

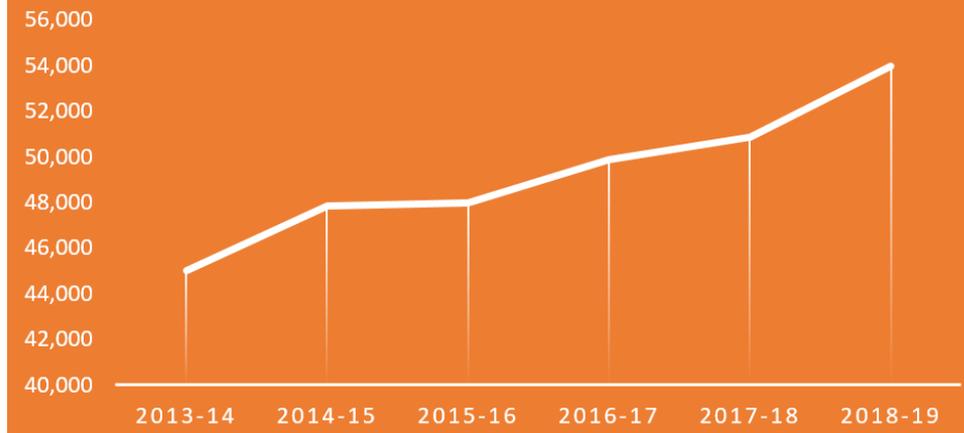
# Raising Teacher Salary in North Carolina Public Schools

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## Key Points

- While North Carolina has increased its salary for teachers, it still drastically lacks behind the national average.
- A larger percentage of teachers have additional jobs to supplement their income as a teacher to pay for a quality standard of living.
- School districts and states have begun starting to implement incentive rewards dependent on teaching performance and merit.
- Studies show that higher pay allows for more competitive teachers who will allow their students to perform better.

## PUBLIC TEACHER SALARY OVER PAST 6 YEARS



Graph created from data found by T. Keung Hui from The News and Observer

## The Problem

Last year, the public school teachers of North Carolina marched on Raleigh, demanding better pay. The State of North Carolina is lacking in the United States in salaries for teachers, and teachers are demanding better. In 2017, North Carolina ranked 39th for teacher salary, and 44th in salary for instructional staff. Both of these are a 4.2 percent increase from 2016, but North Carolina is still in the bottom of the country. North Carolina, as of 2017, ranks 40th for local revenue as a combined state and local revenue percentage that goes into teacher pay. Only 35.6% of combined local and state revenue goes into teacher salaries. This problem is not exclusive to North Carolina. The past few months have seen teacher strikes in Los Angeles and Denver. The cause for these strikes mirror why the teachers of North Carolina marched, they want an increase in teacher salaries. This most recent year, North Carolina has raised teacher salary, but it is still far below the national average (as seen in the graph on page 2). Also, North Carolina teachers are still not satisfied as another rally will occur on May 1, 2019.

## Common Myths

This problem can be seen with the number of teachers nation-wide who hold second jobs. These jobs are not just in the summer when teachers do not work, but during the school year. Teachers are 30% more likely than non-teachers to have a second job, with roughly 14% of teachers having a second job. Furthermore, the majority of teachers are having to work second jobs in January and February. These jobs vary across a wide variety of topics not education related, from cashiers to Uber drivers. By having to work a second job, it makes teachers more tired and that effects their teaching performance. Alternatively, schools and districts can implement incentive based teacher pay, where salaries would increase based off of student performance. The energy used in a second job would be channeled into students increase teacher morale and student performance

**\$53,975**

North Carolina Public  
Teacher Salary in  
2018-2019

**#39**

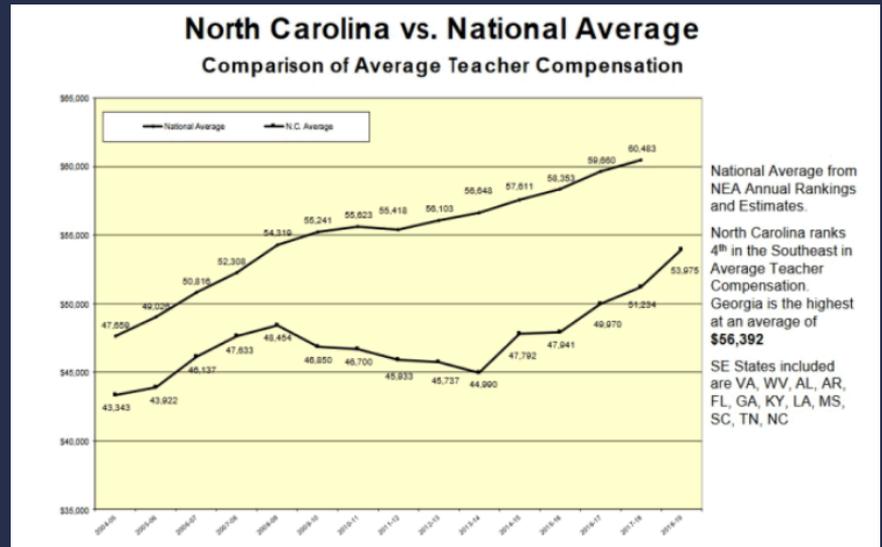
North Carolina's  
ranking in public  
teacher salary in 2017

**#44**

North Carolina's  
ranking in  
Instructional Staff  
Salary in 2017

## Hold Harmless Statute

Legislation for North Carolina teachers from the General Assembly includes a "hold harmless" provision that means no teacher will make less in 2016-2017 than they did in 2014-2015. This language has been included in the budget every year since then and is a step in the right direction for increasing teacher pay. One violation of this is teachers of over 25 years of experience will get paid less in the upcoming years than in 2013-2014 because the provision did not go into effect until 2016-2017. Still, the Duke University Fact Check Lab has approved the claim that within the past two years, teacher salaries are increasing as much as the General Assembly is saying, which is a step in the right direction



Data comes from T. Keung Hi and the National Education Association

## Possible Solutions

- Matthew Springer has researched education reform practices and noted that over the past several years, more states and local districts have adopted incentive based pay programs. Teachers are split on the issue of whether they like them as they can inadvertently favor districts in wealthier areas. As of 2017, his study has found that merit pay (pay based on the grades of students) had a modest positive effect on student test scores. The gains were the equivalent of adding 3 extra weeks of learning. North Carolina can justify paying teachers more by claiming that it can improve test scores, as seen in this study.
- Matthew Hendricks conducted a study that measured how districts attract and retain better teachers. He found that pay for teacher above three years experience is the deciding factor into where a teacher works if they can have a say. He concludes by stating that when teachers are retained by being offered a higher salary, they are more productive to prove their worth and students do better with the lower turnover. By paying below the national average, North Carolina risks losing better teachers to states that can pay more.
- A group of researchers reviewed the NC Bonus Program from the early 2000s, a system in which teachers in high-poverty schools in North Carolina were offered higher salaries. The program found a 1/6 reduction in turnover in those schools. The researchers acknowledge the study was short lived, but theorize that this increase in pay in high-poverty areas would have led to increased scores among students as teachers would be willing to stay in those areas longer.

## Policy Proposal

My policy implementation idea is to introduce more incentive based programs at a district level to find a policy initiative that works best and apply that to a state level. However, district policy change may only be realistic as many districts vary in size, need, and surrounding income. Some groups may oppose this as it may unfairly benefit districts in wealthier areas, like Wake and Mecklenburg counties. However, this will attract a wider teacher pool, increase student scores, and can make North Carolina a role model for education reform.

### SOURCE LINKS

<https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/article227200094.html>

<https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/article217932320.html>

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/03/23/why-are-teachers-more-likely-than-others-to-work-second-jobs/>

<http://www.nea.org/home/73145.htm>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/pam.20292>

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/95ef/a780b0879e9e174738333b593da16edeef07.pdf>

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<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/03/23/why-are-teachers-more-likely-than-others-to-work-second-jobs/>.