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QuickPoint! – Who says Oregon pays public school teachers more than other states? The National Education Association, that's who!

By Steve Buckstein

As Oregon legislators wrestle with [how much money to spend on public education](#), advocates claim that we spend too little compared to other states. They demand that legislators spend more, and raise taxes to do it. But, according to the nation's largest teachers union, the reality is quite different.

As [I noted recently](#), in its [Rankings & Estimates report for 2016 and 2017](#), the National Education Association says that Oregon spends more per student than 33 other states: \$13,320 per Average Daily Attendee versus \$12,572 nationally.

Another interesting finding in the NEA report is how much Oregon pays its public school teachers. In 2015-16 it shows the average teacher salary in the country was \$58,343, compared to \$60,459 here in Oregon. We spend three percent more on teacher salaries than the national average.*

But, the report also shows that our per capita personal income is nine percent *less* than the national average: \$48,783 versus \$43,783.

So, while we pay our teachers three percent more, we do that out of incomes that are nine percent less than the average American. Add those two numbers together, and it's clear that based on our ability to pay we compensate Oregon teachers very well.

All this data add weight to the argument that we don't need new taxes to better fund public education. We fund it very well already.

*"Where applicable, 'average teacher salary' includes the contract amount plus 6 percent for the employer portion of retirement contributions." Page 146 of the [NEA report](#).

Steve Buckstein is Senior Policy Analyst and Founder of Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.

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