32. What is the deadline for submission?

Pursuant to Education Law §3037(2)(a), applications for reimbursement must be **received by** August 1st of each year for reimbursement of eligible teacher salaries

for the prior year. Therefore, since August 1, 2021 lands on a Sunday this year, the deadline for submitting request forms for the 2020-2021 school year is Monday, **August 2, 2021**.

33. Will incomplete or incorrect applications be deemed ineligible and not be reviewed?

Yes, applications must be submitted with all required signatures and documentation. When selecting an eligibility choice for each teacher, there is a checklist for the required documentary evidence. Please also refer to page five (5) of the guidance document for additional details regarding the required documents.

34. Where can we find the guidance document, and additional MST information?

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/nonpub/fundingopportunities/#mst>

35. When will you start accepting the applications?

Application submissions have already started. The deadline for submitting the reimbursement form and documentation is August 2, 2021.

36. Will we receive notification that our reimbursement submission form has been received?

No. We will not notify schools of receipt.

37. Do we submit one application form per school or one application form per teacher?

Each nonpublic school must submit a separate reimbursement form for each eligible teacher for whom the school is seeking reimbursement.

38. Can we apply for this for every teacher in our building who meets the criteria or only one teacher?

The law does not state a limit of the number of eligible teachers who can apply from each school.

39. What is the difference between a school master schedule and the teacher's schedule?

The master schedule encompasses the entire school's schedule including the teachers' names/initials, and the subjects/classes taught by period of each day. The teacher's schedule is specific to the daily schedule of the individual teacher for whom you are seeking reimbursement. No other teachers should appear on the

individual teacher's schedule unless a class is co-taught with another teacher. Please refer to the guidance document for additional detail.

40. Does every class within the master schedule need to align with the NYS Learning Standards?

No. Only the classes within in the master schedule for which the school is requesting reimbursement.

41. As we are only using secular instruction hours, must the master schedule include the whole school day, including religious studies, or is it to only include the secular study segment of the day?

The master schedule must encompass the entire school schedule.

42. In what format should the master schedule be submitted? These schedules are quite large.

The master schedules can be submitted on paper or on a flash drive. If the schools need to submit in an alternative method, please contact the State Office of Religious and Independent Schools at SORIS@nysed.gov, to discuss further.

43. Is a copy of the teaching certificate, or a diploma sufficient?

Yes. As long as it states the area of certification or degree type.

44. Where and in what format do we submit the reimbursement form?

It is encouraged that a school submits their application via the SED Monitoring Business Portal. (See appendix B on the MST Guidance document for directions)

If you choose to submit by paper application, please submit the Nonpublic School Reimbursement Request Form for Mathematics, Science and Technology Teachers in Religious and Independent Schools **along with the required** documentation including original signatures to:

New York State Education Department
State Office of Religious and Independent Schools
89 Washington Avenue, Room 1074 EBA
Albany, New York 12234

REMINDER – Forms and required documents must be received by NYSED no later than August 2, 2021.

45. Are all the documents listed in each category of the reimbursement request form required?

Yes. Nonpublic schools must submit the applicable documentary evidence with the Nonpublic School Reimbursement Request Form for Mathematics, Science, and Technology Teachers in Religious and Independent Schools. Please refer to the guidance document for additional detail.

46. Education Law §3037(a) states that a candidate for reimbursement may be an individual who “holds a Bachelor’s degree in Mathematics, Science, Technology or Education and is currently enrolled in a Master’s or Ph.D. program in Mathematics, Science, Technology or Education “within five years from the later of the April 10, 2017 or the employment start date with the nonpublic school” What has to occur within five years?

Education Law §3037(a) requires that for a teacher who only holds a bachelor’s degree to be eligible under this provision, he or she must be enrolled in an eligible Master’s or Ph.D. program by April 10, 2022 or within five years of commencing employment with the nonpublic school, whichever date is later. Please note that for a school to seek reimbursement for a teacher under this criteria, such teacher must be enrolled in the Master’s or Ph.D. program at the time reimbursement is sought.

47. What evidence do we need to provide to show that the curricula support the NYS Learning Standards? Are course descriptions sufficient? Are there resources available?

Evidence that the curricula supports the NYS Learning Standards shall include, but is not limited to, a description of the course and the corresponding curriculum, and curriculum maps. For information on current New York State Learning Standards please refer to the following links:

New York State Education Department’s website has resources available

Engage NY: <https://www.engageny.org/>

Next Generation Learning Standards:
<http://www.nysed.gov/next-generation-learning-standards>

Office of Curriculum and Instruction:
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/standards.html>

48. If the name on the teacher’s certificate or other documentation is not the same as the name on the school’s documentation due to marriage or other reasons, does the school need to submit proof of the teacher’s name change?

In such circumstances, the school should submit official documentation of the teacher's legal name change from the teacher or a notarized statement regarding the name change from the teacher along with the application.

49. If the staffing stayed the same, do the teachers applying need to re-submit their official transcript that should already be on file with NYSED?

The application must include at least a copy of the transcript, it does not have to be original.

50. Our employment agreements are electronic, through DocuSign. Are we able to submit printed DocuSign agreements, or would we have to have the Head of School and teacher manually re-sign the electronically signed versions?

It is not necessary to manually resign agreements that already contain electronic signatures. Our office will accept electronic signatures for the agreements; however, the certification page must be original. *For 2020-2021, schools can submit electronic or copied signatures in the certification section, if necessary.*

51. The directions for the grant state that the "school leader" needs to sign the employment agreement. Does that mean the principal or the superintendent, or can our HR person sign the agreement?

The employment agreement must be signed by a person who is involved in the hiring process at the school level. This could be a superintendent, principal, HR representative, or someone with another title. School leader titles may vary from school to school.

INSTRUCTION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

52. My school provided in-person and remote learning options for students during the 2020-2021 school year. What schedule should I submit?

For the master schedule requirement, please submit a schedule or multiple schedules that encompass all modes of instruction (clearly label in-person, remote, and/or hybrid) offered by your school this year.

For the teacher schedule requirement, submit a schedule or multiple schedules that encompass all modes of instruction taught by the teacher this year (clearly label in-person, remote, and/or hybrid offered by your school this year).

53. What if my school started the school year providing remote or hybrid instruction and switched to in-person instruction part way through the year, which schedules do we submit?

For the master schedule requirement, please submit a schedule or multiple schedules that encompass all modes of instruction, (clearly label in-person, remote, and/or hybrid instruction) offered by your school this year and the dates of the model change.

For the teacher schedule requirement, submit a schedule or multiple schedules that encompass all modes of instruction taught by the teacher this year (clearly label in-person, remote, and/or hybrid offered by your school this year) and the dates of the model change.

54. My school offered in-person instruction this year. However, we were required to go remote for certain periods at the direction of the local health department. Should I submit the remote schedule for those periods?

If a school closed or went to remote learning temporarily due to COVID-19 cases in the school or community, please send just the original master and teacher schedules.

55. My school temporarily had to close for a short period of time due to cases of COVID-19, what schedules would I submit?

If a school closed or went to remote learning temporarily due to COVID-19 cases in the school or community, please send just the original master and teacher schedules.

56. What does temporarily mean?

If a school closed or went to remote learning due to COVID-19 cases in the school or community and/or was directed to close the building by the Department of Health, but then reopened when cleared.