

Report: Ore. teachers not paid enough

Natalie Pate
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Oregon teachers earn less than private sector workers with similar levels of education and experience, even when accounting for public employee benefits and summer vacation, according to a report released Sept. 18.

The Oregon Center for Public Policy found public school teachers earn 78 cents for every dollar earned by a comparable private sector worker.

When state benefits — such as health insurance and retirement — are factored in, educators still earn 9 percent less in weekly compensation, or 91 cents for every dollar a private sector worker earns.

These numbers are based on average weekly wages instead of annual wages to account for "so-called 'summers off,'" though the report acknowledges many teachers work when school is out.

The center is a nonpartisan, non-profit institute that researches budget, tax and economic issues. It analyzed data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Oregon Department of Education and the American Community Survey between 2012 and 2016.

"Oregon teachers deserve a raise," Daniel Hauser, a policy analyst for the center, said in a statement. "Few professions are more vital to the well-being of children and communities than teachers, and yet Oregon is not compensating them adequately."

One reason for the disparity could be the gender demographics of the profession, according to the report.

In Oregon, seven out of 10 public school teachers are women compared to the four out of 10 private sector workers.

Officials from the center said the pay gap between professions may be a result of female-dominated careers being devalued and inherently paid less.

A national comparison shows the gap between public school teachers and private sector workers is

Oregon Teacher Pay



78 cents for every \$1

Oregon teachers make 78 cents for every \$1 earned by a comparable private sector worker in Oregon.



91 cents for every \$1

When PERS, benefits are factored in, teachers make 91 cents for every \$1.



71 percent

71 percent of Oregon's public school teachers are women. In Oregon's private sector, 40 percent are women.

Source: Oregon Center for Public Policy

statesman journal

mirrored on the national level and has grown more severe in recent decades.

In 1996, the average weekly wages of teachers at the national level were 4 percent less than private sector workers, according to the Oregon report. By 2015, the national gap grew to 19 percent.

And while Oregon's starting salary for teachers isn't far from the national average, it does come up short.

According to the National Education Association, the national average for a starting teaching salary in 2016-17 was \$38,617. In the same year, Oregon's starting teachers averaged \$35,534.

New Jersey and the District of Columbia have the highest starting salaries at more than \$51,000. Montana and Oklahoma have the lowest, starting at \$30,036 and \$31,919, respectively.

The Oregon report concluded teacher compensation is directly related to schools being able to hire "high-quality" educators and retain them.

Not only does the impact the lives of Oregon's educators, but according to the report, retaining high quality teachers helps students reach higher levels

of academic achievement and, in turn, leads to higher earnings over their lifetimes — "a benefit for them and the overall economy."

It's not just pay

Educators nationwide have been going on strike over the last year to demand adequate pay.

Most recently, teachers from 14 school districts across the state of Washington went on strike this fall over contract disputes stemming from an influx of cash districts had received from the state.

After three weeks of teacher strikes, educators received higher pay raises and students were all back in school as of Sept. 17.

In Oregon, the most recent report by the state's Quality Education Model estimated Oregon is short about \$2 billion per biennium of what it needs to maintain and improve schools.

But Mindy Merritt, president of the Salem-Keizer Education Association, told the Statesman Journal she didn't think local members were close to striking over pay.

What Merritt sees most is teachers leaving the district or profession when they don't feel heard or valued and they feel burned out.

"They feel like they're drowning, fighting on their own," she said. "They know we can do better as a district ... as a community."

In Salem-Keizer Public Schools, the starting teaching salary for someone with a Bachelor's degree is \$40,297. That number increases to \$46,748 if they have a Master's degree.

Salem-Keizer Public School Superintendent Christy Perry was not available for comment Monday afternoon.

Pay is also affected by hours of professional development and experience to, ideally, help the individual earn more money the more experience they have.

But Merritt said teachers are frequently faced with difficult decisions — are they paid enough to sustain a 30-year career and do they feel valued and heard?

They have to decide if earning a master's to be a more viable candidate will outweigh the cost of increased student loans.

She also said teachers are, in some ways, locked into one district once they start since they may take a pay cut moving to another district later in their careers.

Merritt said Salem-Keizer is making improvements in filling positions to eliminate a teacher shortage that has continued since the Great Recession.

"Are teachers paid enough? Absolutely not. Are support staff paid enough? Absolutely not," she said. "Improving salaries and benefits will help, but that's not everything."

To read the full report, or for more information, go to <https://www.ocpp.org/> or call 971-279-4732.

Contact reporter Natalie Pate at npate@StatesmanJournal.com, 503-399-6745 or follow her on Twitter @Nataliempate or Facebook at www.Facebook.com/nataliepatejournalist.

Helping students with cyberbullying



Susanne Eide
Guest Columnist
Oregon Connections Academy

Remember that saying, "sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me"? In today's digital world, words can be very painful.

October is National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month, a good time to talk to children about cyberbullying. As a virtual school, we promote good digital citizenship to our students, but we all share responsibility for a safe respectful online environment.

The National Crime Prevention Council says cyberbullying is what happens "when people use the Internet, cellphones, or other devices to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person."

Cyberbullying happens in many places including websites, emails, chat rooms, instant messaging, and social media platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

Cyber threats can involve serious, repeated forms of aggression and sometimes illegal behavior. They are often conducted anonymously, follow the victim home from school, and invade their life around the clock.

The impact of online bullying extends into the real world. Researchers found a majority of cyberbullied students said the experience affected their ability to learn and feel safe at school.

Twenty-six percent of middle and high schools have reported weekly incidents of cyberbullying, at school and away from school, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Oregon's Healthy Teens Survey also shows 11 percent of juniors and 15 percent of eighth-graders were cyberbullied in the last month.

Parents can do several things to detect cyberbullying, act if their child is a victim and prevent it from happening.

What are the warning signs of cyberbullying?

If you suspect your child is experiencing cyberbullying, watch for signs around the use of their electronic devices.

For example, they might seem nervous after a text or instant message appears, and secretive about sharing their online activity. Your child may unexpectedly stop using their device(s), or start spending more time online.

It's important for parents to be technologically savvy in order to figure out what's going on, but also allow kids to

share their point of view. As an ice-breaker, bring up the topic of cyberbullying and ask if it's an issue at your child's school.

What should you do if cyberbullying is occurring?

Tweens and teens facing online bullying are often reluctant to come forward, so encourage them to talk to a parent, teacher or other trusted adult at the first sign of trouble.

It's natural for a child to want to respond to a cyberbully, but urge them not to retaliate.

Striking back might turn your child into a bully or give the offender the virtual power they're seeking. Defuse the conflict and take rational steps to resolve the situation.

Parents want to protect kids by fixing a problem like digital bullying, but instead slow down and talk to children about what they're going through. Don't take away devices if something happens. Demonstrate trust and involve them in the process. Being heard helps victims heal and gain resilience.

Evidence of electronic bullying on computers and phones can usually be saved or captured. Keeping a record of dates, times, and other details is helpful if there's an investigation.

Most social media sites, tagged photos, and other services allow users to block people or report cyberbullying. Ensure children have secure passwords and lock their device(s) when not in use.

Oregon's school system has strong

cyberbullying laws, so if your child is being harassed by a classmate, talk to school authorities. File a complaint with the online platform or if the offensive content involves a potential crime, contact local police.

How can you help prevent cyberbullying?

Cyber-safe techniques, such as activating privacy settings on devices or apps, help reduce a child's risk of being cyberbullied. Children shouldn't give out personal information, email addresses or phone numbers online without permission from parents.

Talk openly with your student about online interactions. Parents can lead by example, showing children positive messages they send to others on their own social media.

It's also important to teach students good social media manners. This includes promoting kindness and pausing before posting or sending something — reminding them the message might remain online forever.

Technology and social media can be helpful in your child's everyday life — especially staying connected with others. Parents should offer guidance and boundaries to help kids take a balanced approach.

Susanne Eide is an eighth grade Language Arts and Social Studies teacher from Monmouth at Oregon Connections Academy. For more information on upcoming events or how to enroll, please visit: www.OregonConnectionsAcademy.com/Events or call (800) 382-6010.

BRIEFS

Parking fines increase

Fines for public parking violations on Silverton streets increased Monday, the result of council action last spring.

A \$10 fine can now be levied against drivers who allow time to run out on their parking meters, those who stay too long in a 2-hour-parking zone, those who don't park within the lines or are more than 12 inches away from the curb, and those in no-parking areas.

For a vehicle that remains even longer in a 2-hour space, second and third time violations may now generate \$25 and \$50 fines, respectively. The council also increased fines for loading zone violations, large vehicle violations and late fee charges.

Silver Crest School haunted for October

Silver Crest School is hosting a haunted house every weekend during the month of October. Haunt the Hills, advertised as a "frightful haunting experience," is open to the public from 7 to 9 p.m. every Friday and Saturday, starting Oct 5. Entrance is \$5 per person; proceeds go to Silver Crest Booster Club.

The school is located outside of town at 365 Loar Road SE.

Silverton Shindig plays Oct. 6

The seventh annual Silverton Sidewalk Shindig is Saturday, Oct. 6. Solo musicians and groups will present music of all flavors — Irish, classical, marimba, rock, big band, punk, alternative, and more — outside and inside downtown businesses from 11 a.m. until midnight. The festival is free and family friendly.

— Christena Brooks



CROWN

MEMORIAL CENTERS

CREMATION & BURIAL

A New Tradition™

LOW COST CREMATION & BURIAL

Simple Cremation \$595

NO Hidden Costs

<p>SALEM 412 Lancaster Drive NE (503) 581-6265</p> <p>PORTLAND 832 NE Broadway (503) 783-3393</p> <p>EASTSIDE 1433 SE 122nd Ave (503) 783-6865</p>	<p>TUALATIN 8970 SW Tualatin Sherwood Rd (503) 885-7800</p> <p>TIGARD 12995 SW Pacific Hwy (503) 783-6869</p> <p>MILWAUKIE 17064 SE McLoughlin Blvd (503) 653-7076</p>
---	---

Privately owned cremation facility.
A Family Owned Oregon Business.

www.ANewTradition.com