



TSTA NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 27, 2026

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Despite last year's raises, the average teacher pay in Texas trails the national average by more than \$8,500; per student funding is almost \$5,000 behind

The raises that the Legislature provided most Texas teachers last year have helped increase the average teacher pay in Texas by more than \$4,000 a year. But Texas teachers were so far behind their peers in most other states that they still trail the national average in teacher pay by more than \$8,500, according to the National Education Association's (NEA) annual survey of state financial contributions to public education.

The same survey shows that, even with last year's school funding increase, Texas falls almost \$5,000 below the national average in per-student spending for public education, based on average daily attendance (ADA). This ranks Texas 40th among the states and the District of Columbia in this critical education funding category, an improvement over last year, when only three states spent less per student, but still deficient.

"Last year was the first statewide raises for Texas teachers and significant funding increase for classrooms in six years. That is nothing for state leaders to brag about because they still have a long way to go to provide the level of funding our students need," Texas State Teachers Association President Ovidia Molina said.

"Many school districts are still tackling deficits, and Texas still has a serious teacher shortage that will require a larger investment of state dollars in public schools to adequately address. Even with last year's raises, teachers continue to lose spending power to inflation. And our school support staffers are paid much less. Many do not earn enough to cover basic needs for themselves and their families."

Molina also pointed out that Gov. Greg Abbott and the legislative majority last year appropriated \$1 billion in tax funds on a new voucher program for private schools and homeschoolers.

"That money should have gone to public education," she said. "TSTA will work to kill that voucher program or at least limit its growth when the Legislature convenes next year."

Based on data from states' educational departments, NEA estimated the average teacher salary in Texas for the current 2025-26 school year at \$68,001. This is \$8,551 less than the national average salary of \$76,552 and ranks Texas 29th among the states and the District of Columbia.

Last year, before the statewide raises went into effect, NEA calculated the average Texas teacher salary at \$63,749, more than \$10,000 less than the then-national average of \$74,495.

This year, for the first time in years, Texas increased its average teacher pay by a greater percentage (6.67 percent) than the average national increase (2.76 percent). Despite the raises, though, Texas teachers on average are earning 3.67 percent less than they were in 2017, after salaries are adjusted for inflation, NEA reported.

NEA estimated Texas is spending \$15,557 per ADA for public school funding this school year, 2025-26, compared to the national average of \$20,497. That is \$4,940 per student less than the national average.

In a related report covering the 2024-25 school year, NEA analyzed the earnings of school support staff, which covers a range of jobs, including teacher aides, school bus drivers, cafeteria workers, school secretaries and others. The average full-time support staff salary for 2024-25 in Texas K-12 schools was \$33,481, almost \$3,000 less than the national average of \$36,360 and ranking Texas 34th among the states and the District of Columbia.

According to the Economic Policy Institute's Family Budget Calculator, the least expensive metropolitan area in Texas is Brownsville-Harlingen, where a household with one adult and one child would need \$58,544 to have a modest but adequate lifestyle. The average support staff pay in a K-12 school in Texas falls more than \$25,000 short of that. It falls more than \$54,000 short of an adequate lifestyle for a similar family in the Austin-Round Rock area, the most expensive metro area in Texas.

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