

## Your Question:

What are states doing to increase teacher and education assistance staff compensation through statute or ESSER funding?

## Our Response:

States are taking numerous actions to increase compensation for teachers and other school staff, including salary increases, step adjustments, setting minimum pay requirements, offering incentive funds for local districts to increase pay, and providing one-time hazard and bonus pay. Ongoing commitments such as salary increases and step adjustments are funded through a combination of state and local resources, while one-time bonuses are more likely to be funded with federal relief funds or state contributions.

### Salary Increases for Teachers and Instructional Staff

The National Education Association collects teacher salary data from state departments of education annually. [In the 2021 report](#), the NEA found a national increase of 2.9% *on average* comparing the 2018-19 school year to the 2019-20 school year. The largest increases were in New Mexico (13.44%), Georgia (6.10%) and Texas (5.49%). The smallest increases are in North Carolina (.39%), Kansas (.47%) and New Hampshire (.72%). The full summary is available in Table B-6 of the report (pg. 25). Estimates for the 2020-21 school year are also available in Table E-6 (pg. 44).

In addition, the NEA report has salaries for all instructional staff, which includes supervisors of instruction, principals, guidance personnel, librarians, psychological personnel and other instructional staff in addition to teachers. For all instructional staff, the report found a national increase of 3.0%. The largest increases were in New Mexico (10.15%), Louisiana (6.61%) and Georgia (5.90%). The smallest increases were in North Carolina (.39%), Kansas (.64%) and New Hampshire (.72%). Prior versions of the report are posted on [NEA's website](#).

### State of the State Addresses

ECS analyzes governors' proposals in [State of the State addresses](#). State of the State addresses are still underway, but so far this year, 31 governors have given their addresses. Of those, at least 16 mentioned teacher compensation or diversified pay in their address. An abridged list of specific compensation actions and goals are listed below:

- **Alabama:** Proposed a 4% pay increase for teachers.
- **Florida:** Proposed a second \$1,000 bonus and increased teacher pay.
- **Indiana:** Highlighted the state goal of raising teacher salaries to \$40,000 by July 1.
- **Iowa:** Announced a \$1,000 retention bonus for educators using ESSER funds.
- **Missouri:** Proposed a \$38,000 baseline salary for new teachers.
- **New Mexico:** Proposed a 7% pay increase and raising the starting salaries for every tier of educators.
- **South Carolina:** Proposed an average teacher salary of \$66,524 including benefits.
- **West Virginia:** Proposed a 5% pay raise.

## Legislative Tracking

ECS also [tracks state legislation](#) during the legislative sessions. Examples of enacted legislation from 2021 to increase teacher and support staff compensation are listed below:

- **Alabama:** [S.B. 188](#) appropriates a 2% salary increase for teachers and school staff.
- **Arkansas:** [S.B. 504](#) creates the Teacher Salary Equalization Fund and target for a statewide average salary of \$51,822 for 2021-22 and 2022-23. The state provides funding for districts with an average non-federal classroom teacher salary of less than the target. Funding for eligible districts will be \$185 multiplied by the prior year average daily membership of the district.
- **Colorado:** [S.B. 21-172](#) creates the Educator Pay Raise Fund conditional on the passage of ballot measure. Any money appropriated from the fund must be to assist school districts, charter schools, and boards of cooperative services for increasing teacher salaries and the hourly wage paid to other employees.
- **Iowa:** [S.F. 269](#) appropriates a 2.4% salary increase for teacher salaries and professional development in fiscal year 2022.
- **Mississippi:** [H.B. 852](#) adjusts the minimum salary schedule for certified teachers to provide a raise of \$1,110 for those in their first three years of teaching, which brings the starting salary to \$37,000, and a raise of \$1,000 for all others, including assistant teachers.
- **Montana:** [H.B. 143](#) provides incentive funds for districts to meet the legislative goal for competitive base pay of teachers. The required base pay for teachers is \$33,850 in fiscal year 2022 and \$34,720 in fiscal year 2023.
- **Oklahoma:** [S.B. 807](#) authorizes support employees to receive pay for any time lost because of their school being closed by a health officer or closed because of the pandemic.
- **South Carolina:** [H.B. 3609](#) appropriates \$50,000,000 from the 2018-19 Contingency Reserve Fund to provide teacher step increases for the 2020-21 school year that were suspended because of financial uncertainties caused by the pandemic.
- **Tennessee:** [H.B. 7020](#) appropriates \$42.8 million to be used for 2% pay raises for teachers and other certified staff including school nurses for the second half of the 2020-21 school year. The state is covering both the state portion and the local required match portion.
- **Utah:** [H.B. 450](#) provides a one-time Supplemental Educator COVID-19 Stipend of \$1,500 for licensed school-level educators and \$1,000 for classified school-level employees in appreciation of work done during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER)

States have used the ESSER funds to provide one-time bonuses or hazard pay for teachers and school staff. In a review of state American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER plans, we have identified that **Florida**, **Georgia** and **Puerto Rico** dedicated ESSER funds for bonuses or as hazard pay.

- **Florida** provided a one-time \$1,000 disaster relief payment to full-time classroom teachers and principals to reimburse them for expenses incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and to promote instructional continuity ([Approved ARP ESSER State Plan](#)).
- **Georgia** used ESSER II SEA reserve funds to provide a one-time \$1,000 retention bonus to all K-12 educators and support staff, including substitute teachers ([Approved ARP ESSER State Plan](#)).

- **Puerto Rico** has approved \$200 million in ESSER II SEA reserve funds to provide a \$5,000 bonus for permanent, probatory and transitory employees working during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency to support continuity of education services ([Approved ARP ESSER State Plan](#)).

States have also used funds generally for teacher recruitment and retention, including incentivizing teacher pathways and paying student teachers. FutureEd has created a [shared summary sheet](#) with investments states have made in teachers and teaching (see column H of the linked sheet). In addition, below are a few teacher recruitment and retention examples that we identified:

- **Hawaii** approved the use of \$129.5 million of ESSER II funds to maintain support for teacher recruitment and retention for hard-to-staff areas and high-needs programs.
- **Nevada** invested \$20.7 million to fund stipends for pre-service teachers completing their student teaching or final semesters in educator preparation programs as part of the Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching initiative.
- **Oklahoma** plans to spend approximately \$12.7 million to pay a stipend to 1,300 student teachers each year for the next three years. Student teachers will receive compensation of \$3,250.

### Other Resources

- [How Are States Planning to Leverage their ARP Funding?](#) This resource describes trends and examples of how states are using ESSER funds based on a review of the 35 state plans that were available at the time.
- [COVID-related incentives for teachers during 2021-22](#) highlights COVID-related incentives for teachers from a sample of 148 school districts.
- Our [50-State Comparison: Teacher Recruitment and Retention](#) compiles state-specific data related to teacher shortages and provides a national comparison of state policies to recruit and retain teachers, especially in shortage subject areas and underserved schools.