



THE UTAH TAXPAYER

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Utah’s Average Teacher Pay Ranks Above National Median, Second Highest in the Region

While we can always do more to help fund our students and teachers, the picture is not nearly as dire as we’re told it is.

In fact, the Utah Legislature, in 2016, designated \$178 million to teacher salary increases.

This Session, the Legislature has worked to cut \$69 million from base budgets, with roughly \$41 million, if each school district were to appropriate it to salaries, to approximately \$2,000 to each teacher in the state.

Also, the Legislature is expected to increase the weighted pupil unit (WPU), which is the mechanism that funds classroom education, which includes teacher pay. According to Utah’s legislative budget team, they expect most of that to go directly to salaries.

While the Legislature continues to build teacher salaries to ensure Utah remains competitive to attract the best teachers, the situation is not as desperate as the messaging would have you believe.

According to data calculated by the Utah Taxpayers Association, Utah ranks 25th highest in average teacher salary in the nation, putting us right in the middle of the pack.

Utah’s average teacher salary is \$55,746, which is above the nationwide median of \$55,630, a positive

difference of \$116.

This data is for the averages of elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers for the 2015-2016 school year, by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics. This does not include special education or CTE teachers.

Our non-adjusted average teacher pay puts us the second highest average teacher salary of our neighboring states, falling only behind Wyoming, where the average teacher salary is \$59,156.

When the cost of living adjustments are taken into consideration, the average teacher salary in Utah is \$57,470 annually. Keep in mind, this information does not include benefits or any other compensation. This ranking is strictly based on non-contract income and salary data.

In fact, Utah’s average teacher salary, when adjusted for cost of living, is only \$129 less than the median nationwide teacher salary, which is \$57,599.

The cost of living adjustment data is provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which calculates the Regional Price Parity (RPP). The RPP is made of costs such as rental prices, the cost of goods such as food, fuel, and other factors. The latest data available on the regional price parity was from 2015.

State	Average Teacher Salary	National Ranking	Salary Adjusted for Regional Price Parity	National Ranking
Wyoming	\$ 59,156	18	\$ 61,493	15
Utah	\$ 55,746	25	\$ 57,470	27
Nevada	\$ 55,630	26	\$ 56,765	30
New Mexico	\$ 55,580	27	\$ 58,877	25
Colorado	\$ 52,266	33	\$ 50,645	44
Idaho	\$ 48,753	43	\$ 52,198	42
Arizona	\$ 44,526	47	\$ 46,285	51