

Pocket Facts: Better Salaries For Teachers In Texas Public Schools

- What public school teachers are paid, as well as how, is inferior to the annualized salaries of comparable professions in the private sector.
- When average state teacher salary is judged by comparisons with national average teacher salaries, Texas teachers are underpaid—but, adjusted for cost of living, Texas teachers are paid about right. Some are paid very handsomely compared with teachers in other states, some are paid too low, and some are paid too much.
- When salaries are judged by districts' ability to recruit and retain qualified teachers, some Texas teachers—in specific positions and specific schools—are paid too low.
- The state's uniform salary schedule is dysfunctional, hindering districts from recruiting and retaining all of the qualified teachers they need—even though most districts pad the state schedule with supplements, bonuses, and stipends.
- Districts' limited authority over salary and employment decisions undermines efforts to materially improve student achievement.

Policy Recommendations:

- Phase out the state uniform salary schedule and laws pertaining to employment.
- Set state standards for districts to provide differentiated, performance-based salaries, and standards for district management of human resources.
- Create a state teacher salary incentive program for all public school teachers and dedicate a specific amount of state funding for differentiated, performance-based pay.
- Establish significantly higher standards for student achievement that recognize the potential of teacher impact, and hold students, teachers, administrators, and schools accountable for results.
- Require school districts to implement programs that affect the value of salaries, including improving the school environment, expanding professional development related to instruction, and creating career opportunities to keep good teachers in the classroom.

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