

# Employment and Wages in Elementary and Secondary Schools

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The number of people working directly in the education industries demonstrates the importance of investment in education in the United States. With 11.5 million workers, or about 9 percent of total employment, educational services (Standard Industrial Classification 82) is one of the largest employing industries in the Nation. The Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) divides SIC 82 into five three-digit industries: Elementary and secondary schools (SIC 821); colleges, universities, professional schools and junior colleges (SIC 822); libraries (SIC 823); vocational schools (SIC 824); and schools, and educational services, not elsewhere classified (SIC 829).

Drawing on 2001 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment Statistics survey (OES), this article focuses on the staffing and wages of teachers, teacher

support workers, and administrative workers in elementary and secondary schools (SIC 821) and highlights the variation in the staffing and wages among States. Table 1 shows the distribution of employment and annual mean wages for the detailed occupations in the three occupational groups. These occupations, combined, account for 5.1 million workers, or about two-thirds of employment in the Nation's elementary and secondary schools (SIC 821). Teachers are 46 percent of employment in elementary and secondary schools, while teacher support occupations make up 14 percent and administrative workers account for 4 percent. Elementary school teachers, with 1.4 million workers, is the largest detailed occupation within the three occupation groups discussed here, and is also one of the largest occupations in the United States. Other dominant occupations in this industry are secondary school teachers and teacher assistants, with around 1 million employees each, followed by middle school teachers with about 570,000 employees.

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Text table 1. **Employment and annual mean wage for three categories of occupations in elementary and secondary schools (SIC 821), 2001**

Occupation	Employment	Annual mean wage
Total employment in elementary and secondary schools .....	7,985,850	\$36,020
Teachers .....	3,662,320	44,120
Kindergarten teachers, except special education .....	150,760	42,400
Elementary school teachers, except special education .....	1,435,620	43,370
Middle school teachers, except special and vocational education .....	569,140	43,550
Vocational education teachers, middle school .....	18,240	43,420
Secondary school teachers, except special and vocational education .....	975,100	45,390
Vocational education teachers, secondary school .....	103,870	44,970
Special education teachers, preschool, kindergarten, and elementary school .....	203,180	45,230
Special education teachers, middle school .....	85,490	43,160
Special education teachers, secondary school .....	120,920	45,860
Teacher support .....	1,073,650	22,180
Librarians .....	61,790	46,110
Library technicians .....	25,600	23,290
Audio-visual collections specialists .....	5,600	36,540
Instructional coordinators .....	32,100	53,220
Teacher assistants .....	948,560	19,450
Administrative .....	318,120	66,690
Managerial .....	287,560	59,460
Business .....	19,580	46,040
Financial .....	10,980	48,690
Other occupations .....	2,931,760	32,930

As one might expect, about half of those employed by elementary and secondary schools are teachers. However, the teachers' proportion of school employment and their salary levels are not consistent across all States. For example, teachers' share of industry employment varies from 33 percent in Kentucky to 56 percent in Missouri. In the case of earnings, annual mean wages for teaching occupations vary from \$59,615 in New York to \$31,847 in Montana.

The next section of this article discusses employment of the teacher, teacher support worker, and administrative worker groups with regard to various characteristics. The following section focuses on wages for these occupations.

### Employment

There are about 3.6 million teachers in elementary and secondary schools nationwide. Text table 2 shows the share of employment in teaching occupations that is found in elementary and secondary schools for each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia. In Delaware, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin, teachers represent more than 50 percent of industry employment, while they account for only 33 percent in Kentucky and 36 percent in Michigan.

While some States have higher shares of teachers overall, they may have different concentrations of specific types of teachers. Elementary school teachers account for the highest share of elementary and secondary school employment in Nevada (27 percent) and North Dakota (26 percent). This contrasts with Maine and Rhode Island, which have the smallest shares, or 13 percent each. States with the highest shares of such teachers include New Mexico (26 percent)

and Louisiana (25 percent) and those with the lowest share of special education teachers include Indiana (12 percent) and Texas (11 percent).

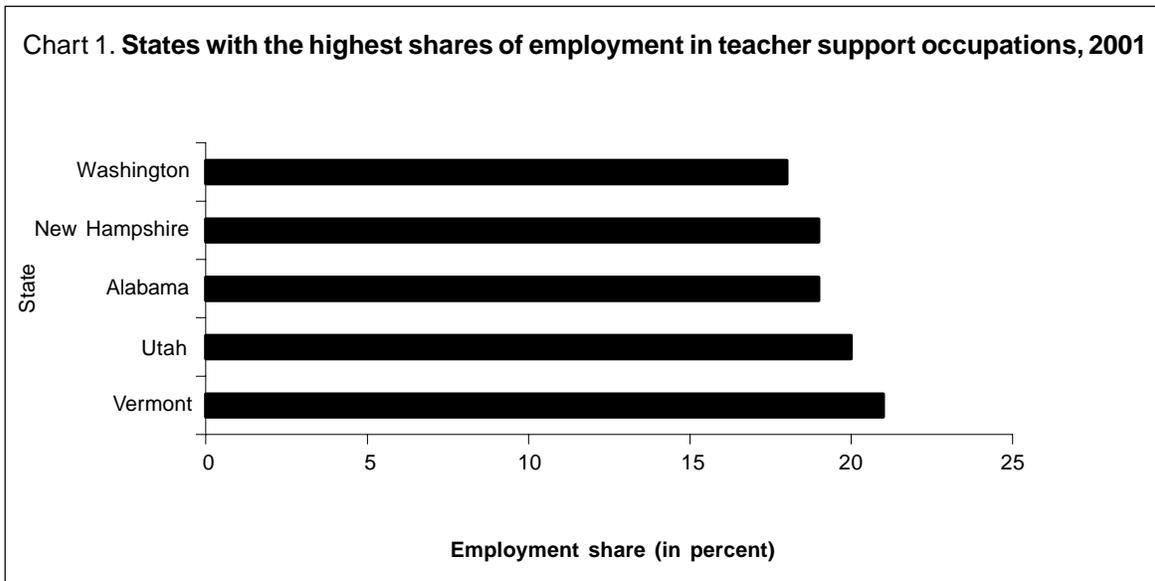
As in the case of teachers, the representation of teacher support occupations varies by State. These support occupations include librarians, library technicians, audio-visual collections specialists, instructional coordinators, and teacher assistants. Chart 1 shows the States in which support workers' shares of industry employment are greatest. The States with the smallest shares of teacher support workers include West Virginia (7 percent) and Nevada (8 percent). Missouri, which has the largest share of industry employment for teachers, has the third lowest share of employment in teacher support occupations (9 percent).

There are 948,560 teacher assistants in elementary and secondary schools, or 12 percent of the industry's employment. This single occupation accounts for about 90 percent of the employment in teacher support occupations. In most States, teacher assistants dominate employment in teacher support occupations. The occupation's share of employment ranges from 19 percent in Vermont to 6 percent in West Virginia.

The final group of workers examined in this study is administrative employees. Administrative workers, a group that accounts for 4 percent of employment in elementary and secondary schools, includes all managerial, business, and financial occupations. Clerical workers are not included in this group. By State, the share of industry employment attributable to administrative occupations varies from under 3 percent in Utah to 5 percent in Arizona, the District of Colum-

Text table 2. Share of employment in teaching occupations as a percent of SIC 821 employment, 2001

State	Percent of industry employment	State	Percent of industry employment
Missouri .....	56	Georgia .....	46
Delaware .....	55	Arkansas .....	46
Pennsylvania .....	53	North Carolina .....	45
Nevada .....	52	New Hampshire .....	45
Wisconsin .....	51	Mississippi .....	45
Oklahoma .....	51	Maryland .....	45
Nebraska .....	50	Louisiana .....	45
West Virginia .....	49	Idaho .....	45
South Dakota .....	49	Colorado .....	45
South Carolina .....	49	Virginia .....	44
Oregon .....	49	Montana .....	44
North Dakota .....	49	Arizona .....	44
New Jersey .....	49	Vermont .....	43
New York .....	48	Kansas .....	43
Massachusetts .....	48	Florida .....	43
Iowa .....	48	Alabama .....	43
Illinois .....	48	Utah .....	42
Connecticut .....	48	Hawaii .....	42
Alaska .....	48	California .....	42
Texas .....	47	New Mexico .....	41
Maine .....	47	Wyoming .....	40
<b>United States</b> .....	<b>46</b>	Indiana .....	40
Tennessee .....	46	Washington .....	39
Ohio .....	46	District of Columbia .....	37
Minnesota .....	46	Rhode Island .....	36
		Michigan .....	36
		Kentucky .....	33



bia, West Virginia, Alaska, and Delaware. The largest detailed occupation in the administrative worker group is elementary and secondary school administrators, which includes school principals. While these administrators account for just over 2 percent of industry employment in elementary and secondary schools, they are reported in 85 percent of all establishments in this industry.

The occupations outside of the three major categories discussed here account for about one-third of total employment in elementary and secondary schools. The largest of these are janitors, school bus drivers, food service workers, and clerical workers. While these other occupations account for smaller portions of total employment, they are found in most schools in all States.

### Wage rates

Wage rates for the three major occupational groups in the education industry are quite different. Nationally, administrative workers earn \$66,690 per year. On average, teachers earn \$44,120 per year, or about two-thirds of the administrative workers' salary, and teacher support occupations earn \$22,180 or about one-third of the administrative wage. Just as employment for these occupations differs from State to State, so do wages among workers in these groups. Text table 3 displays teachers' annual salaries by State for 2001. Mean annual salaries for teachers range from \$31,847 in Montana to \$59,615 in New York.

Relative wages for specific types of teachers also vary by State. While special education teachers earn wages, that are 4 percent higher on average, than those of non-special education teachers, States premium for special education teachers range from 13 percent in Colorado and 9 percent in Maryland to -9 percent in Hawaii and -6 percent in Missouri and New Hampshire. Although Colorado has the highest relative wages for special education teachers, the share of teachers accounted for by special education teachers is less than

13 percent. Nationally, 16 percent of all teachers are special education teachers.

On average, teacher support workers earn half as much as teachers. Yet, the differences in wages between the two groups also depend on where the jobs are located. While teachers in New York earn the highest wages nationwide, teacher support workers in the State earn less than half of the teachers' pay. Other States, such as Connecticut and New Jersey, that pay teachers high wages also pay teacher support workers less than half of what teachers earn. On the other hand, 33 States, including Maine and Iowa, pay teacher support workers more than half the wage of teachers, as shown in chart 2. In Nevada and the District of Columbia, teacher support workers earn three-quarters of the teachers' wage.

While they represent a small share of industry employment, administrative workers have earnings that far exceed those earnings of teachers and teacher support workers. In all States, administrative workers earn more than do teachers. Education administrator is the most commonly reported occupation in elementary and secondary schools. With an annual salary of over \$71,000 per year, this is among the top wage-earning occupations in elementary and secondary schools. Other high-paying occupations in this group include chief executives (\$95,510) and computer and information systems managers (\$69,420).

ALMOST 8 MILLION PEOPLE are directly or indirectly involved with educating students in elementary and secondary schools. Besides elementary school teachers, teacher assistants, and school principals, other occupations that are found in nearly all schools include counselors, school bus drivers, food service workers, and janitors. The staffing and wages for these occupations may vary greatly by State. An understanding of the typical staffing in elementary and secondary schools may be useful to those interested in employment in this industry. ■

Text table 3. Wage rates for teachers, by State, 2001

State	Mean wage	State	Mean wage
Pennsylvania .....	\$48,552	New Mexico .....	\$36,835
Alaska .....	49,647	Illinois .....	46,484
Maine .....	38,189	Hawaii .....	39,709
West Virginia .....	36,671	Tennessee .....	35,662
Rhode Island .....	48,986	Maryland .....	44,345
Alabama .....	39,323	Kentucky .....	39,067
Massachusetts .....	46,496	Louisiana .....	34,144
Florida .....	41,718	Connecticut .....	52,624
Wyoming .....	36,450	Colorado .....	40,053
Ohio .....	43,237	Oregon .....	42,757
Virginia .....	42,481	Arizona .....	37,564
North Dakota .....	32,300	New York .....	59,615
Delaware .....	52,672	Oklahoma .....	33,188
South Carolina .....	38,676	Montana .....	31,847
Vermont .....	40,380	Arkansas .....	34,683
New Hampshire .....	38,418	Wisconsin .....	42,247
Georgia .....	44,141	Nebraska .....	37,885
California .....	49,881	Utah .....	39,857
Michigan .....	47,976	Mississippi .....	32,043
Texas .....	40,142	Kansas .....	35,460
Indiana .....	43,279	Washington .....	42,864
<b>United States</b> .....	44,122	District of Columbia .....	46,987
Minnesota .....	42,389	South Dakota .....	32,155
Idaho .....	38,622	Iowa .....	34,791
North Carolina .....	37,577	Nevada .....	40,937
		New Jersey .....	51,201
		Missouri .....	35,441

