



Pay Teachers Act of 2023

HELP Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

There is no job more important and more difficult than teaching our nation's children. Today, 44 percent of public school teachers [quit the profession within 5 years](#). Our public school teachers are [more likely than other workers to experience higher levels of anxiety, stress, and burnout](#)—which has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Public school teachers in America have one of the toughest, most demanding, and most under-appreciated jobs in America, and yet, [according to NEA](#), the starting pay for teachers in almost 40 percent of our nation's school districts is less than \$40,000 a year. Further, 43 percent of our nation's public school teachers make less than \$60,000 a year. The sad reality is that teacher pay in America has been stagnant for decades. Unacceptably, after adjusting for inflation, the [average weekly wage](#) of a public school teacher has gone up by only \$29 over the past 30 years. In America today, hundreds of thousands of public school teachers have to [work two or three jobs](#) during the school year to make ends meet. No wonder researchers have found that [the status of the teaching profession is at its lowest point in five decades](#).

As a result, [over half of our nation's public schools](#) feel they are under-staffed. Teacher shortages [disproportionately impact schools](#) that primarily serve students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. The **Pay Teachers Act** would triple Title I-A funding, help raise annual teacher salaries to at least \$60,000, and help to ensure that teachers are paid a livable and competitive salary across their career. [Raising teacher salaries annually to at least \\$60,000 and helping to ensure competitive pay for all of our teachers is one of the most important steps we can take to address the teacher shortage in America and to increase educational opportunity across our public schools.](#)

The Pay Teachers Act Significantly Increases Federal Investments in Public Schools and in Supporting the Teaching Profession. The bill makes the following mandatory investments beginning in fiscal year 2024 and permanently indexes funding to inflation in succeeding fiscal years:

- Triples Title I-A funding (\$36.77 billion).
- Triples funding for Rural Education programs (\$430 million), doubles Impact Aid Basic Support Payments (\$1.46 billion), and provides an additional \$1 billion for the Bureau of Indian Education.
- Diversifies and expands the teacher pipeline by: (1) authorizing a new Grow Your Own program within the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant program and providing \$550 million for TQP grants; (2) investing \$150 million in the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence program to support teacher preparation at HBCUs, TCUs and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs); and (3) investing \$300 million in IDEA, Part D to support the special education personnel pipeline.
- Supports the teaching profession by expanding leadership and advancement opportunities by investing in and strengthening the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) program (\$100 million) and the Teacher and School Leader Incentive program (\$200 million).

Support States in Increasing Teacher Salaries, Including by Improving Resource Equity

- Requires States to establish a “minimum salary for teachers” that must be at least \$60,000 and to pay teachers a livable and competitive annual salary that is at least and commensurate with similarly college-educated and experienced professionals and increases throughout a teacher's career.
- Provides additional flexibilities to States that currently have an annual starting statewide teacher salary average of less than \$45,000, or where 50 percent or less of teachers statewide earn less than \$60,000, to increase teacher salaries over time by participating in the Teacher Salary Improvement Pathway.
- Helps to ensure students from low-income backgrounds, students who are racial and ethnic minorities, children with disabilities, and English learners are not disproportionately served by out-of-field, inexperienced, or ineffective teachers, including ensuring that teachers have the adequate supports they need to be effective.
- Expands resource reviews and incorporates “maintenance of equity” requirements into Title I-A to protect high-need school districts from disproportionate cuts and highest-need school districts from any cuts in per-pupil funding, and to ensure all districts have the resources they need to pay teachers a livable and competitive wage and provide students equitable educational opportunities.

This bill is supported by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the National Education Association (NEA), and over 50 major organizations representing students, educators, and families.