

## **BOARD CREDIT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is Board Credit?**

Board Credit is the system of professional development credit that the Board of Education uses to recognize and encourage continual professional growth among certified teachers through advancement on the salary schedule. The policies and procedures for Board Credit are detailed in the Board of Education Policy 5:100 Staff Development Program (Revised June 17, 2014).

### **How do I earn Board Credit (BC)?**

Basically, a teacher can earn Board Credit one of two ways. First, you can earn Board Credit for any staff development workshops that you attend that are offered through the district after school or weekends (not on contractual time). For any workshops that are offered by USD#116, you may automatically receive Board Credit by noting it on the sign-in sheets, unless you have asked for a stipend, and you do not have to apply. If you teach a district workshop, you can earn double Board Credit in lieu of a stipend. Second, you can apply for Board Credit (in advance) for workshops or conferences that you attend that are not on contractual time. To apply for Board Credit, you must create a Professional Development Request in Skyward Employee Access. To do this, choose Requests Pre-Approval under Professional Development in Employee Information. Click Add on the right side of the Pre-Approval screen, and fill out the required fields (highlighted in green). Once all the information is entered, click Submit for Approval. More information on requesting Board Credit for non-USD#116 workshops is available from Professional Development staff. No matter who the provider is, proof of attendance or completion is required for the Board Credit to be conferred.

### **How is the amount of Board Credit determined for each workshop or event?**

For every 8 approved clock hours of Board Credit (equal to professional development contact hours), you will earn 1 unit of Board Credit. While the Office of Professional Development keeps a database of Board Credit earnings, it is your responsibility to maintain documentation and records that verify contact time.

### **Is Board Credit different from University Credit or PD hours?**

Yes. Board Credit ONLY applies to advancement on the salary schedule in Urbana School District. University Credit is earned through college or university coursework that is transferable to other districts. University Credit is documented via transcripts that you must turn in to the Director of Human Resources. Professional Development Hours are required for license renewal through the Illinois State Board of Education. You keep ISBE Proof of Completion forms forever and document them through the Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS) available through ISBE website when you renew your teaching license.

### **Can I get Board Credit and PD Hours?**

Yes, the two are independent of each other.

**Can I get a district-paid stipend and Board Credit for the same activity?**

No, you must choose between Board Credit and a stipend.

**If the district pays for me to attend a conference can I still get Board Credit?**

No. Registration costs, fees, and other expenses are the participants' responsibility. If any USD#116 account is used to pay for even just a small percentage of the cost of attending, it cannot be used to earn Board Credit.

**Can I get Board Credit for District or Building Inservice days, or staff meetings?**

No. You cannot earn Board Credit during contractually obligated hours.

**Can I combine several events to build up to 1 unit of Board Credit?**

Yes! When you attend a workshop or conference, you will be awarded "clock hours" of Board Credit. For every 8 clock hours that you earn, you will be awarded 1 unit of Board Credit.

**How do I know how much Board Credit I have?**

Log into your Skyward Employee Access account, and in Personal Information, choose Prof Development under Personnel on the left side. Here you will find a list of all the Board Credit that has been processed for you. The numbers in the Earned column indicate the number of clock hours recorded for you. (Remember: 8 clock hours = 1 Board Credit, therefore 120 clock hours = 15 Board Credits.) To download this information, click the Excel icon at the top of the records, choose Export as Excel, and download the file.

**How do I decide between Board Credit and a stipend?**

This is a personal financial decision. Stipends are one-time cash incentives that are often paid from grant programs. Therefore, stipend amounts vary from year to year based on available grant funds, and are rarely offered. Often, Board Credit is the only compensation available. Board Credit accumulates toward movement on the salary schedule, which in the long run means a larger take home pay and a higher contribution to the Teacher Retirement System (TRS). You should also note on the salary schedule that after you reach BA+60, you must obtain a Master's degree before you can start accumulating Board Credit toward MA+15. Therefore if you are at BA+60, you should choose a stipend when possible.

**How and when do I move on the salary schedule?**

After you have accumulated 15 units of Board Credit (equal to 120 clock hours) or a combination of Board Credit and University Credit beyond your degree, you need to submit a Request for Movement form to the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Professional Development. The movement will take place at the beginning of the next contractual year. All coursework toward salary movement must be completed prior to the first day of the contractual year (the first day of school). Movement requests and all applicable paperwork must be submitted by September 30 to be eligible for salary movement.