

Teacher Pension Policy in Tennessee

A report card on the sustainability, flexibility and fairness of state teacher pension systems

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For more information about Tennessee and other states' teacher retirement policies, including full narrative analyses, recommendations and state responses, see www.nctq.org/statePolicy

Tennessee's pension system ratings

Sustainability

Pension system is stable and well-funded.



Flexibility

Pension system is flexible and fair to all teachers.



Neutrality

Retiree benefits to teachers accrue uniformly with each additional year of work.



fully meets goal
 nearly meets goal
 meets goal in part
 meets a small part of goal
 does not meet goal

Snapshot of Tennessee's pension system

Teacher pension system is well-funded (at least 90%).	YES
Teachers have the option of a fully portable primary pension plan.	NO
Teachers vest in three years or less.	NO
Teachers leaving early can take at least a partial employer contribution with them.	NO
Teacher and employer contribution rates are reasonable.	NO
Retirement eligibility is based on age only.	NO
Pension benefits accrue in a way that treats each year of work uniformly.	NO

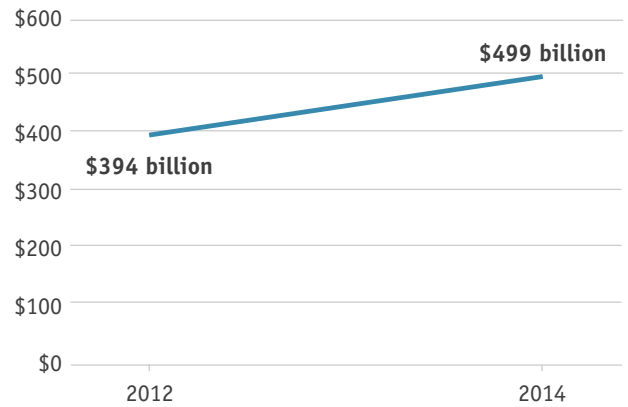
Tennessee's pension system characteristics

Type of plan	Hybrid
Unfunded liabilities (percent of system funded)*	\$282,376,550 (96%)
Vesting period	5 years
Teacher contribution rate (percent of salary)	5%
Employer contribution rate (percent of salary)	9%
Basis for retirement eligibility	Years of service
Cost of living adjustments	Linked to Consumer Price Index
Participation in Social Security	Yes
Contributions teachers may withdraw from plans if they leave after 5 years	Own with interest
Policy for purchasing time for prior teaching or approved leave	Limited (prior teaching); Not permitted (approved leave)
Cost per teacher of allowing retirement before age 65	\$306,524

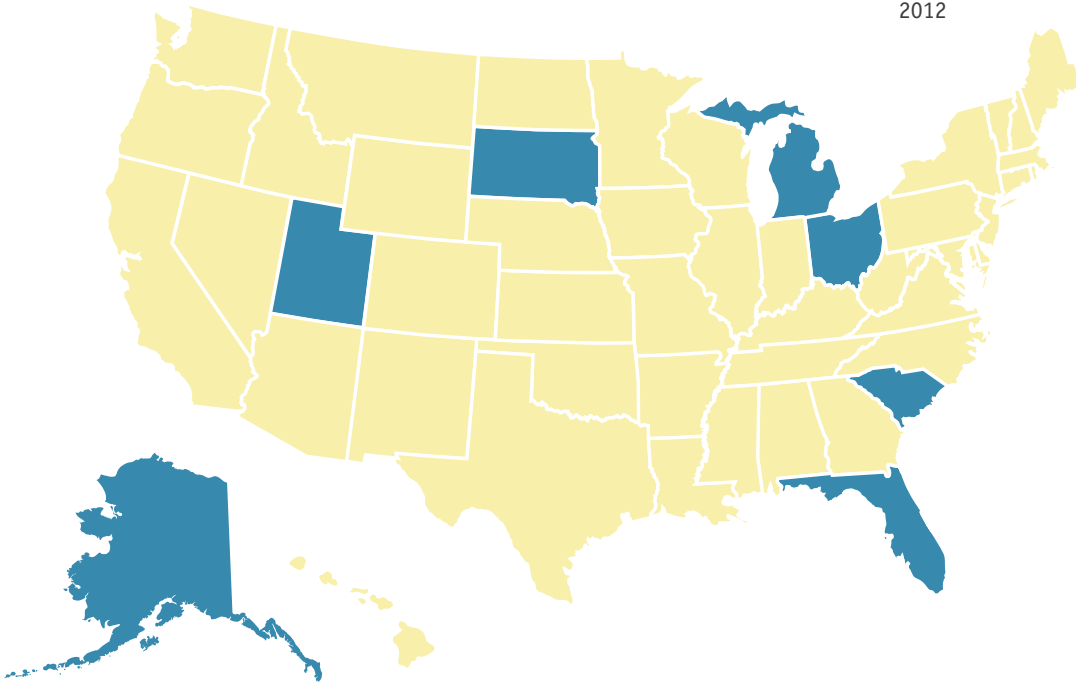
* For states in which teachers are part of a larger public employee system, the liabilities were adjusted to reflect an estimate of the percentage of teachers in the system.

Teacher pension trends in the U.S.

Teacher pension system debt has reached a half trillion dollars.

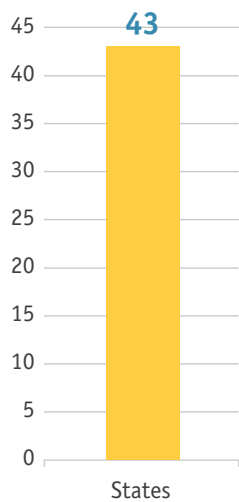


Just seven states offer a fully or nearly fully portable primary pension plan for teachers.

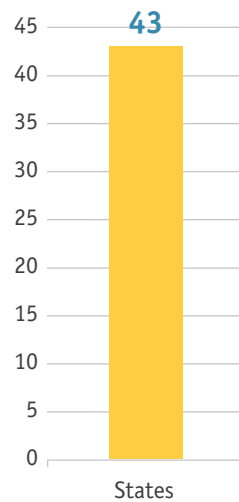


Other indicators also reflect worrisome trends.

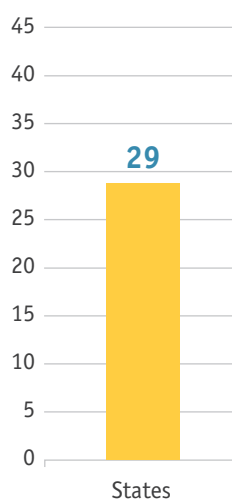
Number of states where pension funding ratios have decreased since 2008



Number of states that require excessive contributions of teachers, employers or both



Number of states that have increased teacher contribution rates since 2008



Number of states that have ten-year teacher vesting periods

