

Higher Wages Don't Improve Teacher Quality, Left-Leaning Think Tank Finds

To paraphrase Jane Austen, it is a truth universally acknowledged that a teacher is the most important component of a child's education. As a result of this acknowledgement, conventional wisdom seems to indicate that the way to attract and retain effective, high-quality teachers is through lucrative salaries.

But surprisingly, that may not be the case. This fact is noted by economist Jishnu Das in a recent [paper](#) for the left-leaning Brookings Institution entitled "Teachers' salaries: Too many bucks for the bang?"

Das looks at a variety of research from various countries on whether or not contract teachers – who are paid considerably lower wages than regular ones – impact student performance. As Das explains, these lower paid teachers experience the same effectiveness – and in some cases were more effective – than their higher paid, permanent counterparts.

Such results lead Das to pose the following question:

"Does all this mean that we should now pay teachers lower wages? Not necessarily. Policy has to take into account a myriad of other factors relative to what researchers study. ...

But the main message is clear: All the available evidence shows that higher wages do not bring in better teachers or increase the performance of existing teachers. In fact, existing wages are high enough already."

Given that conclusion, it's a bit interesting to observe the [average teacher salaries](#) for each state as listed below from

May of 2017. Do you think Das is right in saying that teacher wages are “high enough already”?

1. New York	\$78,933
2. Alaska	\$77,007
3. Connecticut	\$76,750
4. Massachusetts	\$73,460
5. California	\$73,103
6. New Jersey	\$71,687
7. Illinois	\$66,863
8. Virginia	\$66,733
9. Rhode Island	\$65,677
10. Oregon	\$65,293
11. Maryland	\$65,247
12. Pennsylvania	\$63,063
13. Minnesota	\$62,927
14. Michigan	\$62,077
15. Washington	\$61,790
16. Delaware	\$59,853
17. Wyoming	\$59,157
18. Ohio	\$59,063
19. Hawaii	\$57,863
20. New Hampshire	\$57,470
21. Vermont	\$57,227
22. Wisconsin	\$56,743
23. Georgia	\$55,907
24. Utah	\$55,747
25. Nevada	\$55,630
26. New Mexico	\$55,580
27. Nebraska	\$55,360

28. Texas	\$55,093
29. Iowa	\$54,873
30. Kentucky	\$53,223
31. Montana	\$52,373
32. Colorado	\$52,267
33. Maine	\$51,967
34. Missouri	\$51,437
35. North Dakota	\$51,170
36. Indiana	\$50,840
37. Tennessee	\$50,180
38. South Carolina	\$50,113
39. Kansas	\$49,723
40. Alabama	\$49,497
41. Florida	\$49,353
42. Idaho	\$48,753
43. Louisiana	\$48,677
44. Arkansas	\$48,437
45. West Virginia	\$45,060
46. Arizona	\$44,527
47. North Carolina	\$44,423
48. South Dakota	\$43,783
49. Mississippi	\$42,990
50. Oklahoma	\$41,997

Image Credit: U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Holly Cook