



# Utah Employment Trends Report

WASATCH FRONT

## Utah: By the Numbers

Median salary, school teachers: **\$53,912**  
(29th highest)

Median salary, all workers: **\$35,650**  
(21st lowest)

Per pupil expenditure: **\$7,207**  
(the lowest)

High school graduation rate: **84.8%**  
(25th lowest)

Cost of living: **3.0% less than national average**  
(23rd highest)

Using U.S. Labor Department data, Utah ranked 29th among all 50 states in the median annual salary for elementary, middle and high school teachers. Salary figures include private and public school teachers. (Source: 24/7 Wall Street)

## Teacher Salaries Adjusted For Cost Of Living

**\$49,668**

**\$46,042**

Adjusted for cost of living    Actual pay

Representing the average annual teacher salary in 2016, Utah ranked 47th among the 50 states and District of Columbia in what teachers make before — and after — adjusting for regional cost differences. (Source: [National Center for Education Statistics](#), [Council of Community and Economic Research](#), EdBuild analysis)

## National Spotlight on Low Teacher Pay Reinforces Need to Address Public-School Salaries

A recent TIME Magazine article entitled “‘I Work 3 Jobs And Donate Blood Plasma to Pay the Bills.’ This Is What It’s Like to Be a Teacher in America” sheds some harsh light on the chronic low salaries of teachers across the nation. The piece details high school teachers – many with advanced degrees – who do everything from donating blood plasma to placing their own clothes on consignment to working multiple jobs during the academic year to make ends meet.

While the article doesn’t cite Utah among the handful of states where public-school teachers have staged walkouts or marches on their respective state capitols, it does mention national trend statistics that certainly will affect Utah school districts. According to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the number of new educators completing preparatory programs across the country fell by 23 percent between 2008 and 2016, meaning less people are becoming teachers. Compounding the problem, once teachers make it to the classroom, they don’t stay long: one in three teachers quit within the first five years.

These numbers confirm the fact that the country’s approximately 3.2 million full-time public-school teachers (K-12) must cope with wage stagnation that is among the worst of any profession. Teachers earn less on average in inflation-adjusted dollars than they did in 1990, according to Department of Education (DOE) data.

Utah ranks 32nd in the nation for starting teacher average salary at \$35,722 per year, according to a 2016-2017 study by the National Education Association. The national average is \$38,617. Taking a closer look at median salaries in the state, things get only slightly better. Utah ranks 29th in the nation at \$53,981, according to a 24/7 Wall Street study of U.S. Labor Department data on salary figures of private and public school teachers. Complicating the picture for Utah public-school teachers is the fact that the state ranks 51st out of all the states plus the District of Columbia in per-pupil spending.

The Kelly Services education practice has been providing schools across Utah with quality substitute teachers and non-instructional staff since 2004. Based on our experience and the stagnation of teacher pay, some of the local school districts face losing newer teachers to other job sectors, including retail, because they can make more money.

To combat this issue, policy makers in Utah will need to take a close look at how teacher compensation stacks up against other types of jobs to ensure that teaching can remain a viable career choice for educated individuals, and schools and districts can keep their top educators.

The TIME Magazine article points out another truism. Despite the pay issues, many teachers truly love teaching and will continue in the profession. It’s time to take care of those who prepare our children for today’s fast-evolving workforce, for higher education, and for life in general.

For additional information, please contact:  
Susan Hornbuckle, Vice President, Utah  
[Susan.Hornbuckle@kellyservices.com](mailto:Susan.Hornbuckle@kellyservices.com)

801.773.4322  
[kellyservices.us](http://kellyservices.us)



Connect with Susan at:  
[www.linkedin.com/in/susan-hornbuckle](http://www.linkedin.com/in/susan-hornbuckle)