

# Teacher Salary in New Hampshire

District-Level Salaries for Teachers with a Bachelor's Degree

Teacher salaries in New Hampshire's public schools varied widely between school districts, based on factors like district size and the property wealth of the community. First-year teachers earned 57% more in the highest-paying district than in the lowest-paying district.

In the 2019 school year, the average salary for all New Hampshire public school\* teachers was \$59,198, compared to the state's average income of \$53,950 (NH Department of Education, 2020; NH Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). In most districts, teacher salaries are determined by a "step schedule," or a set amount based on level of education and years of teaching experience.

New Hampshire's district and school leaders identify teacher salaries as one way of attracting and retaining high-quality teaching staff (Green, 2010). National research supports this claim: teacher pay has been cited as a driving factor in teacher attrition and retention (Miller, 2006). Teacher turnover tends to lead to lower math and reading scores for students, and these effects are especially strong for underserved students (Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff, 2013). Teaching experience, particularly in the same grade level, subject, or district, is also positively associated with teacher effectiveness (Kini and Podolsky, 2016). Teachers with less experience (fewer than three years) are more likely to teach in schools with high concentrations of students navigating poverty, raising concerns around equity, student needs, and the opportunity gap (Rice, 2010).

In 2008, lawmakers identified the standard teacher salary as \$35,548 in the school funding formula, which was the average salary for a certified educator with a Bachelor's degree and three years of teaching experience. In 2019, the median salary for a certified educator with a Bachelor's degree and three years of teaching experience was \$40,858, a 15% increase from 2008. The funding formula, however, has increased 7% over the same period.\*\*

This policy brief explores variations in salaries across New Hampshire, focusing exclusively on salary step schedule data **for NH-certified teachers with Bachelor's degrees**. This brief does not explore salaries for teachers with additional post secondary credits, Master's or higher degrees, alternative certifications, or any other education or experience.

## Key Takeaways

- The median starting salary for first-year teachers with a Bachelor's degree was \$37,602 in 2019.
- Salaries for teachers with a Bachelor's degree, with the same amount of teaching experience, differed considerably throughout New Hampshire.
- First-year teachers in the single highest-paying district earned over \$17,000 more than first-year teachers in the single lowest-paying district -- a difference of 57%.
- Fifth-year teachers in four New Hampshire school districts did not make as much as first-year teachers in 64 New Hampshire school districts.
- New Hampshire's school funding formula funds a third-year educator position at **\$35,548** per year, plus benefits; however, the average third year teacher salary in the state is **\$40,858** plus benefits in 2019.

\*Salaries are for all teachers in public school districts, public academies, and joint maintenance agreement schools, in all grades, regardless of education level or experience. The teacher salaries in this brief do not include New Hampshire charter schools.

\*\*These numbers have not been adjusted for inflation.

NOTE: The NH Department of Education did not have teacher tenure, attrition, or retention data publicly available on their website at the time of publishing.



Chart 1: Growth in Teacher Salary Among Highest- and Lowest-Paying Districts, 2019



This chart displays the median teacher salary in Steps 1, 3, and 5 for the state, as well as for the 10 districts with the highest starting salary, and the 10 districts with the lowest starting salary, as ranked by Step 1. Only districts that use a step schedule were included in this analysis.

## Variations in First- and Fifth-Year Teacher Salary

The median starting salary for first-year New Hampshire teachers with a Bachelor's degree was \$37,602 in 2019.

First-year salaries varied considerably between districts. In the ten highest-paying districts in the state, first-year teachers earned between \$43,926 and \$47,860. In the ten lowest-paying districts in the state, first-year teachers earned between \$30,452 and \$33,841. Chart 1 shows the salary gap between the median salaries of the ten highest- and ten lowest-paying districts, compared to the state median.

First-year teachers in the single highest-paying district earned over \$17,000 more than first-year teachers in the single lowest-paying district -- a difference of 57%.

Those differences grew by the time teachers reached the fifth step: fifth-year teachers earned up to 65% more in the highest-paying district than in the lowest-paying district. **The fifth-year salary in the single lowest-paying district was \$14,246 less than the first-year salary in the single highest-paying district.**

### Starting Salaries

High	\$47,860	First-year teachers <b>earned 57% more</b> in the highest-paying district than in the lowest-paying district
Median	\$37,602	
Low	\$30,452	

### Step 5 Salaries

High	\$55,417	Fifth-year teachers <b>earned 65% more</b> in the highest-paying district than in the lowest-paying district
Median	\$43,036	
Low	\$33,614	

### What is the earliest step for a teacher to make at least \$50,000?

In those districts that specify steps rather than longevity pay, step 11 was the most common step when teachers earned a salary of \$50,000 (15 districts). In three districts, teachers earned at least \$50,000 in their third step. In 24 districts, there was no step where teachers with a Bachelor's degree made at least \$50,000. Please see the "Additional Information About Teacher Salary Schedules" section for more information.



Table 1: Examples of Three Districts' Salary Changes by Dollar and Percentage Increases, 2019

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 10
<b>Uniform Increase</b>	\$36,228	\$37,239 2.8%	\$38,280 2.8%	\$39,349 2.8%	\$40,450 2.8%	\$46,452
<b>0% Increase until Step 5</b>	\$38,750	\$38,750 0.0%	\$38,750 0.0%	\$38,750 0.0%	\$40,000 3.2%	\$44,000
<b>Varied Increase</b>	\$40,284	\$40,596 0.8%	\$41,672 2.7%	\$43,427 4.2%	\$44,991 3.6%	\$48,576

Table 1 displays examples of three different New Hampshire school districts' salary schedules: one district that has a uniform, 2.8% increase from year to year; one district that does not have a salary increase until step 5; and, one district that has a varied increase in salary between steps. These three examples do not represent every salary change combination; step salary changes are negotiated at the district level.

## Step-to-Step Increases

Step increases were not uniform across all districts – and they were not always uniform between steps in the *same* district. The median increase statewide in first-year to second-year salaries was \$1,287. The median percentage increase was 3.5%.

The greatest increase between steps 1 and 2 was \$2,655 (6.5%), and the lowest increase was \$0. Two districts, with starting salaries of roughly \$39,000, had no increase in salary for teachers until their fifth year of teaching.

By the time teachers reached their fifth year of teaching, the median teacher salary for the top ten districts was \$52,957, and the median salary for the bottom ten

districts was \$38,587. The difference between the fifth-year median teacher salaries of the top ten districts and the bottom ten districts was \$14,370. **In four New Hampshire school districts, fifth-year teachers did not make as much as first-year teachers did in 64 New Hampshire school districts.**

As shown in Chart 1 on the previous page, the percentage increase from year one to year five in the top ten highest- and lowest-paying districts was almost identical (17% and 16%, respectively). Despite the similar increase, *fifth-year* salaries in the lowest-paying districts were still lower than the *first-year salaries* in the highest-paying districts.



## Geographical Variations in Teacher Salary

Teacher salaries in New Hampshire’s public schools varied based on factors like district size, student-to-teacher ratio, and the property wealth of the community (Reaching Higher NH, 2020).

Districts with low teacher salaries were not clustered in one region of the state, as shown in Map 1. Map 1 highlights the districts with the highest (blue) and lowest (green) starting salaries for a teacher with a Bachelor’s degree.

The starting salary for a teacher with a Bachelor’s degree was \$30,452 in the district with the lowest starting salary, as shown in Chart 2. However, the median salary for a first-year teacher with the same education in the ten geographically closest districts, all within 13 miles, was \$36,673. This “salary gap” expanded to \$9,192 once teachers reached Step 5.

However, districts with the highest teacher salaries tended to be on the Seacoast and in the Upper Valley. Chart 3 shows the highest starting teacher salary, which was \$47,860; in the ten geographically closest districts, all within 13 miles, the median salary was \$43,920. This salary gap actually slightly decreased by step 5 to \$3,649 less per year than the highest-paying district.

Map 1: Districts With the Highest (Blue) and Lowest (Green) Starting Teacher Salaries, 2019

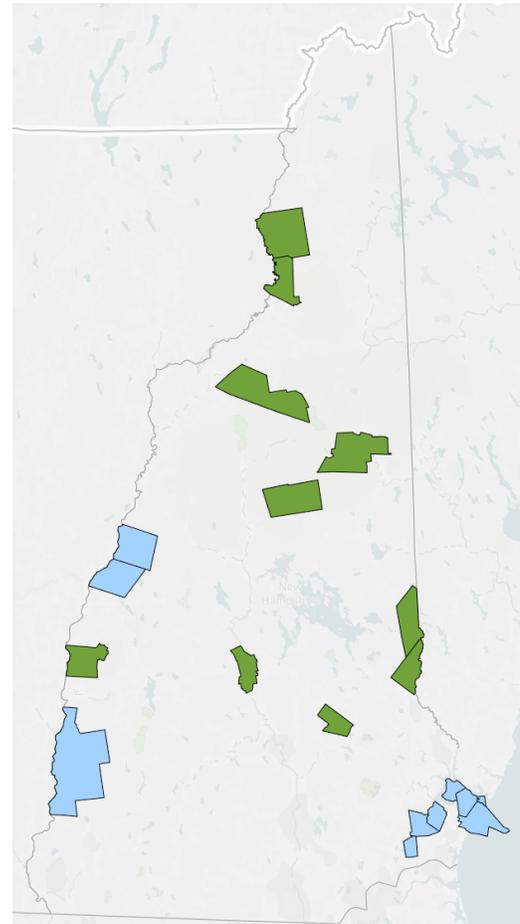


Chart 2: District with Lowest Starting Salary and Nearby Communities, 2019



Chart 3: District with Highest Starting Salary and Nearby Communities, 2019



Charts 2 and 3 contain data for the single lowest-paying district and single highest-paying district, respectively, and the median salary for the 5- and 10-closest districts, measured by the straight line distance between the district centers.

## Additional Information About Teacher Salary Schedules

The step data in this brief includes salaries for New Hampshire K-12 public school teachers who have a Bachelor's degree and are certified by the New Hampshire Department of Education for the 2018-2019 school year, in districts that use a step salary schedule. It does not include salaries for public charter schools, private schools, or online schools, and does not include districts that use methods other than a step schedule to determine teacher salaries.

The majority of school districts in New Hampshire pay teachers based on a "step" salary schedule, with each step representing one year of experience.

Under a step salary schedule, districts pay teachers based on years of experience and level of education. Schedules include varying higher education levels, which may include: Bachelor's degree, BA+15 (Bachelor's plus 15 graduate credits), Master's degree, MA+15 (Master's plus 15 graduate credits), and so on. Salary schedules are negotiated at the district level.

"Off-step" salaries, or salaries for teachers whose years of employment exceed the maximum step listed, are part of the district's contract agreement. Steps are generally calculated by the years of service teaching, rather than the years of service with a particular district; however, these decisions are made on a district-by-district basis. Not all districts have the same number of steps: they vary between a minimum of 6 steps, and a maximum of 48 steps.

Salary data include base salary, but do not include benefits, additional payments, or stipends.

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### About Reaching Higher NH

Reaching Higher NH is a nonpartisan 501(c)3. Our mission is to provide all New Hampshire children with the opportunity to prepare for college, for immediate careers, and for the challenges and opportunities of life in 21st century NH, by serving as a public education policy and community engagement resource for New Hampshire families, educators, and elected officials.

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