

Teacher Salary in New Hampshire

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

Teacher salaries in New Hampshire's public schools varied based on factors like district size and the property wealth of the community. First-year teachers earned 64% 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 mean 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 particularly 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).

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

Key Takeaways

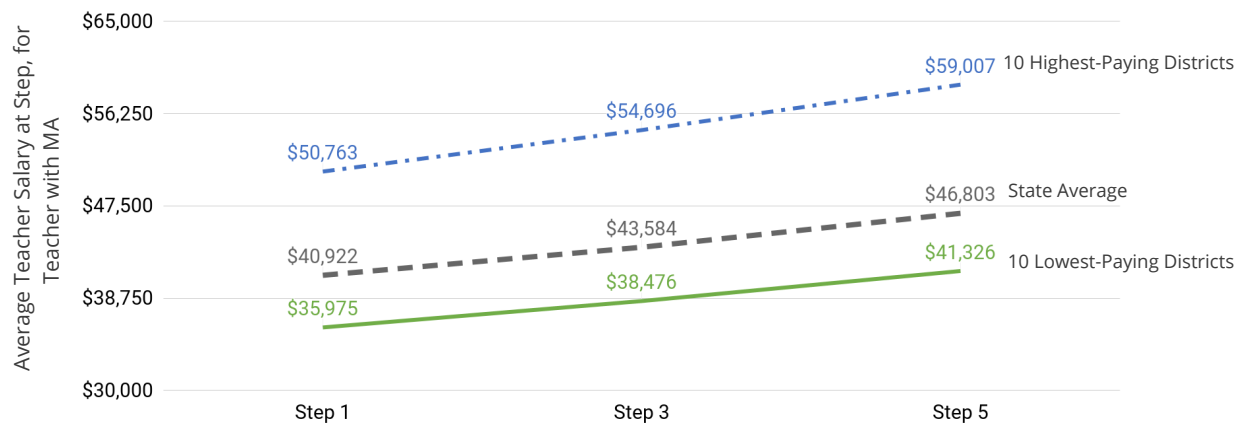
- The median starting salary for first-year teachers with a Master's degree was \$40,922 in 2019.
- Salary offerings for teachers with a Master's degree differed considerably throughout New Hampshire.
- First-year teachers in the single highest-paying district earned \$22,066 more than first-year teachers in the lowest-paying district -- a difference of 64%.
- Fifth-year teachers in 77 New Hampshire school districts did not make as much as first-year teachers in any of the ten highest-paying New Hampshire school districts.

*Average 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 average teacher salaries do not include New Hampshire charter schools.

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.

Variations in First- and Fifth-Year Teacher Salary

The median starting salary for first-year New Hampshire teachers with a Master's degree was \$40,922 in 2019.

First-year salaries varied considerably between districts. In the ten highest-paying districts in the state, first-year teachers earned between \$47,682 and \$56,366. In the ten lowest-paying districts in the state, first-year teachers earned between \$34,300 and \$36,538.

First-year teachers in the single highest-paying district earned \$22,066 more than first-year teachers in the lowest-paying district -- a difference of 64%.

Those differences grew by the time teachers reached the fifth step: fifth-year teachers earned up to 67% more in higher-paying districts than in lower-paying districts. **The fifth-year salary in the lowest-paying district was \$19,066 less than the first-year salary in the highest-paying district.**

Starting Salaries

High	\$56,366	First-year teachers earned 64% more in the highest-paying district than in the lowest-paying district
Median	\$40,922	
Low	\$34,300	

Step 5 Salaries

High	\$62,386	Fifth-year teachers earned 67% more in the highest-paying district than in the lowest-paying district
Median	\$46,803	
Low	\$37,300	

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

In six districts, teachers earned at least \$50,000 in their first step. Most frequently, step 9 was when teachers earned a salary of \$50,000 (15 districts). In six districts, there was no step where teachers with a Master'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
Uniform Increase	\$38,071	\$39,136 2.8%	\$40,230 2.8%	\$41,357 2.8%	\$42,516 2.8%	\$48,833
0% Increase until Step 5	\$40,750	\$40,750 0.0%	\$40,750 0.0%	\$40,750 0.0%	\$42,000 3.1%	\$46,000
Varied Increase	\$43,918	\$44,157 0.1%	\$45,176 2.3%	\$46,948 3.9%	\$48,511 3.3%	\$52,041

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 \$1,393. The median percentage increase was 3.5%.

However, the highest dollar amount increase between steps 1 and 2 was \$2,654; the highest percentage increase was 6.0%. The lowest increase was \$0. Two districts, with starting salaries of \$40,750 and \$43,501, 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 \$59,007, and the median salary for the bottom ten

districts was \$41,326. The difference between the fifth-year average teacher salaries of the top ten districts and the bottom ten districts was \$17,681. **Fifth-year teachers in 77 New Hampshire school districts did not make as much as first-year teachers in any of the ten highest-paying 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 (16% and 15%, 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. The starting salary for a teacher with a Master's degree was \$34,300 in the district with the lowest starting salary, as shown in Chart 2. However, a first year teacher with the same education would have earned a median salary of \$40,050 in the five geographically-closest districts, which were within 30 miles. This “salary gap” expanded to \$10,700 once teachers reached Step 5.

Map 1 highlights the districts with the highest (blue) and lowest (green) starting salaries for a teacher with a Master's degree.

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 \$53,366; in the nearest five districts - all within 10 miles - the salary gap was about \$6,547. This salary gap actually *decreased* by step 5: teachers in the five districts closest to the highest-paying district earned about \$5,176 less per year than the highest-paying district.

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

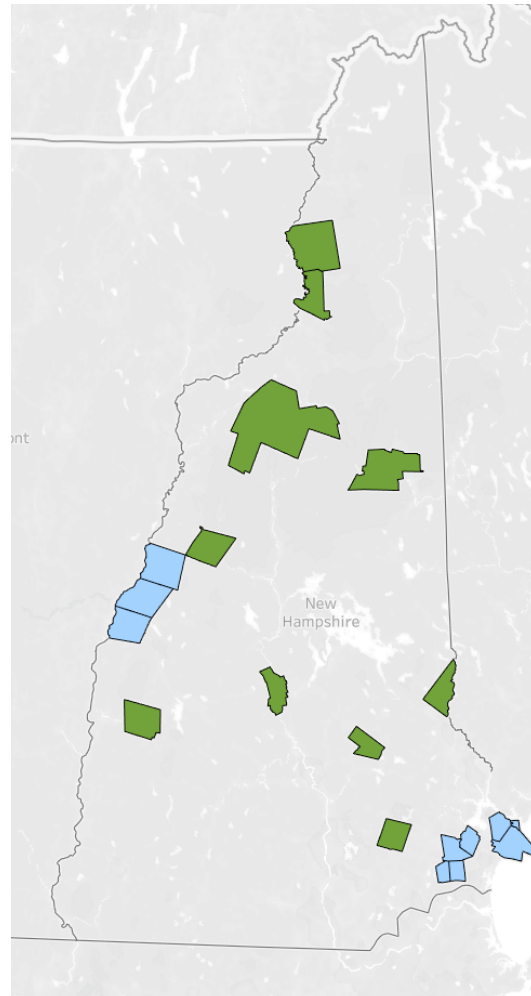


Chart 2: District with Lowest Starting Salary and Nearby Communities, 2019



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



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 Master's degree and are certified by the New Hampshire Department of Education for the 2018-2019 school year. It does not include salaries for public charter schools, private schools, or online schools.

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.

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

Sources

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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.

Authors: Elizabeth Canada and Christina Pretorius
Data Analysis: Dr. William T. Jamieson

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Any comments relating to the material contained in this document may be sent to:

Reaching Higher NH, Inc.
www.ReachingHigherNH.org
Email: staff@reachinghighernh.org
Mail: 40 N Main Street, Suite 204 | Concord, NH 03301

