

# NC Teacher Pay Still in Recession

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## Key Points:

- North Carolina ranks 39th in teacher pay by state<sup>2</sup>, 30th in NAEP Math Scores, and 39th in NAEP Reading Scores<sup>4</sup>.
- Evidence suggests that variations in teacher quality account for at least 7.5 percent of the total variation in student achievement<sup>1</sup>.
- Data show that a ten percent increase in teacher pay gives a five to ten percent increase in pupil performance<sup>1</sup>.

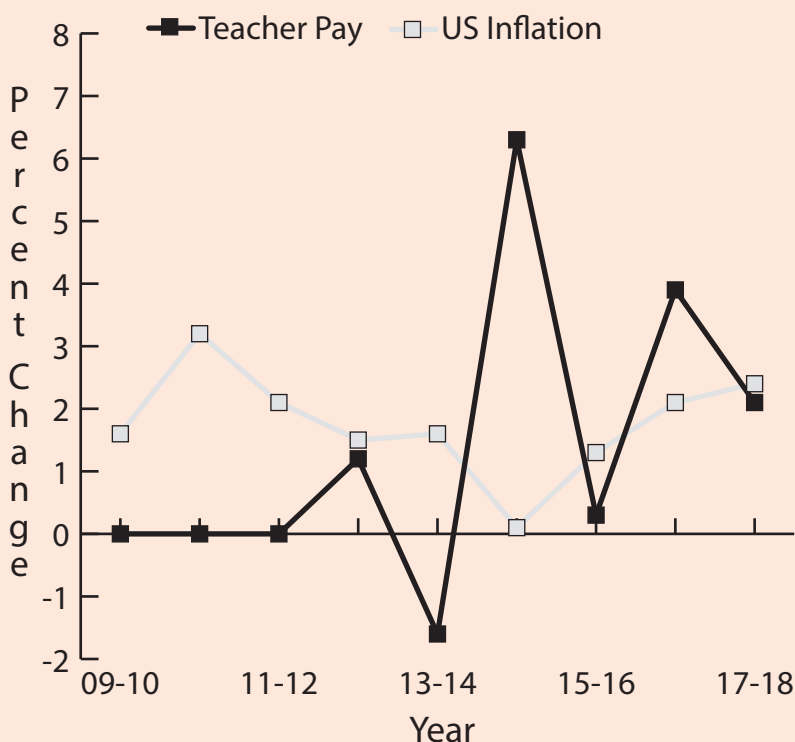
## The Problem:

The United States suffers from a declining education level in comparison to other leading countries around the world. North Carolina, though improving, is unfortunately nowhere close to the top of the state rankings regarding quality of K-12 education. Evidence shows that primary education is strongly influenced by teacher quality, which is often correlated with teacher pay.

Teacher pay in North Carolina suffered heavily during the Great Recession. The Democratic state legislature lowered and froze teacher salaries in 2009. Then, from 2010-2013 the newly Republican legislature continued to cut salaries consistently forcing many veteran teachers to retire, quit, or move<sup>2</sup>.

Teacher salaries in North Carolina have never fully recovered. The state currently ranks 39th in teacher pay. In 2018 these teachers had approximately \$5,000 less in purchasing power than they had before the Great Recession<sup>2</sup>. Despite rising demand for education in the United States, teachers continue to suffer.

NC Teacher Pay vs US Inflation  
(Data from ncae.org)



## Why is this so important?

This is a pressing issue due to the obvious relationship between teaching quality and student scores and retention. Students who miss out on high quality primary education typically experience negative effects on their future economic mobility<sup>3</sup>. We owe the children of America an opportunity to not only succeed in our country, but also to be competitive globally. As one of the leaders of the free world the United States needs to stay ahead of the education curve and it starts with our educators.

## Recent Proposals:

- North Carolina Republicans want to give teachers a six percent average raise and give bonuses for high performers or those who teach high-demand subjects<sup>2</sup>.
- Roy Cooper wants to give teachers an eight percent raise, reward veteran teachers, and eventually raise average teacher pay in North Carolina to the national average. This would be funded by halting a tax cut to business and incomes over \$200,000<sup>2</sup>.

**An overall raise in teacher pay would give current teachers no incentive to improve and take 30-40 years for new, better teachers to take over the system<sup>1</sup>.**

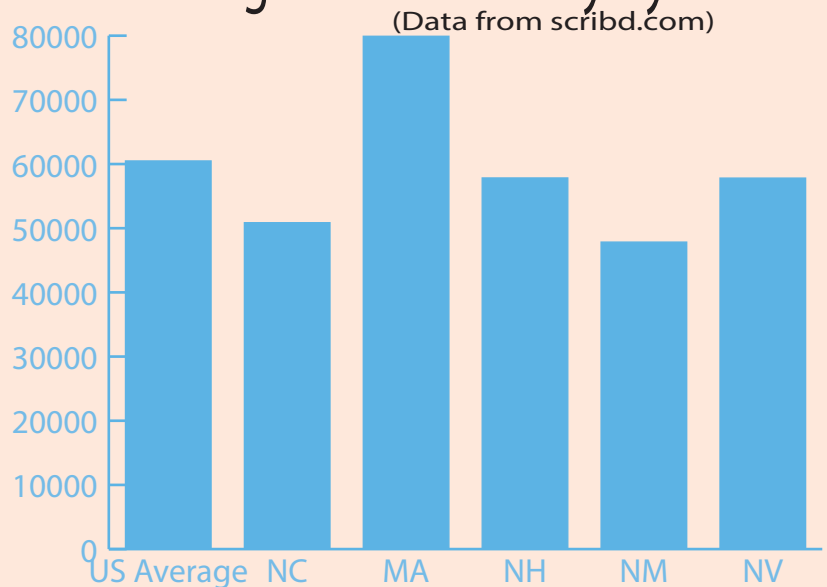
In order for a solution to be effective, it needs to include both *incentive* and *evaluation*.

## Incentive:

An obvious part of the solution to this problem is incentivising top professionals in the US to want to become teachers. Higher pay will attract more qualified employees. A prime example of this can be found in South Korea where they recruit educators from the top five percent of graduates, and consistently perform at the highest level in pupil achievement<sup>1</sup>.

Research shows that a ten percent increase in teacher relative wages can reduce pupil dropout rates by three to six percent. 64 percent of current education spending is already allocated to teacher compensation<sup>1</sup>, and local governments often add bonuses to that<sup>3</sup>. It is up to state legislators to increase the overall salary level.

## Average Teacher Salary by State



Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Nevada, and New Mexico rank 1, 2, 23, 49, and 50, respectively, in K-12 education.

## Evaluation:

The only way that better incentives will be effective is if teachers are held accountable for measurable improvement. Some benefits of teacher evaluations include:

- Instructional Improvement
- Certification
- Reemployment
- Merit Promotion
- Salary Increases

Surveys have shown that North Carolina teachers are both open to evaluation processes, and also generally approve of the criteria of evaluation<sup>3</sup>.

## References:

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