



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | FEBRUARY 20, 2025  
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## The NYC Teacher Pay Puzzle: Low or High? It Depends on What You Look At

February 20, 2025 – [The competitiveness of teacher salaries has long been a central focus as schools nationwide struggle to hire and retain educators.](#) This is particularly true for New York City with its high cost of living and ample other employment opportunities outside of teaching. The need for quality teachers is even more stark amid a decline in student achievement compared to pre-pandemic levels. Furthermore, a new State law limits class sizes, which the New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO) estimated will require hiring [17,700 additional teachers.](#)

Given this context, IBO examined how competitive New York City public school salaries are compared with other employment options. In [this report](#), IBO compares New York City public school salaries with salaries across City charter schools, school districts on Long Island, in the Hudson Valley, and nearby New Jersey, as well as other urban school districts in New York State. Beyond just comparing raw salary numbers, IBO also compares salaries adjusted for teacher education levels, years of experience, local cost of living, and competitiveness of the local labor market. This provides a more complete picture of how New York City teacher pay in public schools stacks up against other opportunities.

IBO's key findings:

- Looking at raw salaries across all teachers in a school district, New York City public school teachers have a higher median salary than City charter schools, other large urban districts in New York State (Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers) and neighboring New Jersey school districts. However, teachers in school districts on Long Island and in the Hudson Valley had higher median salaries, in part due to teachers having more years of experience.
- When looking at salaries for teachers with a master's degree and five or fewer years of teaching experience, New York City public and charter schools had higher unadjusted salaries than the comparison school districts. As the City seeks to hire more teachers, likely these recruits would be novice teachers with a master's degree. This would suggest that unadjusted New York City salaries are more competitive compared with other areas.
- New York City, however, has a high cost of living and a labor market that presents many other job opportunities outside of teaching. [After adjusting for these factors,](#) New York City teacher salaries for new hires look similar across the State and are lower than other large urban school districts in New York State.

For new teachers with a master's degree, New York City public school salaries are in line with other regional teaching options. This means New York City does not have a comparative advantage relative to other places regarding salaries. But it also indicates that City teachers are unlikely to be lured away to teaching jobs outside the City because of salary levels alone. Separate from pay or other employment benefits, New York City has many other attractive features as a place to work that may be appealing to recruiting new teachers.

This report is one in a series IBO is producing to help State policymakers understand the questions that will be central to education discussions in Albany this session. IBO also recently published a report analyzing the potential impact of the Rockefeller Institute of Government's recommendations on the distribution of [Foundation Aid](#) for New York City.

Reach out to IBO's press office for a briefing or further details on IBO's education research.

