



Recruiting and Retaining Top Talent Issue Brief

Background

A competitive market salary is a big component in attracting and retaining school personnel. Salaries for North Carolina’s K-12 public school classroom teachers, instructional support personnel, and assistant principals are linked to the State-set “A” Teacher Salary Schedule, which is based on years of experience. It was only in recent years that assistant principals began being paid on the “A” Teacher Salary Schedule, plus 17%.¹ In 2018 that was increased to plus 19%.² Previously, assistant principals had been paid on a school-based administrator salary schedule.

Noncertified school personnel are paid based on their status as permanent or temporary and full-time or part-time. Noncertified school personnel whose salaries are supported by State funds usually receive an annual increase, but that increase was not allocated by the General Assembly in 2019 or 2020. In 2020, the General Assembly only “encouraged” the Governor to allocate a one-time lump sum bonus from federal CARES Act funds to noncertified school personnel.³

History of the “A” Teacher Salary Schedule

Until 2009, the State’s teacher salary schedule included step increases, which were thought of as guaranteed annual increases to a teacher’s base salary. Because of the huge budget deficit during the Great Recession, from 2009 until 2014 teachers received only one 1.2% pay increase. The teacher salary schedule was dramatically restructured in 2014-2015: instead of annual increases, salaries were locked-in for five-year bands and salaries were capped at \$50,000 for 25 years of experience. Teachers also received a 7.0% average salary increase (including longevity pay).⁴ In 2016-2017, annual step increases were restored for teachers with 0-14 years of experience, and the salary cap was increased to \$51,000.⁵ Teachers received a 9.6% average salary increase in 2017-2018, and the salary cap increased by \$300.⁶ In 2018-2019, the salary cap increased again to \$52,000.⁷ Since 2018-2019, the teacher salary schedule has remained the same.

Teacher and Instructional Support Personnel Pay⁸

NC’s Ranking for Average Teacher Pay

NC’s Ranking for Average Instructional Staff Pay

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NATIONAL RANKING</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NATIONAL RANKING</u>
2002-2003	24 th	2012-2013	48 th
2008-2009	28 th	2013-2014	49 th
2009-2010	36 th	2014-2015	47 th
2012-2013	43 rd	2015-2016	43 rd

¹ Section 8.5, SB 257: Appropriations Act of 2017 (SL 2017-57)

² Section 8.4, SB 99: Appropriations Act of 2018 (SL 2018-5)

³ Part III, SB 818: Compensation of Certain School Employees (SL 2020-45)

⁴ Section 9.1, SB 744: Appropriations Act of 2014 (SL 2014-100)

⁵ Section 9.1, HB 1030: 2016 Appropriations Act (SL 2016-94)

⁶ Section 8.1, SB 257: Appropriations Act of 2017 (SL 2017-57)

⁷ Section 8.1, SB 99: Appropriations Act of 2018 (SL 2018-5)

⁸ Rankings of the States and Estimates of School Statistics (annual), National Education Association (nea.org)

2013-2014	47 th	2016-2017	43 rd
2014-2015	42 nd	2017-2018	43 rd
2015-2016	44 th	2018-2019	39 th
2016-2017	38 th		
2017-2018	33 rd		
2018-2019	30 th		

Teacher Supplemental Pay, Preparation, and Professional Development

North Carolina offers a salary supplement of 12% for teachers who gain certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.⁹ Additionally, many local school districts provide salary supplements to teacher pay. In the 2019-2020 school year, 109 local school districts provided a local salary supplement, ranging from an average of \$108 (Mitchell) to \$8,782 (Charlotte-Mecklenburg).¹⁰ A 2013 session law phased out the teacher salary supplement for a master’s degree or other advanced degrees. This means that only teachers who were already receiving the master’s degree or advanced degree salary supplement prior to the 2014-2015 school year continue to receive it.¹¹

In addition to teacher pay, preparation and professional development programs play a role in recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers. Despite programs like the North Carolina Teachings Fellows Program, which provides merit-based forgivable loans for certain teacher candidates, the State is not seeing an increase in interest in the teaching profession. According to U.S. Department of Education data, there is a nationwide decline in enrollment in educator preparation programs (EPPs). North Carolina EPP enrollment has decreased by roughly 21% from 2010 to 2018, with EPP completion rates decreasing nearly 33%.¹²

NCSBA Position

NCSBA believes that permanent pay increases should be provided to all teachers, instructional support personnel, and assistant principals paid on the “A” Teacher Salary Schedule. Additionally, the General Assembly should assist LEAs’ efforts to recruit and retain qualified teachers by restoring supplemental pay for teachers with advanced degrees in their subject area. Just as the public and State leaders expect North Carolina’s teachers and support personnel to exceed the national average, so too should their average salary exceed the national average. A pay increase should also be given to noncertified school personnel who did not receive additional compensation in the last biennium.

Priority should be given to enhancing professional development opportunities and teacher preparation programs. Options include creating new programs and expanding existing ones, such as New Teacher Support Program, Advanced Teaching Roles Program, Teacher Assistant Tuition Reimbursement Program, and Teaching Fellows Program.

NCSBA’s position satisfies the 2021 Leandro Action Plan.

⁹ Part I, SB 818: Compensation of Certain School Employees (SL 2020-45)

¹⁰ Table 20 – Selected Statistics of Local Salary Supplements, NCDPI Statistical Profile

¹¹ 2013 Annotated Conference Committee Report, NC General Assembly Fiscal Research Division

¹² What to Make of Declining Enrollment in Teacher Preparation Programs, Center for American Progress