

A Highly Educated Classroom: Illinois Teachers Are Not Overpaid

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Executive Summary

This report finds that public school teachers in Illinois are highly skilled and are compensated accordingly through competitive salaries. Properly understanding teacher pay is critical to developing an efficient teacher compensation structure.

Teachers in Illinois are among the best-educated in the nation and earn appropriate incomes that reward their skill. Illinois' teachers are highly educated, with over 62 percent of full-time public elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers in the state having earned a master's degree. An additional 36 percent of full-time public school teachers have a bachelor's degree. These highly skilled educators help foster the next generation of workers and innovators who will grow Illinois' economy.

Full-time public K-12 teachers in Illinois earn less than highly educated workers in Illinois private and nonprofit sector, on average. The average full-time public school teacher in Illinois earns an annual salary of about \$63,000.

- Full-time private and nonprofit sector workers with a bachelor's degree earn more than \$76,000 per year, over \$13,000 more than public school teachers in Illinois.
- Full-time private and nonprofit sector workers with a master's degree earn about \$103,000 per year, approximately \$40,000 more than public school teachers in Illinois.

A key difference between public school teachers and their private sector counterparts is that income is distributed much more equally among public school teachers. The top 1 percent of teachers earns about \$126,000 per year (and only after many years of experience), while the top 1 percent of private sector workers earns \$505,000 in Illinois.

There is a strong correlation of 0.63 between the share of teachers with at least a master's degree and the average cost-of-living-adjusted income of teachers in states across America. Illinois has higher-paid public school educators principally because its teacher workforce ranks 12th in the nation by share of teachers with a master's degree. After controlling for demographic, educational, cost-of-living, and other characteristics, Illinois public elementary and middle school teachers are statistically found to be the 15th-highest paid in the nation and Illinois' public high school teachers are the 5th-highest paid in the nation. However, public school teachers in Ohio, Michigan, and Iowa are all better compensated than their Illinois counterparts, after accounting for educational factors. Additionally, as of 2014, the average pay increase for a teacher in Illinois, after earning a master's degree, is \$14,062. This added compensation value of an advanced degree exceeds the current national average of \$12,205 for comparable teachers. Illinois ranks 17th in the value of the masters' bump.

The data show that the salaries of Illinois' public school educators reflect and reward their training, skills, and level of education. Illinois has valued educators that help grow the state's economy by improving human capital across the state. Investing in the future of Illinois means investing in students, and investing in students means investing in high-quality public school teachers who are paid a competitive salary.

Introduction

Educators are the backbone of any civil society and economy. A well-educated society tends to produce positive economic and social outcomes, such as high worker incomes, high productivity, high life expectancy, high civic and political engagement, and high life satisfaction (Berger & Fischer, 2013). Research has also found that high quality and highly trained educators improve the individual prospects of the next generation by increasing intergenerational mobility. Because teachers influence the ability of children to thrive in the future, it is imperative that students are taught by the best educators in environments conducive to learning.

Over the last two decades, a chorus of education researchers and policymakers have focused attention on K-12 teacher compensation systems. In Illinois, as in all other states, the dominant determinants of pay are based on salary schedules, which provide larger salaries to teachers with higher levels of formal education and for each additional year of teaching experience. These systems reward teachers with pay increments (i.e., “steps and lanes”) for acquiring and demonstrating specific knowledge and skills needed to meet educational goals.

In part driven by the belief that public school teachers are not “underpaid,” some commentators have called for reforming the practice of allocating teacher pay (Hess, 2004). In Illinois, for example, it was recently claimed that teachers at Chicago Public Schools are the highest-paid of the nation’s 50 largest school districts (Korte, 2016).

However, claims of excessive pay have been discredited by additional research, which finds that teachers experience a wage penalty of between 10 and 19 percent when compared to similarly-situated private sector workers (Mishel, 2012; Keefe, 2012; Allegretto, et al., 2011; Olson & Lubotsky, 2011). A compensation penalty for public school teachers exists even after taking benefits into account (Allegretto et. al, 2011). Studies have further shown that, not only is there a wage gap, but it has actually increased. For example, in 1995, the average college-educated private sector worker in the country earned 17 percent more than a Wisconsin teacher. But in 2009, the difference had widened to 36 percent (Olson & Lubotsky, 2011). According to Olson, “not only did Wisconsin teachers not keep up with inflation, their earning power also fell behind their private-sector counterparts.” Additionally, because health insurance premiums for Illinois public school teachers have increased substantially, their take-home pay has been “reduced by approximately 17 percent of the cost of individual health insurance, and 46 percent of the cost to insure family members” (Lubotsky & Olson, 2015). The incremental loss of earnings multiplies over time and has real quality-of-life implications. Studies have further noted that mid- and late-career teacher base salaries are “painfully low in many states” with experienced teachers (minimum 10 years) often qualifying for some federally funded benefit programs. Additionally, to supplement minimal mid-to-late career salaries, large percentages of teachers work second jobs (Boser & Straus, 2014).

Assertions that public school teachers are overpaid, whether compared to private employees or other public school teachers in different communities, are often devoid of context for two particular reasons. First, the characteristics of the teacher workforce vary by city and state. An honest comparison of teacher pay across regions would account for various educational, demographic,

and other factors that help to determine an individual's take-home pay. For instance, if more public school teachers have a master's degree in Illinois, they might be expected to earn higher incomes than their counterparts in other states. Second, the dynamics of supply and demand are extremely important. Illinois has and needs quality teachers that are highly educated, skilled, and trained so the state can compete in the global economy. Quality educators are only attracted to the teaching profession if public schools offer salaries that are competitive in the marketplace (Strauss, 2014).

Properly understanding teacher pay is critical to developing an efficient teacher compensation structure. School districts need to be able to recruit, professionally develop, and retain a quality educational workforce. In one large national survey, 75 percent of teachers report that salary is an essential element to retaining effective teachers (Scholastic & Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2012). Survey respondents also concur that if additional revenues are raised to improve local public schools, 34 percent of Americans say they would want the money targeted toward teachers, nearly twice as many as for any other spending priority (PDK Poll, 2016).

This Illinois Economic Policy Institute (ILEPI) and University of Illinois Project for Middle Class Renewal report examines the compensation of public elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers in Illinois. The report considers the educational attainment level of full-time public school teachers in Illinois, and contrasts the income distribution of teachers to comparable employees in Illinois' private and nonprofit sector. Then, the analysis evaluates data from the 50 states plus the District of Columbia, finding a positive correlation between public school teacher salary and the share of teachers with a master's degree. After accounting for other important factors, the data reveal that public school teachers in Illinois are not overpaid; rather, Illinois' public school teachers are among the best-educated in the nation and earn appropriate incomes that reward their skills. The report concludes by recapping key findings.

Challenges Facing K-12 Public Education in Illinois

It is no secret that Illinois faces onerous financial challenges significantly impacting the level and source of K-12 funding. Illinois ranks 50th in the nation in the percentage of total revenue that comes from the state for public education (Raise Your Hand, 2016). As state support for schools has dropped, local taxes and student fees now account for 67.4 percent of the revenues that districts need to operate on average (Rado, 2016a). In the 2014-2015 school year, 76 school districts in Illinois had more debt than their total borrowing capacity and another 66 districts used more than 75 percent of their borrowing capacity (Rado & Bentle, 2016). Illinois' public school districts are approximately \$20 billion in debt (Rado 2016b).

As Illinois' public school districts continue to increase their reliance on property taxes, Governor Bruce Rauner and the Illinois General Assembly have struggled to provide the necessary state funding. The Illinois State Board of Education requested an additional \$730 million to meet funding requirements for K-12 public schools. However, House Bill 3763 signed by Governor Rauner only increased K-12 spending by \$244 million in Fiscal-Year 2016 – about one-third of the level deemed necessary by the Illinois State Board of Education (Hoffman, 2015). Additionally, during the 2016 budget impasse, some public schools feared that they would not be able to open without revenue from the State.

Fully funding K-12 public education in Illinois would make a significant difference in the future success of Illinois’ students. In 2014, the State of Illinois ranked 13th in state education spending per pupil, spending \$13,077 per student on elementary and secondary education (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2016). A 2015 report by professors at Northwestern University and University of California, Berkeley finds that a 10 percent increase in spending, on average, leads children to complete 0.3 more years of school and improves their future wages in the labor market by 7.3 percent (Jackson et al., 2015). But Illinois’ over-dependence on local revenue has resulted in severe per-student funding disparities between the wealthiest and the poorest communities. In fact, the largest gap in the nation between the richest and poorest school districts is in Illinois (Ushomirsky & Williams, 2015). Properly funding K-12 public education in Illinois would allow school districts to modernize their facilities, reduce their class sizes, and offer competitive salaries that attract quality teachers who improve outcomes for students.

Public School Teachers in Illinois Have High Levels of Educational Attainment

Full-time public school teachers are highly educated in Illinois. As shown in Figure 1, approximately 62 percent of all educators in Illinois have a master’s degree or higher. Based on survey data from the 2015 *American Community Survey* by the U.S. Census Bureau, an estimated 63,300 public elementary and secondary school teachers who work more than 35 hours per week have earned a master’s, professional, or doctorate degree. While the education profession does not formally require a master’s-level degree, there is a near *de facto* recognition that a post-graduate degree is a strong indicator of qualification (Sahlberg, 2010).¹ An additional 36 percent of full-time public school teachers have a bachelor’s degree. In total, an estimated 98.5 percent of all full-time public educators in Illinois have earned a four-year bachelor’s degree or higher (Figure 1). Additionally, teachers in Illinois are required to attain between 40 and 120 hours of “professional development” within a five-year cycle as a condition of license renewal (ISBE, 2017). One of the primary factors influencing worker compensation in the United States, regardless of occupation, is level of educational attainment. Thus, the number of teachers with advanced degrees appropriately influences the average incomes of public school teachers in Illinois.

Figure 1: Level of Educational Attainment among Public School Teachers in Illinois, 2015

Level of Educational Attainment	2015, 35+ Hours, Public Teachers in Illinois	
	Share	Number
Master’s Degree	60.0%	61,200
Bachelor’s Degree	36.4%	37,100
Professional or Doctorate Degree	2.0%	2,100
Other Educational Attainment	1.5%	1,500
Total	100.0%	101,900

Source(s): 2015 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al., 2016).

¹ By comparison, a master’s degree is now a prerequisite for permanent employment as a teacher in all Finnish basic and high schools.

Public School Teacher Salaries Are Lower than the Private Sector in Illinois

To evaluate whether public elementary and secondary education teachers are “overpaid,” this section compares the salaries of Illinois’ full-time teachers to annual wage and salary incomes for full-time workers in Illinois private and nonprofit sector by level of education. Publicly available data from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) was collected for all full-time equivalent employees at public schools across Illinois who were classified as a “teacher,” during the 2014-2015 school year (ISBE, 2016). Note that the data exclude special education teachers and part-time educators. In total, the ISBE reports the names, grades taught, employer, location, and actual annual compensation of 95,311 full-time equivalent teachers at public schools in the state. This information is then contrasted with 2015 *American Community Survey* data on individuals employed for 35 hours or more in the private and nonprofit sector in Illinois.

Full-time public K-12 teachers in Illinois earn less than highly educated workers in Illinois private and nonprofit sector, on average (Figure 2). The average full-time public school teacher in Illinois earns an annual salary of \$62,907. By contrast, the average Illinois worker with a bachelor’s degree who is employed for at least 35 hours by a private or nonprofit organization earns \$76,496 per year, approximately \$13,500 more than public teachers in the state. Similarly, workers with master’s degrees in Illinois’ private sector earn considerably more than public school teachers. The mean annual salary is \$102,778 for full-time workers with a master’s degree in Illinois’ private and nonprofit sector, almost \$40,000 more per year than public school teachers who generally have a comparable level of educational attainment. The disparity between what an average Illinois K-12 teacher with a master’s degree earns and an equally-educated private sector employee helps to explain why the “wage competitiveness” of the profession in the state falls behind 23 other states (Sucher et al., 2016).²

Figure 2: Average Salary and Income Distribution in Illinois, Full-Time Public School Teachers vs. Full-Time Private and Nonprofit Sector Workers, 2015*

Annual Wage and Salary Distribution	2014-2015, Full-Time, Public School Teachers	2015, Worked 35+ Hours Per Week, Private/Nonprofit Sector	
	All Teachers	All Bachelors Only	All Master’s Only
Average	\$62,907	\$76,496	\$102,778
Bottom 10%	\$39,269	\$24,000	\$32,000
Bottom 25%	\$46,896	\$37,000	\$50,000
Median	\$58,348	\$60,000	\$80,000
Top 25%	\$76,315	\$90,000	\$120,000
Top 10%	\$91,108	\$135,000	\$180,000
Top 1%	\$125,865	\$505,000	\$505,000

Source(s): 2014-2015 Public Data on Compensation at Public Schools (ISBE, 2016); 2015 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al., 2016). *Note that the estimated annual wage and salary income for all of Illinois’ 6.07 million workers is \$49,672 on average and \$35,000 on median – including part-time, lesser-educated, and other public sector workers – according to the 2015 ACS data.

² The Learning Policy Institute created an index of teacher wage competitiveness that is “calculated by dividing the estimated annual wage of elementary and secondary teachers by the estimated wage of non-teachers working in the same state with master’s degrees at both age 25 and age 45, controlling for hours worked per week and weeks worked per year.”

It is also worth noting that over 92 percent of teachers use their own take-home income to purchase supplies for their students, which reduces the relative income of public school teachers (Strauss, 2014). Additionally, 14 percent of Illinois teachers work a second job in order to make ends meet, an indication that public school teachers are not overpaid (Bidwell, 2014).

A key difference between public school teachers and their private sector counterparts is that income is distributed much more equally among public school teachers (Figure 2). Actual teacher pay data reveal that the bottom 10 percent of public school teachers earn more than the bottom 10 percent of private and nonprofit workers with similar levels of education in Illinois. However, the median full-time teacher earns (\$58,348) less than the median full-time private sector worker with a bachelor’s degree alone (\$60,000) and significantly less than the median private sector worker with a master’s degree (\$80,000). Additionally, the top 1 percent of teachers – who are sometimes singled out by partisans to elicit public outrage – earn \$125,865 a year or more. By contrast, the top 1 percent of Illinois workers with both bachelor’s degrees and master’s degrees earn at least \$505,000 in annual income. The salaries of full-time public school teachers in Illinois are lower and more compressed than the salaries of their private and nonprofit counterparts with similar levels of educational attainment.

One response to this analysis may be that, while salaries are comparably lower, the benefits package of public school teachers in Illinois exceeds the private sector norm. However, Figure 3 compares actual compensation data for full-time public school teachers in Illinois with *Employer Costs for Employee Compensation* data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) at the U.S. Department of Labor. The BLS reports wages based on an “annualized” 2,080 hours worked, or 40 hours per week for 52 weeks. Teachers, of course, do not work a standardized 40-hour work-week. Work time is committed both at school and at home after the formal school day ends. One study found that teachers on average worked 58 hours per week during the school year (Bruno et al., 2012).

Figure 3: Ratio of Salaries to Retirement Benefits, Full-Time Public School Teachers vs. Private Industry Workers in the Midwest Region, 2015-2016

Salaries and Benefits of Workers	Full-Time Public School Teachers in Illinois, 2015	Private Industry Workers with All Levels of Education in the Midwest Region, 2016Q3
Total Wages and Salaries	\$30.24	\$20.81
Retirement Benefits	\$1.88	\$1.19
Ratio of Salaries to Retirement Benefits	16.11:1	17.49:1

Source(s): 2014-2015 Public Data on Compensation at Public Schools (ISBE, 2016); 2016 Employer Costs for Employee Compensation (BLS, 2016).

Dividing reported salaries and retirement benefits by 2,080 hours reveals that the average full-time public school teacher earns \$30.24 an hour in wages and \$1.88 per hour in retirement benefits in Illinois (Figure 3). Thus, public school teachers receive \$1 in retirement benefits for every \$16.11 earned in wage and salary income. In comparison, the average private industry worker– including workers at all levels of education– in the Midwest region earns \$20.81 per hour in wages and \$1.19 per hour in retirement savings (BLS, 2016). Private sector workers in the Midwest receive \$1 in

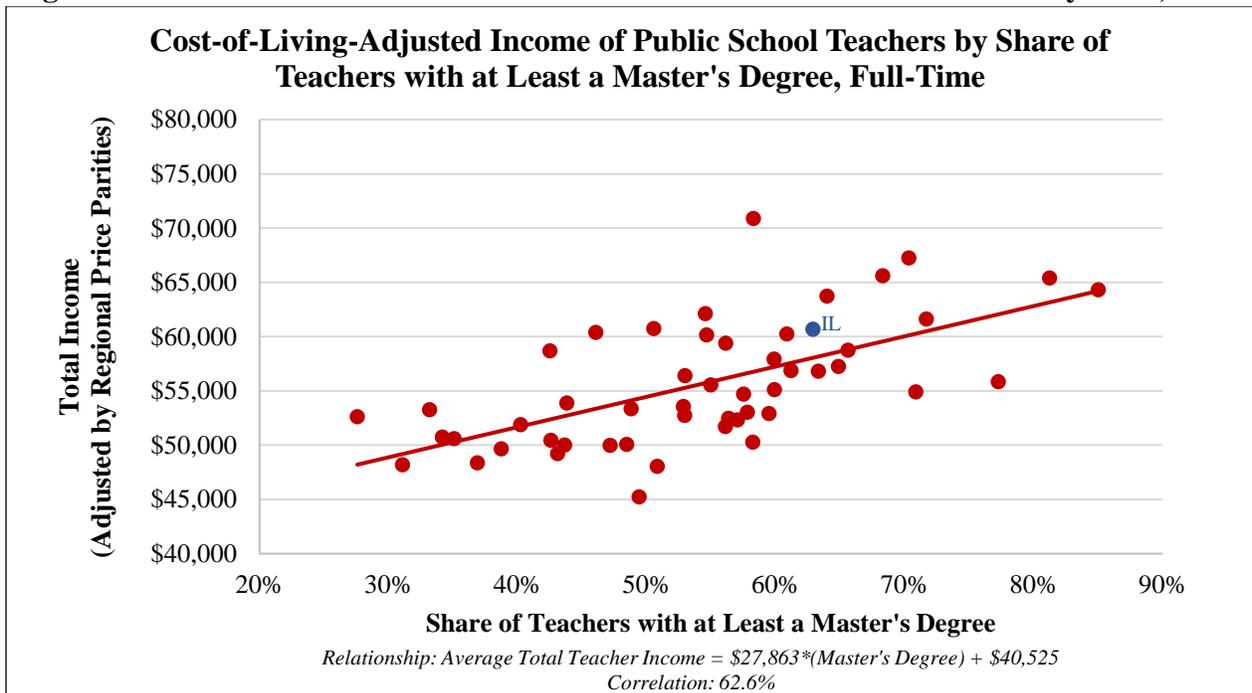
retirement benefits for every \$17.49 earned in wage and salary income. Therefore, on the issue of retirement savings, Illinois' public school teachers earn benefits that are in line with the private market ratio in the Midwest.

How Does Public School Teacher Pay in Illinois Compare to Other States?

Figure 4 displays the relationship between the share of public school teachers with at least a master's degree in a state and the average total income of teachers in the state. This state comparison data for public school teachers who worked 35 hours or more are from the 2014 *American Community Survey*, and include special education teachers. The average total income of public school teachers in each state is adjusted for the cost of living in each state using 2014 "regional price parities" by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) at the U.S. Department of Commerce (BEA, 2016). Note that the latest year for which regional price parities were available was 2014, which is why teacher data for 2014 is used in this state-by-state analysis.

There is a strong positive correlation between the share of teachers with at least a master's degree and the average cost-of-living-adjusted income of teachers in states across America (Figure 4). Illinois has the 12th highest number of teachers with a master's degree. The positive correlation of 0.63 indicates that, as the share of educators with a master's degree or higher increases, the average income of teachers rises. Illinois, which is identified in Figure 4, has higher-paid public school educators because its teacher workforce is one of the highest-educated in the country. Additionally, as of 2014, the average pay increase for a teacher in Illinois, after earning a master's degree, is \$14,062. This added compensation value of an advanced degree exceeds the national average of \$12,205 for comparable teachers (Ruggles et al., 2016).

Figure 4: Income and Education Level of Full-Time Public School Teachers by State, 2014



Source(s): 2014 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al., 2016); 2014 Regional Price Parities by state (BEA, 2016).

Figure 5: Regression of the Annual Cost-of-Living-Adjusted Income of Elementary and Secondary School Teachers, Controlling for Other Factors, All States vs. Illinois

State	Elementary School Teachers	Secondary School Teachers	Elementary School Rank	Secondary School Rank
Rhode Island	13.78%	4.16%	1	2
Ohio	9.91%	1.03%	2	4
Michigan	9.27%	1.54%	3	3
Alaska	7.25%	-3.53%	4	7
Wyoming	6.57%	4.22%	5	1
Iowa	6.33%	-0.95%	6	6
Pennsylvania	6.32%	-4.53%	7	9
Wisconsin	4.15%	-6.24%	8	16
Connecticut	3.19%	-4.06%	9	8
Texas	1.12%	-6.93%	10	17
Delaware	1.01%	-14.66%	11	33
New Jersey	0.95%	-6.11%	12	T-10
New York	0.91%	-7.85%	13	18
California	0.54%	-6.11%	14	T-10
Illinois (Baseline)	0.00%	0.00%	T-15	5
Alabama	0.00%	-6.11%	T-15	T-10
Minnesota	-0.89%	-9.09%	17	20
Arkansas	-0.99%	-6.11%	18	T-10
North Dakota	-1.02%	-20.47%	19	46
Massachusetts	-1.41%	-6.11%	20	10
Maryland	-1.74%	-9.86%	21	21
Nebraska	-2.01%	-11.37%	22	25
Kentucky	-2.15%	-10.27%	23	23
Georgia	-2.15%	-10.17%	24	22
Louisiana	-2.16%	-8.88%	25	19
Indiana	-2.24%	-10.75%	26	24
Nevada	-4.17%	-6.11%	27	T-10
District of Columbia	-5.04%	-13.46%	28	30
Kansas	-6.19%	-12.91%	29	29
Missouri	-6.23%	-13.63%	30	31
South Carolina	-6.53%	-15.01%	31	34
Washington	-6.94%	-12.84%	32	28
Oregon	-7.27%	-11.97%	33	26
Tennessee	-7.64%	-14.17%	34	32
South Dakota	-7.86%	-21.63%	35	48
West Virginia	-8.26%	-16.60%	36	37
Utah	-8.89%	-16.39%	37	35
Virginia	-9.22%	-16.83%	38	38
North Carolina	-9.76%	-19.33%	39	41
Idaho	-9.80%	-21.95%	40	49
Mississippi	-10.13%	-17.16%	41	39
New Hampshire	-11.57%	-16.56%	42	36
Florida	-12.11%	-22.05%	43	50
Oklahoma	-12.23%	-19.42%	44	43
New Mexico	-12.39%	-19.34%	45	42
Arizona	-12.86%	-19.11%	46	40
Vermont	-12.98%	-12.78%	47	27
Maine	-13.67%	-20.64%	48	47
Montana	-13.87%	-20.37%	49	45
Colorado	-13.93%	-19.81%	50	44
Hawaii	-16.78%	-31.59%	51	51

Source(s): 2014 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al., 2016); 2014 Regional Price Parities by state (BEA, 2016).

Finally, Figure 5 presents results from an advanced statistical technique called a “regression analysis.” A regression analysis allows researchers to account for demographic, educational attainment, and other variables to assess the difference in teacher incomes across states. The findings in Figure 5 report the total income difference of teachers in each state compared to Illinois, as a percentage after controlling for the following factors: public or private school, age, gender, racial or ethnic identification, level of educational attainment, veteran status, and urban status.

After considering educational, demographic, and other characteristics, elementary and middle school teachers in Illinois are the 15th-highest paid in the nation and high school teachers in Illinois are the 5th-highest paid in the nation, after adjusting for cost of living (Figure 5). Elementary and middle school teachers in Illinois earn less, on average, than their counterparts with similar characteristics in Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Texas, New York and California. High school teachers in Illinois earn less, on average, than their counterparts in Michigan and Ohio and only slightly more than those in Iowa, after accounting for educational attainment and other important characteristics. Additionally, Illinois ranks behind 18 other states on the average amount of dollars spent on instructional salaries per pupil.³ Combined with the fact that Illinois is a high-wage state where private sector workers earn higher salaries than public school teachers with similar levels of educational attainment, the data suggests that public school teachers in Illinois are not overpaid.

Conclusion

Properly understanding teacher pay is critical to developing an efficient teacher compensation structure. Teachers in Illinois are among the best-educated in the nation and earn appropriate incomes that reward their skill. Illinois’ teachers are highly educated, with over 62 percent of full-time public elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers in the state having earned a master’s degree. An additional 36 percent of full-time public school teachers have a bachelor’s degree. These highly skilled educators help foster the next generation of workers and innovators who will grow Illinois’ economy.

Full-time public K-12 teachers in Illinois earn less than highly-educated workers in Illinois private and nonprofit sector, on average. The average full-time public school teacher in Illinois earns an annual salary of about \$63,000. By contrast, a full-time worker in the private and nonprofit sector earns over \$76,000 with a bachelor’s degree and about \$103,000 with a master’s degree, on average. A key difference between public school teachers and their private sector counterparts is that income is distributed much more equally among public school teachers. The top 1 percent of teachers earns about \$126,000 per year (and only after many years of experience), while the top 1 percent of private sector workers earns \$505,000 in Illinois.

Illinois’ public teachers earn less for their high educational attainment levels than Illinois workers in the private and nonprofit sector. On average, employees in the private and nonprofit sector with a bachelor’s degree earn approximately \$13,500 more per year than public K-12 educators in Illinois. Similarly, employees in the private and nonprofit sector with a master’s degree earn almost \$40,000 more per year than public K-12 educators in the state. With 62 percent of Illinois public

³ Based on data from the 2014 *Survey of School System Finances* by the U.S. Census Bureau ([Census, 2016](#)). Illinois expenditures for instructional salaries as of 2015 were \$4,747.

educators having at least a master's degree, workers with less educational attainment and the same level of educational attainment earn anywhere from \$13,500 to \$40,000 more per year in the private sector, on average.

There is a strong correlation of 0.63 between the share of teachers with at least a master's degree and the average cost-of-living-adjusted income of teachers in states across America. Illinois has higher-paid public school educators principally because its teacher workforce ranks 12th in the nation by share of teachers with a master's degree. After controlling for demographic, educational, cost-of-living, and other characteristics, Illinois public elementary and middle school teachers are statistically found to be the 15th-highest paid in the nation and Illinois' public high school teachers are the 5th-highest paid in the nation. Public school teachers in Ohio, Michigan, and Iowa are all compensated better than their Illinois counterparts, after accounting for these important factors. Additionally, as of 2014, the average pay increase for a teacher in Illinois, after earning a master's degree, is \$14,062. This added compensation value of an advanced degree exceeds the national average of \$12,205 for comparable teachers.

Ultimately, Illinois has a competitive teacher market with a skilled workforce that is compensated accordingly. The data show that the salaries of Illinois' public school educators reflect and reward their training, skills, and level of education. Illinois has valued educators that help grow the state's economy by improving human capital across the state. Investing in the future of Illinois means investing in students, and investing in students means investing in high-quality public school teachers who are paid a competitive salary.

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