



TSTA NEWS

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Average teacher salary in Texas trails national average by more than \$7,000; most experienced teachers are even farther behind

The average teacher salary in Texas now trails the national average by \$7,510, according to the latest rankings released today by the National Education Association (NEA), at a time when teacher salaries across the country are struggling to keep pace with inflation. The Texas gap is even worse for the most experienced teachers, although beginning teachers compare more favorably to their peers nationwide.

The average maximum salary for Texas teachers lags \$12,867 behind the national average, while the average starting salary for first-year teachers is \$2,757 more than the national average. Texas ranks 14th in the country in average starting pay for new teachers but 43rd in top salaries for veteran teachers. The state's overall salary ranking for all teachers is 26th.

"The new state task force studying teacher shortages can start here," Texas State Teachers Association President Ovidia Molina said. "Other factors, including the pandemic and the disrespect that some state leaders have shown educators, are driving good, experienced teachers from the classroom. But the bottom line for most teachers is their bottom line. The pay raises in 2019 were not enough. They can no longer afford doing the work they love."

"Our most experienced teachers are particularly frustrated with salary policies that do not adequately recognize them for additional training and experience. Texas' record in this regard is abysmal," she added.

Excluding differentiated pay for performance or for filling critical needs, the average top salary for teachers in Texas is only 43 percent higher than the average starting salary. The average salary difference between the beginning and the most experienced teachers in school districts in the rest of the country is twice what it is in Texas, 85 percent, NEA reported.

Making matters worse, Texas teachers, on average, are making 1.54 percent less than they were in the 2012-13 school year, when inflation is factored in.

"Teachers aren't making enough to begin with, and when you consider inflation, they are really taking a hit," Molina said.

Texas' average salary for all teachers for the current 2021-22 school year, based on state financial data reported to NEA, is \$58,887, compared to the national average of \$66,397. That ranks Texas 26th among the states and the District of Columbia.

The average starting salary for beginning Texas teachers, based on state data for 2020-21, was \$44,527, compared to the national average for first-year teachers of \$41,770. But one-third or more of those starting teachers will be gone from Texas classrooms after five years as their pay starts to fall farther and farther behind their needs.

Top salaries for teachers, based on such factors as experience and advanced degrees, vary from district to district, but the average in Texas for the most experienced teachers was \$63,673, compared to the national average of \$76,540.

“Our school support employees also are underpaid,” Molina said. “These people are the bus drivers, cafeteria workers, secretaries, teachers’ aides and many more whose work is essential to every school campus. Teachers can’t do their jobs without them.”

According to a related NEA report, these school district employees in Texas were paid, on average across job categories, \$29,067 in 2020-21, ranking Texas 38th in the country.

But Texas broke into the Top 10 among the states and the District of Columbia in another school finance category of special concern to property taxpayers. In 2020-21, Texas moved from 14th to 10th highest in the percentage of state and local school revenue paid by local taxpayers. Local property taxes accounted for 57.7 percent of total state and local school revenue in Texas that year. That was almost nine points more than the national average of 48.8 percent.

This continued overreliance on local property taxes contradicts what state leaders promised when they enacted House Bill 3, the school finance law, in 2019. They said House Bill 3 would transfer more of the responsibility for school funding to the state and give property taxpayers a break, but that hasn’t happened.

NEA also reported that Texas’ average expenditure per student in average daily attendance (ADA) jumped from \$11,169 in 2020-21 to an estimated \$13,425 in 2021-22, the current school year, an increase of more than 20 percent, based on figures obtained from the Texas Education Agency. TSTA believes that figure is inflated and may include federal COVID relief funds that have been allocated to Texas but haven’t been spent. The federal government has noted that about \$15 billion of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds allocated to Texas remained unspent as of February.

Based on input from school finance experts in Texas, TSTA believes a more-accurate estimate of Texas’ average per-pupil ADA payment for 2021-22 is about \$12,000.

TSTA is an affiliate of the National Education Association.

Find the NEA reports here: <https://www.nea.org/resource-library/teacher-pay-and-student-spending-how-does-your-state-rank>