



TSTA NEWS

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Texas teacher pay slipping farther behind; even worse for support staff

Even as the Legislature debates state education funding, the average teacher salary in Texas is dropping even farther behind the national average, updated research by the National Education Association (NEA) shows.

Average teacher pay in Texas for the current, 2018-19 school year is \$54,122, according to the Texas Education Agency, or \$54,155, based on NEA's calculations. Either figure is about \$7,600 less than the national average of \$61,782, as estimated by NEA, which does an annual state-by-state survey of teacher salaries and other education spending categories. Texas ranked 27th among the states and the District of Columbia in teacher compensation.

The Texas State Teachers Association is the Texas affiliate of NEA, the 3-million-member educators' union.

Texas' average teacher salary of \$53,334 for the 2017-18 school year trailed the national average of \$60,462 by about \$7,100. Adjusted for inflation, average teacher pay in Texas in 2017-18 was 2.9 percent less than it was in 2008-09, NEA said.

"This is disgraceful, and it is getting worse," said TSTA President Noel Candelaria. "Inadequate pay is a major reason why thousands of effective teachers leave Texas classrooms every year for other professions. It also is why almost 40 percent of teachers who stick it out have to take extra jobs during the school year to meet their families' needs."

"And it is why TSTA is demanding that the Legislature, as it tackles school finance reform this session, enact a permanent, across-the-board pay raise for every teacher and provide funding for pay raises for librarians, counselors, nurses and all support staff as well," Candelaria added.

"The #RedForEd movement rallied at the state Capitol earlier this week, and it will continue to expand throughout Texas until lawmakers do what is right for all our students, educators and retired educators."

Support staff, who provide invaluable services to students and teachers every day, are paid less than teachers, much less in many cases. According to the Texas Education Agency, here are current average salaries for various support staff: classroom aides -- \$21,153; food service workers -- \$19,162; bus drivers -- \$24,304; custodians -- \$24,662; campus clerical staff -- \$26,967; and campus security -- \$32,992.

"When you subtract their ever-increasing costs for health insurance, many of these employees are taking home very little money each month," Candelaria said. "They also have to take outside jobs, often more than one, to support their families. The Legislature must pay all school employees more, and it must increase the \$75 per month it contributes to teacher and school employee health insurance. That amount hasn't been increased in 17 years, while health care costs have soared."

In an earlier report, NEA had estimated the average teacher salary in Texas for 2017-18 at \$53,167, compared to an estimated national average of \$60,483. This new report updates those figures.