

Teacher Pay

What K–12 Teachers Earn—and What They Think About What They Earn—from the 2023 State of the American Teacher Survey



The 2023 State of the American Teacher Survey

The 2023 State of the American Teacher (SoT) survey was administered to a nationally representative sample of 1,400 K–12 public-school teachers in January 2023. Survey results are weighted to provide nationally representative estimates of White, Black, and Hispanic teachers. The survey contains items on several topics related to teacher well-being, pay, and working conditions.

The 2023 SoT survey asked teachers to report (1) their **current base salary** during the 2022–2023 school year and (2) whether they felt that their base salary was **adequate**. Respondents who indicated that their base salary was inadequate were asked to report (3) their **desired base salary**, assuming their roles and responsibilities remained unchanged, to consider their salary “completely adequate.”

Key Findings

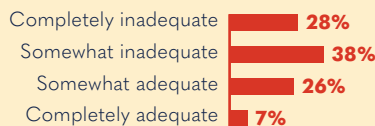
The average teacher reported a base salary of **\$67,000** during the 2022–2023 school year

What is your base teaching salary for the entire school year?

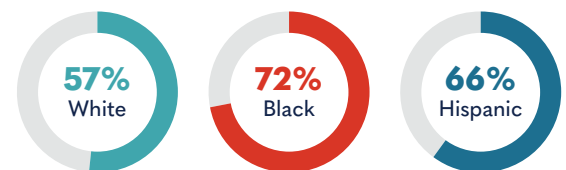


However, **only one out of three** K–12 teachers considered their base salary to be “**somewhat**” or “**completely**” adequate

How adequate do you consider your base teaching salary to be?

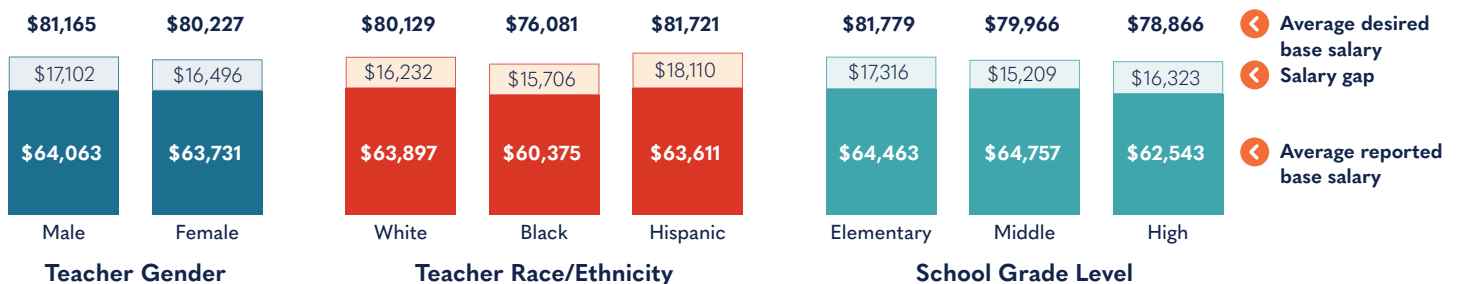


Low salaries were a commonly cited reason among teachers intending to leave their jobs—particularly among teachers of color



Percentage of teachers indicating “my salary is too low” as a top reason why they were thinking about leaving their current teaching job

Teachers who did not consider their salary to be “somewhat” or “completely” adequate, on average, desired roughly a **\$17,000 pay increase**, although the exact size of the gap in actual desired base salary **differed across teacher and school contexts**



Policy Implications

These findings point to the importance of pay adequacy in job satisfaction and retention. State and local leaders have different levers to affect teacher compensation, including **establishing new minimum pay standards** and **creating new opportunities for supplemental pay**.

However, our research also points to the importance of factors beyond compensation levels in determining pay adequacy, such as **hours worked** and **administrator support** (Steiner, Woo, and Doan, 2023).

Improving teacher job satisfaction is **not just a pay issue**. Efforts to bolster teacher retention will require solutions that address pay, hours worked, and working conditions.