



TSTA NEWS

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Texas teachers, on average, now earn a staggering \$9,000 less than the national average

Texas teachers' salaries continue to fall farther and farther behind what their peers in most of the rest of the country are earning, while per-student funding in Texas also lags farther behind most states, the National Education Association's latest national survey of financial commitments to public education shows. Texas teachers, on average, now earn more than \$9,000 less than the national average, while Texas provides more than \$5,000 less per student in school funding than the national average.

Based on financial data from the Texas Education Agency, NEA estimated the average teacher salary in Texas at \$62,463 for the current 2023-24 school year. This is \$9,236 less than the national average of \$71,699, ranking Texas 29th among the states and the District of Columbia. When inflation is considered, Texas teachers' average salaries now are 6 percent lower than they were in 2015.

Texas spent an average of \$12,781 per student in average daily attendance (ADA) from all revenue sources in 2023-2024, NEA's research showed. This is \$5,220 less per child than the national average of \$18,001 and ranks Texas 46th, almost scraping the bottom. While the national average in ADA spending increased by 2.9 percent from the previous school year, Texas' spending dropped by 2.5 percent.

Both deficiencies in these key measures of education support are greater than they were in 2022-23, when average teacher pay in Texas was about \$8,800 less than the national average and per-student ADA funding was almost \$4,400 less.

"Gov. Greg Abbott and his legislative allies are miserably failing the educators and school children of Texas and undermining our state's future," Texas State Teachers Association President Ovidia Molina said. "Even with a record, \$33 billion budget surplus last year, the Legislature failed to add one penny to the basic funding allotment for public schools because the governor, in a political snit fit, held additional state funding hostage to a voucher plan for private schools. That was an unconscionable act of neglect of the governor's constitutional duty to support public education."

"Now, school districts are cutting programs to fight inflation and balance their budgets and are finding it harder to attract and retain qualified teachers, while Abbott continues his drive for vouchers," Molina added. "This public education crisis will continue to worsen if the governor's plan to ship billions of our tax dollars to private schools ever becomes law."

Texas' inadequate compensation of teachers falls hardest on the most experienced educators, those at the highest ends of their districts' pay scales. Pay levels for these teachers are much worse comparatively than they are for younger

teachers, a related NEA report showed. Ninety percent of school districts nationwide, including 66 percent of Texas' districts, participated in this study.

This report, based on data from the 2022-23 school year, showed the average salary for first-year teachers in Texas was \$47,195. This was \$2,665 more than the national average, ranking Texas 15th nationally. The average top salary for Texas' most experienced teachers that year was \$66,461. That was \$14,565 less than the national average of \$81,026 and ranked Texas 41st, near the bottom, of the 46 states that reported a top teacher salary.

"Many promising teachers spend only a few years in the classroom before seeking and finding better-paying professions, as their teacher paychecks begin to lose ground to inflation," Molina said. "This inadequate pay structure and the recent increase in political attacks on teachers are major reasons for Texas' teacher shortage."

In another report based on the 2022-23 school year, NEA found that full-time K-12 school support employees – including bus drivers, cafeteria workers, teacher aides, school secretaries and clerks – averaged \$30,382 in pay, ranking Texas 34th nationally and putting the state \$3,374 behind the national average. Full-time higher education support staff averaged \$43,364, or 27th in the country and \$1,534 less than the national average.

"Many of our support workers, who are critical to school safety and success, hardly make livable wages. As we continue to fight vouchers, TSTA will be seeking substantial pay raises for them, as well as for teachers, when the Legislature convenes next year, because we know Texans value their public school educators, and it's time the Legislature does too," Molina said.

The Texas State Teachers Association is an affiliate of the National Education Association.