

Mapping Tennessee Education

Teacher compensation

Teacher compensation has been a focal point in recent years. The Comptroller's Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) has published several interactive maps online related to K-12 education in Tennessee. Two of these maps display information related to teacher compensation, including:

- average classroom teacher salary for the 2019-20 school year, and
- percent increase in average classroom salary between the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years.

For more information, see OREA's publications on teacher compensation at tncot.cc/compensation.

Average classroom salaries by school year

Each year the Tennessee Department of Education publishes the average salaries for each Tennessee school district. There are three classifications of school staff, as defined in Exhibit 1: licensed personnel, instructional personnel, and classroom teachers. The average salary varies by classification. In 2019-20, the average salary for classroom teachers was \$52,596, while the average salary for instructional staff – all positions funded under the BEP instructional category – was \$55,210.

Exhibit 1: Three classifications of school staff with average salary | 2019-20

		
Licensed personnel	Instructional personnel	Classroom teachers
All personnel in a district with an educator's license	All classroom teachers plus positions such as librarians, school counselors, and principals	Includes only those positions who are in a classroom (e.g., preK-12, special education, home/hospital instructors, and related arts)
\$55,554	\$55,210	\$52,596

Source: Tennessee Department of Education.

OREA's Mapping Tennessee Education website features an interactive map that shows the average salaries for *classroom teachers* in each district for the 2019-20 school year. Oak Ridge Schools had the highest average salary for classroom teachers that year at \$66,926, followed by Maryville City Schools at \$66,863. Lake County Schools had the lowest classroom teacher average salary at \$43,624. All but one of the top 10 districts with the highest average salary were city or special school districts and all but two of the 10 districts with the lowest average salary were county school districts. With additional local tax revenue, city and special school districts can supplement their share of county education revenue and state BEP funds in ways that county districts cannot.

Exhibit 2: Districts with highest and lowest average salaries for classroom teachers | 2019-20

Highest average salaries	
Oak Ridge City	\$66,926
Maryville City	\$66,863
Alcoa City	\$65,064
Arlington	\$63,196
Franklin SSD	\$61,822
Johnson City	\$61,277
Bartlett City	\$59,690
Collierville	\$59,530
Germantown	\$59,430
Shelby County	\$59,317

Lowest average salaries	
Lake County	\$43,624
Grundy County	\$43,792
Richard City	\$44,015
Johnson County	\$44,181
Overton County	\$44,578
Smith County	\$44,880
Union County	\$45,016
Haywood County	\$45,142
Hancock County	\$45,288
Bradford SSD	\$45,301

Source: Tennessee Department of Education.

Increase in average salary

Another interactive map featured on the Mapping Tennessee Education website shows the percent increase in average classroom salary by district between the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years. Between 2019 and 2020, the statewide average salary for classroom teachers rose from \$50,998 to \$52,596, an increase of 3.13 percent.

Williamson County Schools had the highest increase in classroom teacher salary over this time period at 6.9 percent. Classroom teacher salaries in Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools decreased by 2.01 percent during this time. A district’s average salary may decrease if a substantial number of higher paid teachers retire and are either not replaced or replaced with newer teachers at a lower pay rate.

Exhibit 3: Districts with highest and lowest average salary increases for classroom teachers | 2018-19 to 2019-20

Highest average salary increase	
Williamson County	6.90%
Lewis County	5.94%
Carroll County	5.25%
Fayette County	4.89%
DeKalb County	4.83%
Pickett County	4.81%
Fayetteville City	4.36%
Hickman County	4.28%
Humboldt City	4.13%
Knox County	4.02%

Lowest average salary increase	
Montgomery County	-2.01%
Union City	-0.67%
Richard City	-0.30%
Sequatchie County	-0.25%
Loudon County	-0.21%
Rogersville City	-0.11%
Millington	-0.11%
Jackson County	-0.10%
Kingsport City	0.10%
Paris SSD	0.23%

Source: Tennessee Department of Education.

For more information, see OREA’s Mapping Tennessee Education website at tncot.cc/mappingeducation.

