



# Databurst Strategic Teacher Compensation

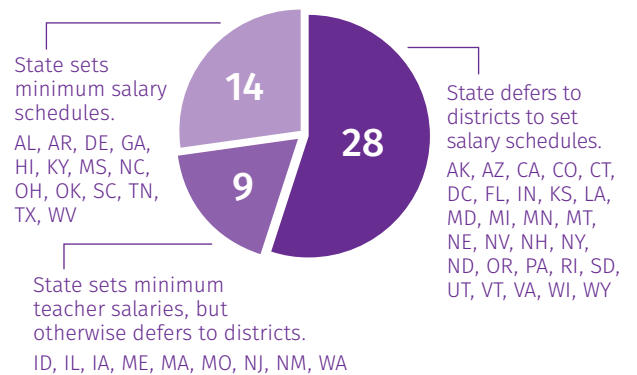
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Decisions about teacher pay are often left to district discretion. Nevertheless, every state can support districts in reforming teacher compensation. By directing or encouraging districts to strategically pay teachers, states have an opportunity to help ensure that teachers are meaningfully compensated for exemplary classroom performance, while simultaneously leveraging a powerful recruitment tool for hard-to-staff positions.

The state role in determining teacher compensation varies considerably across the nation. In 36 states and the District of Columbia, districts determine salary schedules within the framework of collective bargaining, as applicable. Fourteen states maintain a statewide salary schedule that establishes a minimum salary for teachers in each year they remain in the profession. Unfortunately, among all states and the District of Columbia, only nine states require districts to consider performance in teacher pay, and only three states direct districts to make adjustments in starting salary for new teachers with relevant, prior, non-teaching work experience. More promisingly, over half of all states – 35 – take steps to incentivize teaching in high-need schools and/or subjects by explicitly supporting additional compensation or incentives for such teachers.

Recognizing that strategic compensation presents an opportunity for all states, this resource provides 1) promising state policies, 2) a snapshot of each state's policies, and 3) noteworthy state policies by region.

What role do states play in deciding teacher salaries?



## Promising State Policies

**Louisiana's** districts establish local salary schedules based on 1) teacher effectiveness; 2) certification area, particular school, geographic area, or subject area need; and 3) prior experience. The state incentivizes and accommodates teachers with prior, non-educational professional work experience to enter teaching by ensuring districts compensate such teachers for "relevant...experience related to the teacher's content area." The state further requires that no one criterion may account for more than 50 percent of a district's compensation formula, and stipulates that any teacher rated ineffective may not receive a salary increase in the following year. Louisiana policy also enables districts to provide stipends to teachers in critical shortage subjects and low-performing or Title I schools. Teachers in critical shortage subjects may earn up to \$3,000 per year for four years, and teachers in low-performing or Title I schools are eligible to earn additional funds for up to four years. Although not currently funded at the state level, Louisiana provides ongoing technical assistance to districts to secure the necessary resources to fund these incentives for teachers.

For more information, see: [Louisiana Revised Statutes 17:10.2, 17:418, 17: 427](#)

"In 2012, Louisiana's Legislature gave local systems the authority to compensate teachers based on demand, performance and experience. School systems across the state have adapted their compensation systems to meet local needs and to reward excellent teachers. From Caddo Parish, a large urban school system, to St. Landry Parish, a small rural school system, teachers are eligible for stipends and salary increases up to \$5,000 for serving in historically hard-to-staff schools or subjects."

– Hannah Dietsch  
Assistant Superintendent, Talent  
Louisiana Department of Education

"The goal of Utah's educator pay structure is to attract more qualified educators into hard-to-staff fields and to attract and retain more effective educators in every classroom so that each Utah student graduates from high school equipped with the knowledge and skills to have choices for their future."

– Sydnee Dickson  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Utah State Board of Education

**Utah** requires districts to implement compensation systems that align with annual teacher evaluations, while also providing additional monetary stipends to incentivize effective teachers to assume roles in high-need schools and subjects. The state requires that advancements in compensation be based primarily on evaluation, and prohibits employees who earn an *ineffective* evaluation rating from earning a salary advancement. To encourage and reward teachers in critical shortage subject areas, Utah's *Teacher Salary Supplement Program* allows teachers with corresponding degrees to earn an annual salary supplement of up to \$4,100. This bonus to a teacher's regular pay exists in conjunction with Utah's *Effective Teachers in High Poverty Schools Program*, which offers annual salary bonuses of up to \$5,000 to effective teachers employed in high-poverty schools who achieve a median growth percentile of 70 or higher.

For more information, see: Utah Code [53G-11-507](#); [53G-11-518](#)

STATE	DOES THE STATE REQUIRE DISTRICTS TO COMPENSATE TEACHERS FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE?		DOES THE STATE EXPLICITLY SUPPORT <sup>1</sup> ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR TEACHERS IN HIGH-NEED SCHOOLS?		DOES THE STATE EXPLICITLY SUPPORT <sup>1</sup> ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR TEACHERS IN SHORTAGE SUBJECT AREAS?		DOES THE STATE EXPLICITLY SUPPORT <sup>1</sup> ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION TO NEW TEACHERS FOR RELEVANT, PRIOR, NON-TEACHING WORK EXPERIENCE?	
AL	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	Partially	Only career and technology teachers are compensated.
AK	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
AZ	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance. <sup>2</sup>	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
AR	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance. <sup>3</sup>	Yes	National Board Certified Teachers earn bonuses of \$5,000 or \$10,000 per year for up to 10 years.	Yes	STEM teachers are eligible to apply for supplemental grants.	No	Defers to districts
CA	No	Defers to districts	Yes	National Board Certified teachers earn stipends of \$20,000 over four years.	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to provide compensation incentives.	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to make adjustments on the salary schedule.
CO	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance.	Yes	New teachers are eligible for stipends of \$2,800 (up to 40 stipends offered annually). National Board Certified teachers earn additional stipends of \$1,600.	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
CT	No	Defers to districts	Partially	Teachers are eligible for mortgage assistance (amount not specified).	Partially	Teachers are eligible for mortgage assistance (amount not specified).	No	Defers to districts
DE	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance.	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	Partially	Only teachers of trade and industry are compensated.
DC	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
FL	Yes	Salary adjustments are only awarded to teachers rated <i>effective</i> or <i>highly effective</i> ; relationship of adjustment is specified.	Yes	Salary supplements are required (amount not specified).	Yes	Salary supplements are required (amount not specified).	No	Defers to districts
GA	Yes	State salary schedule is waived for 169 of 180 school districts to allow districts to reward teachers based on effective performance. The state requires all teachers rated <i>less-than-effective</i> to be prohibited from earning an additional year's credit on the salary schedule.	Partially	State salary schedule is waived for 169 of 180 school districts to allow districts to provide additional compensation for teaching in high-need schools.	Yes	Salaries for secondary teachers adjusted to step comparable to six years of service. Elementary math and science teachers earn \$1,000 stipends annually for five years.	Partially	State salary schedule is waived for 169 of 180 school districts to allow districts to provide additional compensation for new teachers with relevant prior work experience.
HI	Yes	Salary adjustments are only awarded to teachers rated <i>effective</i> or higher.	Yes	National Board Certified teachers earn additional \$5,000 stipend.	No	Defers to districts	Partially	Only military experience is compensated.
ID	Partially	Districts are explicitly allowed to provide salary advancements on the professional rung of the career ladder for teachers who earn a rating of <i>proficient</i> or higher.	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
IL	Partially	Districts are explicitly allowed to consider performance.	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
IN	Yes	Teachers must earn ratings of <i>effective</i> or higher to earn a salary increase.	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
IA	No	Defers to districts	Yes	Teachers are eligible for salary supplements (amount not specified).	Yes	New teachers are eligible for up to a \$4,000 annual grant, not to exceed \$20,000 for over a five-year period.	No	Defers to districts
KS	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
KY	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance.	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to offer differential pay; those who do are eligible for state grants.	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to offer differential pay (amount not specified).	No	Defers to districts
LA	Yes	Teachers rated <i>ineffective</i> are prohibited from earning a salary raise.	Yes	Teachers are eligible for up to \$6,000 annual stipends for up to four years. <sup>4</sup> Additional compensation structures determined by districts.	Yes	Teachers are eligible for up to \$3,000 annual stipends for first four years. <sup>4</sup> Additional compensation structures determined by districts.	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to offer compensation.
ME	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
MD	No	Defers to districts	Yes	National Board Certified teachers earn additional \$4,000 stipends.	Partially	Teachers are eligible for tuition reimbursement.	No	Defers to districts
MA	Partially	The state explicitly allows districts to consider performance.	Partially	Districts and schools identified by the state as chronically underperforming are explicitly allowed to offer differential pay.	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
MI	Yes	Adjustments are not articulated by the state.	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
MN	Yes	Teachers in districts that participate in Q Comp earn additional compensation, with 60 percent determined by performance. <sup>5</sup>	Yes	Teachers in districts that participate in Q Comp are eligible for stipends; amount not specified. <sup>5</sup>	Yes	Teachers in districts that participate in Q Comp are eligible for stipends; amount not specified. <sup>5</sup>	No	Defers to districts
MS	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance.	Yes	National Board Certified teachers earn additional \$4,000 stipends.	Partially	Teachers are eligible for loan forgiveness, up to \$12,000. <sup>6</sup>	No	Defers to districts
MO	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance.	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
MT	No	Defers to districts	Partially	Teachers are eligible for loan forgiveness, up to \$3,000.	Partially	Teachers are eligible for loan forgiveness, up to \$3,000.	No	Defers to districts

NE	No	Defers to districts	Partially	Teachers are eligible for loan forgiveness, up to \$6,000 annually.	Partially	Teachers are eligible for loan forgiveness, up to \$3,000 annually.	No	Defers to districts
NV	Yes	Mandatory performance-based adjustments are added to base salaries, not to exceed 10 percent, for not less than five percent of a district's teachers and leaders.	Yes	Teachers are eligible for stipends, up to \$3,500 annually.	Yes	Teachers are eligible for stipends, up to \$3,500 annually.	No	Defers to districts
NH	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
NJ	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
NM	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance.	Yes	Teachers earning ratings of exemplary automatically earn awards of up to \$10,000 annually.	Yes	Teachers earning ratings of exemplary automatically earn awards of up to \$10,000 annually.	No	Defers to districts
NY	No	Defers to districts	Yes	Teachers are eligible for \$3,400 stipend annually for three years. National Board Certified teachers rated effective or higher eligible for \$10,000 stipend for up to three years.	Yes	Teachers are eligible for \$3,400 stipend annually for three years.	No	Defers to districts
NC	No	Defers to districts	Yes	Highly qualified new teachers earn salary supplements equivalent to salary of teacher with three years of experience for first three years teaching.	Yes	Highly qualified new teachers earn salary supplements equivalent to salary of teacher with two years of experience for first two years teaching.	Yes	Teachers earn one year of credit for every one year of post-baccalaureate experience; one year of credit for every two years of pre-baccalaureate experience.
ND	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	Partially	New teachers are eligible for loan forgiveness (up to two teachers per district).	No	Defers to districts
OH	Partially	Cleveland Public Schools must adopt a differentiated salary schedule based on performance.	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to offer differential pay; those who do are eligible for state grants. <sup>4</sup>	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to offer differential pay; those who do are eligible for state grants. <sup>4</sup>	Partially	Only teachers with military experience are explicitly allowed compensation.
OK	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance.	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to offer incentives.	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to provide compensation incentives; loan forgiveness is also available.	No	Defers to districts
OR	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
PA	No	Defers to districts	Partially	Teachers are eligible for loan forgiveness, up to \$10,000.	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
RI	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
SC	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance.	Partially	Teachers are eligible for loan forgiveness (amount not specified).	Partially	Teachers are eligible for loan forgiveness (amount not specified).	No	Defers to districts
SD	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	Partially	Teachers are eligible for tuition reimbursement.	No	Defers to districts
TN	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance.	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to implement differential pay.	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to implement differential pay.	Partially	Teachers with military experience are explicitly allowed compensation.
TX	No	Defers to districts	Yes	Future teachers are eligible for \$5,000 grant. <sup>5</sup>	No	Defers to districts	Partially	Only career and technical education teachers and those with military experience are compensated.
UT	Yes	Teachers rated <i>ineffective</i> are prohibited from earning a salary increase.	Yes	Teachers who achieve a median growth percentile of 70 or higher earn annual salary bonuses of up to \$5,000. National Board Certified teachers earn an additional \$750 bonus.	Yes	Teachers earn annual salary supplements of up to \$4,100.	No	Defers to districts
VT	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts	Partially	Teachers are eligible for loan forgiveness (amount not specified).	No	Defers to districts
VA	Partially	Districts are explicitly encouraged to consider performance.	Yes	Districts are explicitly encouraged to offer incentives.	Yes	Middle school math and STEM teachers are offered incentives; loan forgiveness is also available.	No	Defers to districts
WA	No	Defers to districts	Yes	National Board Certified teachers earn an additional \$5,000 bonus.	Partially	Teachers are eligible for scholarships or loan forgiveness (amount not specified).	No	Defers to districts
WV	No	Defers to districts	Yes	Districts are explicitly allowed to award incentives to highly qualified teachers; tuition reimbursement is also available.	Partially	Teacher are eligible for loan assistance, up to \$15,000, and tuition reimbursement.	Partially	Only career and technical education teachers are explicitly allowed additional compensation.
WI	No	Defers to districts	Yes	National Board Certified teachers earn additional \$2,500 stipends annually.	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts
WY	No	Defers to districts	Yes	Teachers are awarded additional compensation (amount not specified).	No	Defers to districts	No	Defers to districts

1 “Explicitly supports” refers to specific state policy language that either allocates funding or definitively states that districts may dedicate resources to provide additional compensation for such teachers.

2 Although Arizona’s policy connects compensation to its teacher evaluation framework, there is no explicit requirement that links performance pay to evidence of effectiveness, including a teacher’s impact on student growth.

3 Pending legislation would allow districts to provide increased salaries based on a tiered licensure system that includes measures of teacher effectiveness, namely impact on student growth.

4 Program is not currently funded by the state.

5 More than half of all students in Minnesota attend a Q Comp school.

6 No awards will be made to new applicants for the 2017-2018 school year due to a lack of funds.

Note: Absent explicit prohibitive language or restrictive statewide salary schedules, districts in many states have the autonomy to adopt teacher pay policies that may address the issues addressed here: performance pay; additional compensation for teaching in high-need schools and shortage subject areas; and compensation for relevant, non-teaching prior work experience. For example, Connecticut, does not articulate a statewide performance pay policy; however, because the state does not expressly prohibit the consideration of evaluation ratings when determining teacher pay scales, or additional pay initiatives for teaching in high-need, hard-to-staff subjects, some districts have adopted such policies as part of individual collective bargaining agreements.

# Noteworthy Policies By Region

## Pacific

States in the Pacific region—**Alaska, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington**—should look to **California** when considering strategic compensation initiatives. While still giving local districts the authority to set pay scales, the state encourages public school employers to “provide incentives to teachers for teaching assignments in areas of highest need.” California also offers a \$20,000 incentive award to National Board Certified teachers who teach at least 50 percent of the time at a high-need school for four consecutive years. Further, the state specifically encourages its districts to compensate teachers for “relevant professional experience on the salary schedule in lieu of units and degrees or... teaching experience.”

## Mountain

States in the Mountain region—**Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming**—should look to **Utah** (p. 1), along with **Nevada**. Nevada’s performance pay system has a primary focus on “improvement in the academic achievement of pupils,” particularly in Nevada’s designated high-risk schools. The state requires each district to award up to a 10 percent increase in base salaries for at least five percent of teachers and administrators employed by each district. To incentivize teachers to assume roles in high-need schools and subjects, Nevada provides up to \$3,500 annually for teachers in defined shortage-subject areas and an additional \$3,500 per year for teachers in “at-risk” schools.

## South-Atlantic

States in the South-Atlantic region—**Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Maryland, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia**—should look to **North Carolina** and **Florida**. While affording districts the flexibility to set their own salary schedules, **Florida** requires that teachers rated *highly effective* earn the highest available adjustment on any salary schedule, and those rated *effective* earn adjustments that are 50 to 75 percent of those earned by *highly effective* teachers. The state does not permit teachers who receive ratings below effective to earn a salary adjustment. The state also directs districts to provide salary supplements for certified teachers teaching in critical shortage areas, as well as teachers in Title I schools or any school that earned a grade of F or three consecutive grades of D in the most recent prior year. **North Carolina** offers salary supplements equivalent to two years of experience to *highly-qualified* teaching graduates who teach in a defined critical shortage subject area during their first two years of employment, and salary supplements equivalent to three years of experience during their first three years for such teachers who teach at low-performing schools. North Carolina compensates teachers with “full-time relevant non-teaching work experience” by advancing such teachers one year on the salary schedule for every one year of post-bachelor’s degree experience and every two years of experience prior to earning a bachelor’s degree.

## Midwest

States in the Midwestern region—**Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin**—should look to **Indiana** and **Ohio** for strategic pay policies. **Indiana** requires local salary scales to be based on a combination of factors, including teacher evaluation, education/experience, academic needs of students, and leadership. The state prohibits any teacher beyond their second year of teaching who earns a rating of *ineffective* or *improvement necessary* from being eligible for a pay raise. Although not currently funded by the state, **Ohio** policy incentivizes teaching in subjects and schools where shortages exist through a grant program for districts that provides monetary incentives to attract qualified teachers to these positions. Despite the strength of this policy, it is only by fully funding this program that its promise can be realized.

“While we have been increasing overall pay for teachers, North Carolina has also been moving toward differentiated pay for teachers who take on advanced roles. Ensuring that low-performing schools have access to quality teachers is a targeted way to address equity concerns and help students anywhere in the state stay on track to pursue college, a career, or military service after graduation.”

—Mark Johnson  
State Superintendent  
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

## South

States in the Southern region—**Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas**—should look to **Louisiana** (p. 1), along with **Tennessee**. Tennessee requires that districts differentiate teacher compensation based on at least one of the following criteria: performance based on teacher evaluations, hard-to-staff schools or subject areas, or additional roles or responsibilities. The state requires districts that choose to include a performance component in their compensation systems base such performance on effectiveness as measured by its teacher evaluation system.

## Mid-Atlantic

States in the Mid-Atlantic region—**New Jersey** and **Pennsylvania**—should look to **New York**, which maintains a state recruitment and retention program that makes teachers serving in teacher-shortage areas eligible for an annual award of \$3,400 for three years. The state defines a teacher-shortage area as a subject area in which more than five percent of full-time teaching assignments in the previous school year were filled by out-of-field or uncertified teachers. Although New York does not currently require performance pay, local districts retain the authority to set pay scales and the state requires that districts offering supplemental compensation base such compensation on a teacher’s performance evaluation.

## New England

At present, no states in the New England region are taking adequate steps to ensure that teachers are strategically compensated. Given the lack of strong policies in this region, states from New England—**Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island** and **Vermont**—should look to states in other regions across the nation for promising policies and practices.

## Recommendations

Compensating teachers strategically requires all states to take a holistic approach to teacher compensation. Such an approach should ensure districts consider additional compensation for effective performance; teaching in high-need schools and subjects; and relevant, prior, non-teaching work experience.

As a preliminary action, states should:

- Provide districts with the flexibility to set pay structures and scales, while preserving the right to establish an adequate minimum salary.

States should then:

- Set parameters regarding district considerations for developing compensation systems, including considerations related to teacher effectiveness, teaching in high-need schools and shortage subject areas, and relevant, prior, non-teaching work experience; and
- Work with districts to identify funding, either at the state or district level, and support successful implementation of such policies so that their impact can be fully realized.

Even in a resource-constrained environment, every state has the opportunity to be strategic about how compensation resources are allocated.