

THE TEACHER SALARY PROJECT

Facts About Teachers

Why do teachers matter so much?

- Studies prove that a great teacher can [impart a year and a half's worth of learning to a student in one year.](#)
- Good teachers over a sustained periods can [help students] [overcome the disadvantages of poverty.](#)
- Teachers work an average of ten hours per day and [1,927 hours per school year.](#)

On U.S. societal views of teaching:

- [61% of U.S. adults](#) think teachers are underpaid given their level of training and importance to society.
- [77% of U.S. adults](#) feel teaching is among the most underappreciated professions in the U.S.
- A 2015 survey found that only [4.2% of college freshmen](#) are considering majoring in education, the lowest rate in 42 years.
- [76% of U.S. adults](#) agree that many of the smartest people in society don't go into teaching because being a teacher doesn't pay enough.

On teacher salaries:

- Only 4.7% of college juniors would consider teaching at the current starting salary. [68% of college students said they would consider the teaching profession if it paid 50% more](#) than the current occupations they were considering.
- In 1970 in New York city, a starting lawyer going into a prestigious firm and a starting teacher going into public education had a differential in their entry salary of about \$2,000. Today, including salary and bonus, that starting lawyer makes \$160,000, [while starting teachers in New York make roughly \\$45,000.](#)
- If teacher pay [had risen in proportion to per-pupil spending since 1970](#), the average teacher would make more than [\\$120,000 today.](#)
- The average starting salary for teachers in our country is [\\$39,000](#); the average ending salary - after 25 years in the profession - is \$67,000.
- As of 2015, teachers' weekly wages are [23% lower](#) than those of other college graduates.
- The wage gap between teachers [who belong to a union and all other professions is -19.6%; for non-union teachers the wage gap jumps to -25.5%.](#)
- Teachers are [priced out of home ownership](#) in 32 metropolitan areas.
- [99.5% of teachers reported spending their own money on their students or classrooms](#) during the 2012-2013 school year. Of the \$3.2 billion spent overall on school supplies that year, \$1.6 billion came directly from teachers' pockets.

On teacher turnover:

- [46 % of teachers](#) in public schools leave the profession within five years.
- In the next 10 years, [more than 1.8 million](#) of the 3.2 million teachers will become eligible for retirement.
- 14% of teachers leave the profession each year; [in urban districts, the turnover is higher: 20%.](#)
- High turnover of American teachers costs our country [over \\$7 billion every year.](#)
- Of teachers who leave the profession for reasons of dissatisfaction, [poor salaries are the cause for 61%.](#)