



LPRO

LEGISLATIVE POLICY
AND RESEARCH OFFICE

Statewide Minimum Teacher Salaries

PREPARED FOR: Joint Task Force on Statewide Educator Salary Schedules

DATE: September 26, 2023

BY: Maia Powloski, Legislative Analyst

RE: States with statewide minimum teacher salaries and their policy environments

Three terms to know

Minimum starting salary

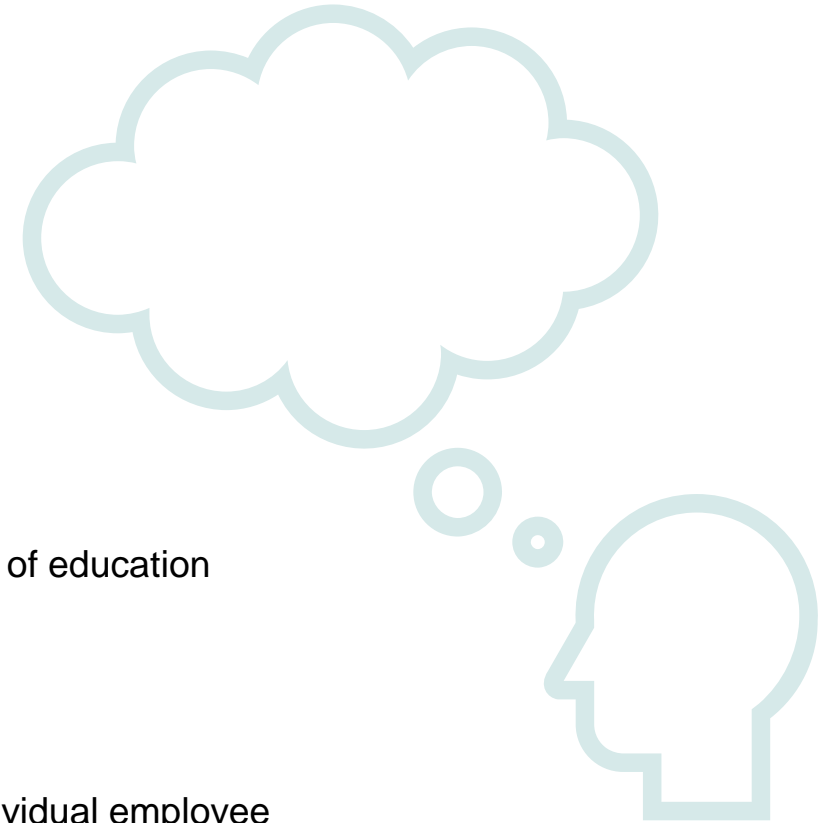
- full-time first-year teacher with a bachelor's degree + zero years' experience
- set by state government

Minimum salary or minimum salary schedule

- set at statewide level, usually by legislature
- sometimes a flat base amount
- but often a schedule:
 - both minimum and maximum amounts
 - a grid: usually, one axis years of experience, and other axis level or type of education

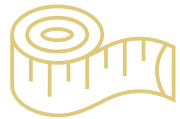
Salary schedule

- negotiated between district + union
- in states where collective bargaining prohibited: negotiated between district + individual employee



Limitations to this report's data

No data for 2022-23 average starting salaries.



In some states, the 2022-2023 minimum starting salary is higher than the 2021-2022 average starting salary, due to 2023 changes in state law.

No medians, only averages.



Averages may be misleading, especially in states with both rural areas and very big or high-cost-of-living cities like Chicago or Boston.

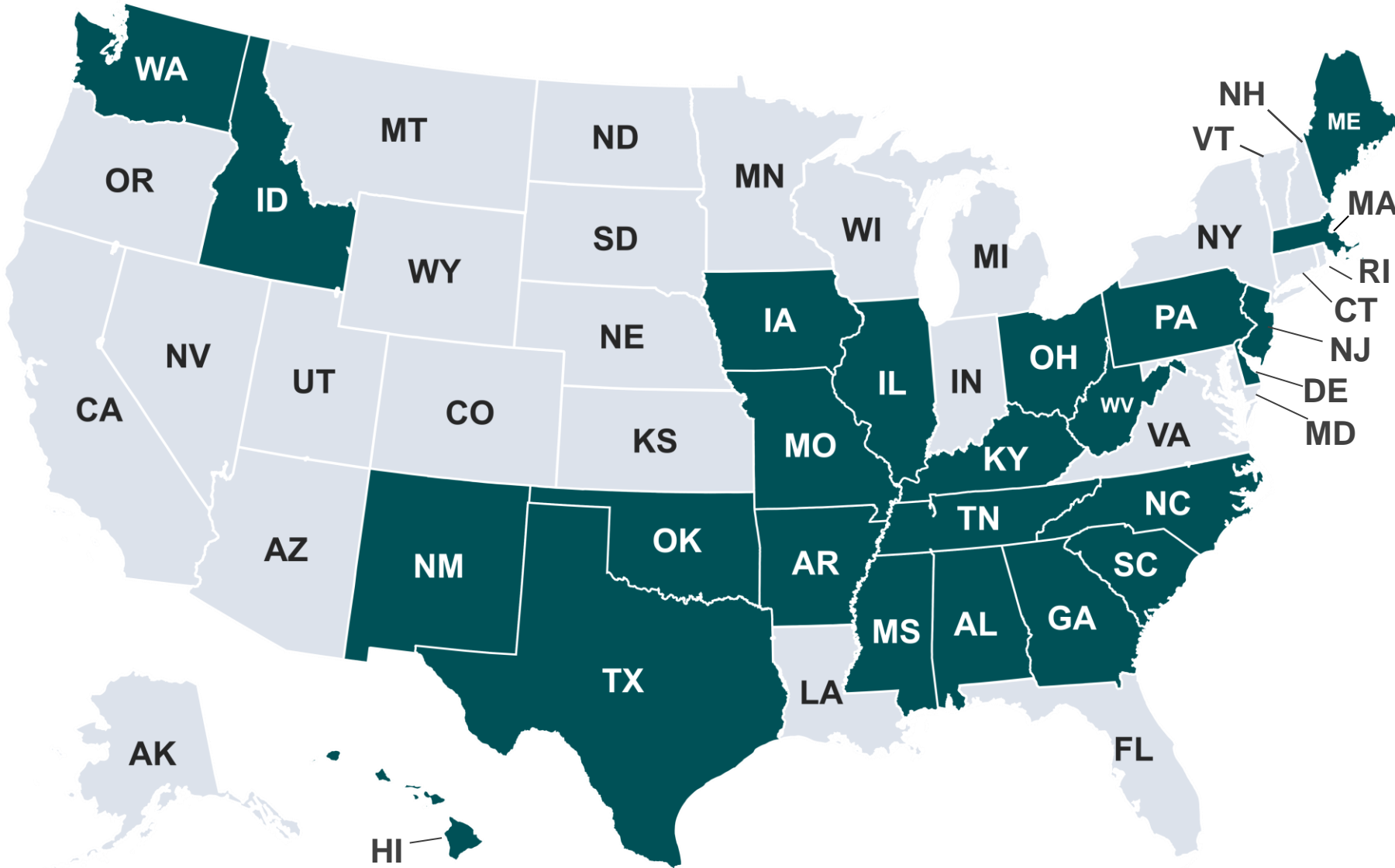
No district-by-district breakdowns.



Each state has wide variation in teacher pay from district to district—but those details are beyond the scope of this report.

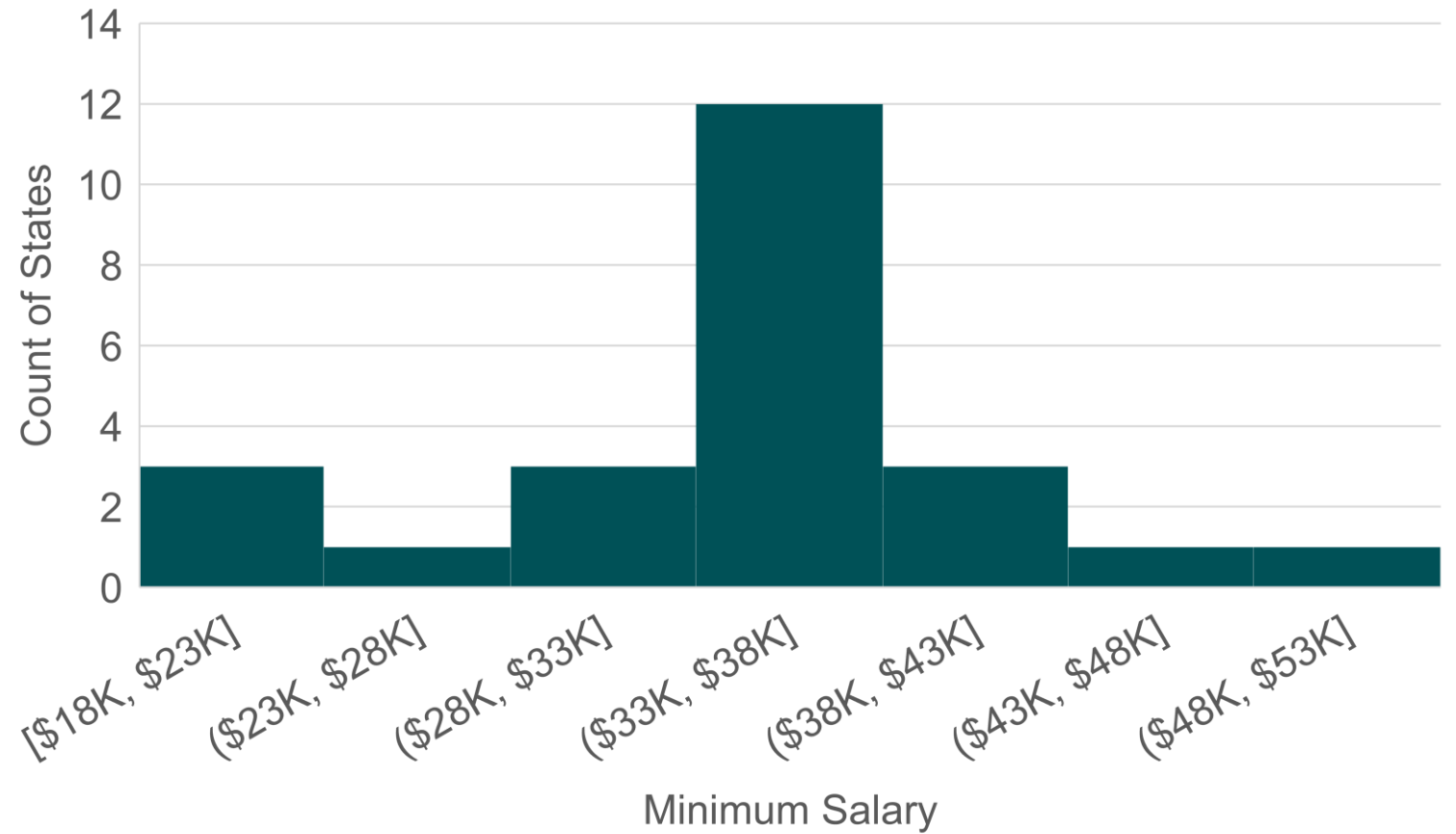


24 states have statewide minimum teacher salaries



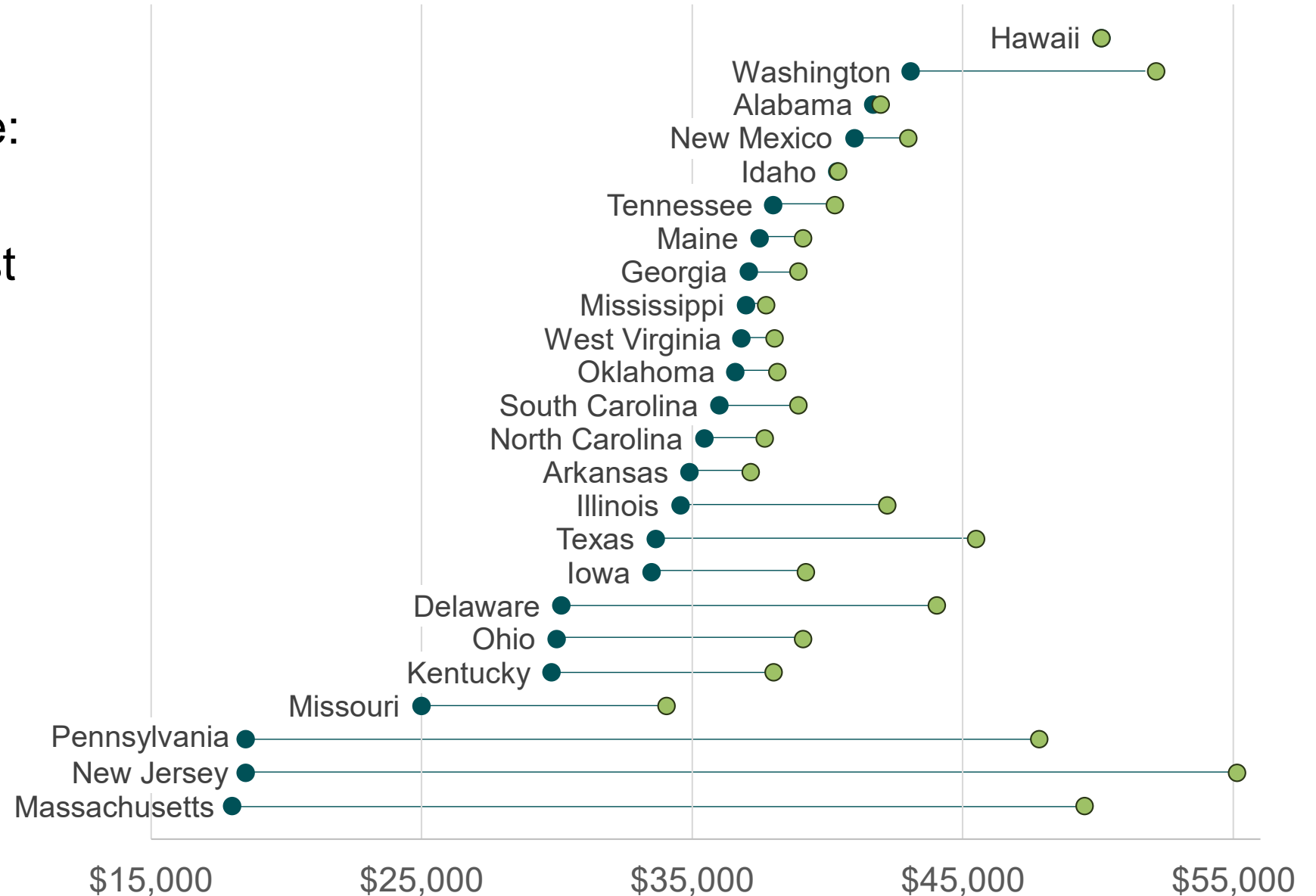
2021-2022 minimum starting salaries vary

- Hawaii had highest: \$50,123
- Massachusetts had lowest: \$18,000



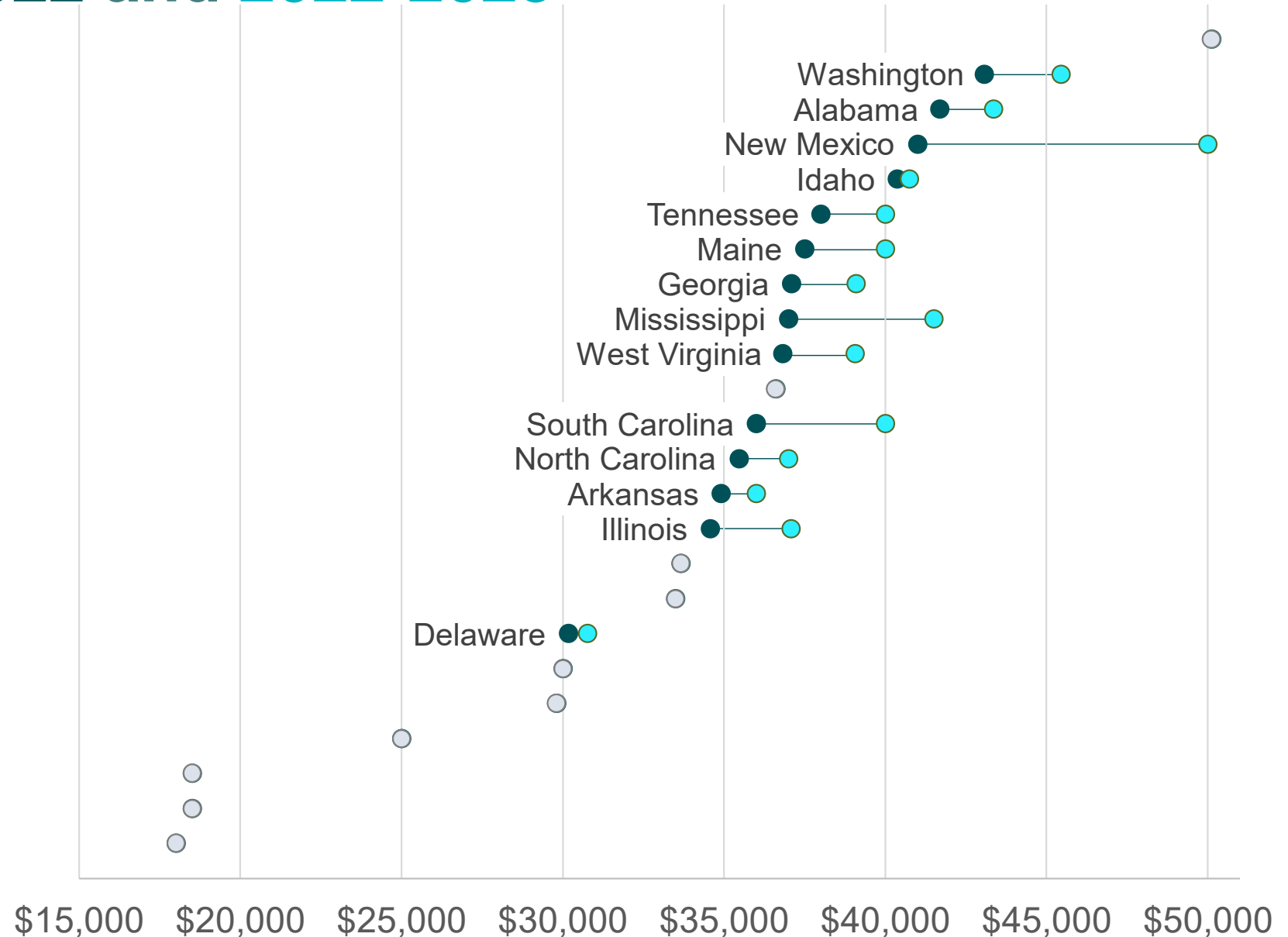
Average starting salary versus minimum starting salary—a range of differences

- New Jersey had highest difference: \$36,643
- Hawaii had lowest difference: \$0



14 of 24 states increased minimum starting salary between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023

- New Mexico had highest increase: \$9,000
- Idaho had lowest increase: \$373



Facts unique to just a few of these 24 states...

Alabama, Delaware, and West Virginia have **statewide minimum salaries for classified staff**. Other states have proposed statewide minimums for classified staff, but no others have passed such legislation.

Washington is the only state that statutorily mandates **regional variation** in its minimum teacher salaries.

Instead of collective bargaining, **Tennessee teachers use collaborative conferencing**—a process unique to their state.



Collective bargaining in states with minimum teacher salaries

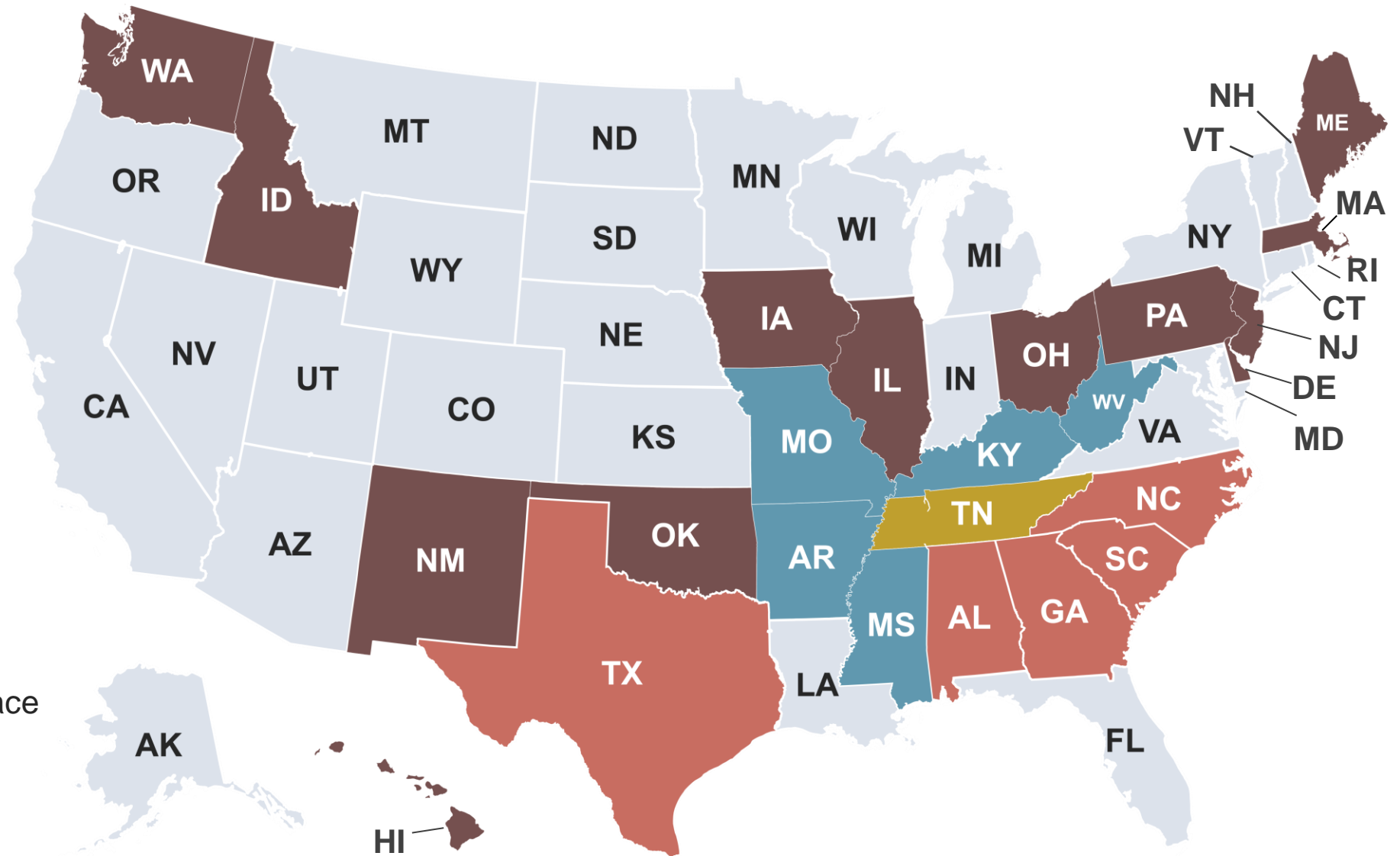
Required 13 states

Permitted 5 states

Prohibited 5 states




Exception 1 state

Tennessee's collaborative conferencing takes the place of collective bargaining.



Alabama

Collective Bargaining PROHIBITED

 146 Districts	 748,274 Students	 38,835 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$41,690	\$41,974	\$55,834	\$43,358	\$56,109

Big recent changes per 2023 TEAMS Act:

- Pay differentials and bonuses to math and science teachers
- Higher salaries to those teaching in high-poverty schools




Alabama is 1 of 3 states with **classified staff min. wage**.

- 2023-2024 state budget: 2% classified staff pay increase
- Advocates were unsuccessful in their push for \$15/hr. min. wage for classified staff.



Arkansas

Collective Bargaining PERMITTED

 261 Districts	 489,565 Students	 38,846 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$34,900	\$37,186	\$52,486	\$36,000	\$53,317




Big recent changes per 2023 LEARNS Act:

- Previous min. salary schedule replaced with **across-the-board \$50k base salary** starting 2023-2024.
- To be eligible for new salary funds, districts **must consider state law both the floor and the ceiling for employee rights.**
- If a teacher of grade 5-12 teaches more than the maximum number of students, then their **pay is increased proportionally.**



Delaware

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED




 42 Districts	 139,935 Students	 9,965 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$30,166	\$44,037	\$65,647	\$30,769	\$66,243

- Delaware is 1 of 3 states with **classified staff min. wage**.
- Min. teacher salary law enacted 1947; Delaware has updated the statute every 1-4 years since that time.
- In addition to teachers and classified staff, Delaware has minimum salaries for **principals, secretaries, clerks, school nurses, custodians, food service workers, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and Dept. of Ed. early childhood personnel**.
- A 2022 senate bill created Delaware's **Public Education Compensation Committee**, similar in many ways to this task force.
- June 2023: legislature passed 3-9% raises for classified and teaching staff.



Georgia

Collective Bargaining PROHIBITED

 223 Districts	 1,740,875 Students	 119,381 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$37,092	\$38,926	\$61,249	\$39,092	\$64,461

Uniquely, **Georgia delegates its teacher salary schedule to its state Board of Education.**




The legislature makes many laws regarding salaries for school staff, including:

- 10% salary increase for each year teacher holds national board certification
- 10% salary increase for certified teachers in high-needs schools
- Math and science teachers boosted to higher step in salary schedule



Hawaii

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED




 1 District	 173,178 Students	 12,026 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$50,123	\$50,123	\$67,000	\$50,123	\$70,947

- Hawaii is unique: **The entire state is 1 school district**, and all public school teachers are state employees.
- This makes Hawaii is the only state in which teachers engage in **statewide collective bargaining**—but all teachers in Hawaii have the same employer, so it may not be comparable to any potential statewide collective bargaining in Oregon.
- Hawaii is also the only state in which the minimum teacher salary is not in statute, but in a collective bargaining agreement renegotiated yearly.



Idaho

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED




 180 Districts	 314,258 Students	 17,934 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$40,369	\$40,394	\$54,232	\$40,742	\$56,365

Master Educator Premiums: \$4,000 is awarded each year for 3 years with 8+ years experience, the most recent 3 years of which must have been teaching in Idaho. School districts may add their own requirements for teachers to earn the premium.



Illinois

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED




 863 Districts	 1,868,482 Students	 139,378 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$34,576	\$42,213	\$72,301	\$37,076	\$73,933

- 2020 updates increase min. salary each school year from \$32,000 (2020-21) to, eventually, **\$40,000 (2023-24)**.
- New in 2021: \$4,000 **retention bonuses** for 2 consecutive years for teachers in 30+% low-income schools.
- A statute effective Aug. 2023 ties salary increases to the **Consumer Price Index**.
- Illinois allows, but does not require, districts to pay student teachers.



Iowa

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED




 327 Districts		 510,661 Students		 36,059 Teachers	
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23	
\$33,500	\$39,208	\$59,262	\$33,500	\$60,150	

Scope of collective bargaining has reduced significantly for many public employees in Iowa, including teachers, after the passage of a 2017 law. Since then, **Iowa teacher collective bargaining has been limited mostly to wages.**



Kentucky

Collective Bargaining PERMITTED




 174 Districts	 654,239 Students	 43,379 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$29,804	\$38,010	\$54,574	\$29,804	\$56,296

- Kentucky has **some of the lowest teacher salaries** in the nation.
- State law provides for **annual \$2,000 payments to certified teachers** for the life of their certificate.
- Similar annual \$2,000 payments for speech language pathologists and audiologists depend on legislative appropriations.



Maine

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED

 234 Districts		 173,215 Students		 15,417 Teachers	
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23	
\$37,500	\$39,101	\$58,757	\$40,000	\$60,391	




2023 bill to **raise min. teacher salary to \$50,000 over next 4 school years** passed, but remains unfunded. If Maine's 2024 supplemental budget funds the bill, it will become effective; otherwise, it dies.

2023 also saw 4 bills that would have created some form of min. salary for Maine **classified staff**; none appear to have passed.



Massachusetts

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED




 399 Districts		 921,180 Students		 76,328 Teachers	
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23	
\$18,000	\$49,503	\$88,903	\$18,000	\$92,307	

- \$18,000 min. has not been updated since 1993, and is one of the country's largest differences between min. salary versus average starting salary.
- Overall, Massachusetts school employee **salary statutes have not been updated in 30-40+ years.**



Mississippi

Collective Bargaining PERMITTED




 152 Districts	 442,000 Students	 31,685 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$37,000	\$37,729	\$47,162	\$41,500	\$48,530

- 2022 saw the largest raise in years for teacher min. salary in Mississippi.
- Teacher's assistants have min. salary; a 2023 bill to raise it from \$17,000 to \$20,000 died in committee.



Missouri

Collective Bargaining PERMITTED




 555 Districts	 888,823 Students	 69,568 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$25,000	\$34,052	\$52,481	\$25,000	\$54,029

Missouri has taken no recent legislative action regarding teacher or classified staff salaries.



New Jersey

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED

 654 Districts	 1,372,381 Students	 117,126 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$18,500	\$55,143	\$79,045	\$18,500	\$82,126




School nurses are paid using the same minimum salary schedule as teachers.

New Jersey has taken no recent legislative action regarding teacher or classified staff salaries.



New Mexico

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED

 148 Districts	 316,785 Students	 21,475 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$41,000	\$42,981	\$54,272	\$50,000	\$63,580

Educational assistants have a min. salary.




Teacher min. salaries are tied to tiered teacher licensure system:

- 1 – provisional license, beginning teacher
- 2 – fully qualified professional
- 3A – instructional leader, peer intervention + mentoring
- 3B – teachers who become administrators



North Carolina

Collective Bargaining PROHIBITED

 328 Districts	 1,525,223 Students	 102,033 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$35,460	\$37,676	\$53,644	\$37,000	\$56,559

Principals and some administrators have a min. salary.

2021 budget bill specified that districts **use additional state funds to supplement** local funds earmarked for salary supplements.




Advocacy group BEST NC released a **report on teacher pay in North Carolina**.

One highlight from the report: **recommendation to “front-load” raises**—begin raises earlier in teaching career, commensurate with skill growth. BEST NC’s data indicate teacher pay is increasing more slowly and later in career than other professions.



Ohio

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED

 989 Districts	 1,683,612 Students	 99,442 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$30,000	\$39,094	\$63,153	\$30,000	\$65,825




Districts must create minimum salary schedules for classified staff. The floor for classified min. salary, however, has not been raised since 1967.

A new 2023 law **aims to bring back teachers who had left for other careers** by issuing temporary licenses to teachers whose licenses had expired.



Oklahoma

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED

 543 Districts	 698,696 Students	 43,090 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$36,601	\$38,154	\$54,804	\$36,601	\$55,541




2023 bill created teacher signing bonuses.

- New teachers may qualify for **up to \$50,000 signing bonuses** in exchange for 5-year commitment to teach pre-K through 3rd or special ed. in Oklahoma.
- State's guidance unclear about whether districts *may* or *must* seek repayment of bonuses from new teachers who leave before fulfilling 5-year commitment—or the mechanisms of how districts would collect repayment.
- Potential conflict between 5-year commitment versus state law prohibiting teacher contracts from lasting more than 1 year.



Pennsylvania

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED

 774 Districts	 1,695,092 Students	 126,344 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$18,500	\$47,827	\$72,248	\$18,500	\$74,116




A 2023 bill would have established min. wage for ed. support professionals; it died in committee.

According to state's largest teachers' union, 7 districts pay under \$30,000 starting salary.



South Carolina

Collective Bargaining PROHIBITED




 85 Districts	 780,878 Students	 55,488 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$36,000	\$38,929	\$53,393	\$40,000	\$55,778

Budget approved March 2023: **\$2,500 raise to every step of teacher min. salary schedule.** Districts that already pay teachers at or above new level may choose whether to use additional state funds for teacher salary supplements or other expenses.



Tennessee

Collective Bargaining EXCEPTION—collaborative conferencing

 148 Districts	 996,709 Students	 64,747 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$38,000	\$40,280	\$53,619	\$40,000	\$54,378

Min. teacher salary law enacted 1977; Tennessee has updated the statute more than 30 times since then, most recently in 2023.

Tennessee's unique **collaborative conferencing took the place of collective bargaining in 2011**. In the decade-plus since, academics and policymakers have written multiple studies about the process and effectiveness of the framework.




2023 law raises teacher pay, but prohibits teacher associations from collecting dues via payroll deductions.

- Teacher groups sued. Court granted temporary restraining order against payroll deduction ban—but later ruled for the state.
- Raises in base salary: \$42k in 23-24; \$44.5k in 24-25; \$47k in 25-26; \$50k in 26-27.



Texas

Collective Bargaining PROHIBITED

 1,209 Districts	 5,428,613 Students	 371,002 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$33,660	\$45,493	\$58,887	\$33,660	\$60,716

Min. teacher salary applies also to **counselors, librarians, and nurses**.




Education commissioner has rulemaking authority to require min. salary for staff whose multiple part-time jobs add up to full-time employment.

Texas's system **pays based on years of experience**; does not consider education level. **Experience need not be consecutive.**



Washington

Collective Bargaining REQUIRED

 324 Districts	 1,081,835 Students	 60,147 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$43,068	\$52,142	\$81,586	\$45,455	\$83,845

Districts must provide **annual inflation and cost-of-living increases** to teachers.




Washington’s regional variation in min. salary: statewide average salary; mandate that regional variations be specified in each school year’s omnibus appropriations bill, and ongoing legislative review of regionalization.

Beginning 2023-2024, salary schedules must be “reviewed and rebased” annually “to ensure that state salary allocations continue to align with staffing costs.”



West Virginia

Collective Bargaining PERMITTED

 57 Districts	 252,729 Students	 18,723 Teachers		
Min. Starting Salary 21-22	Average Starting Salary 21-22	Average Teacher Salary 21-22	Min. Starting Salary 22-23	Average Teacher Salary 22-23
\$36,815	\$38,052	\$50,315	\$39,055	\$53,006

West Virginia is 1 of 3 states with **classified staff min. wage**.

2023 legislation: teachers received \$2,300 per year raise; classified staff received \$1,500 year raise. Published reports indicate school employee fears that raises moot due to **rising insurance premiums**.



Questions?

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