

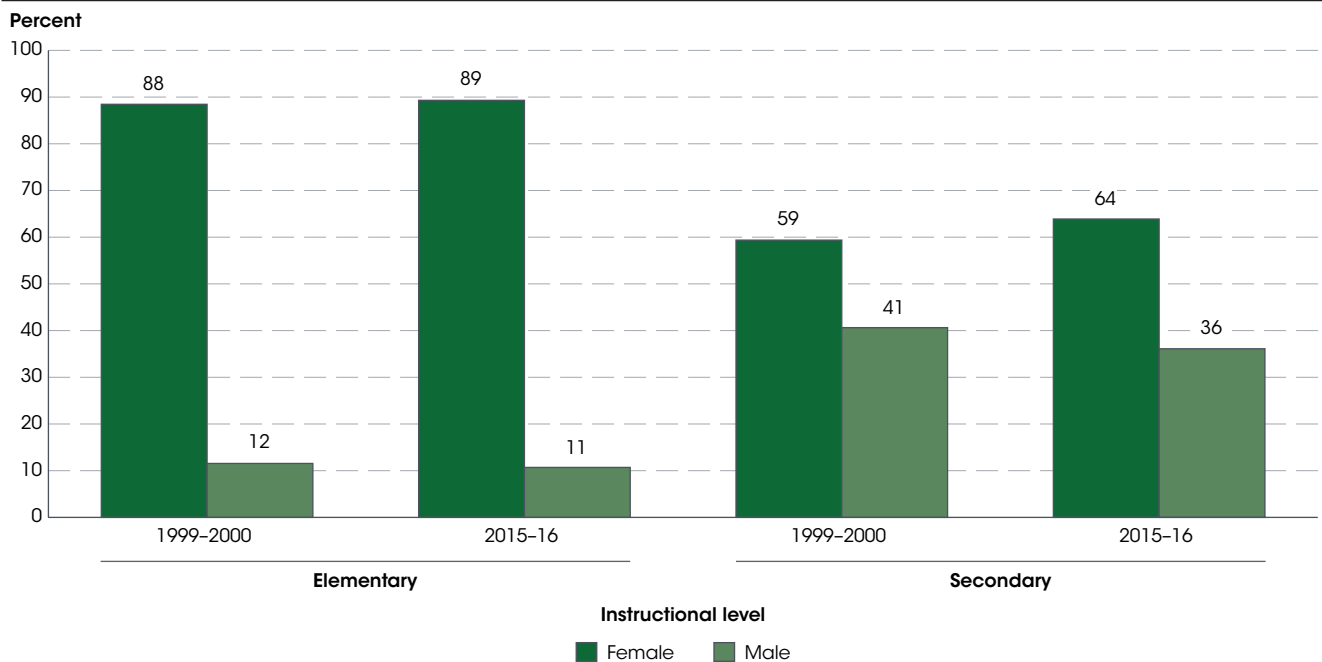
# Characteristics of Public School Teachers

The percentage of public school teachers who held a postbaccalaureate degree (i.e., a master’s, education specialist, or doctor’s degree) was higher in 2015–16 (57 percent) than in 1999–2000 (47 percent). In both school years, a lower percentage of elementary school teachers than secondary school teachers held a postbaccalaureate degree.

In the 2015–16 school year, there were 3.8 million full- and part-time public school teachers, including 1.9 million elementary school teachers and 1.9 million secondary school teachers. Overall, the number of public school teachers in 2015–16 was 27 percent higher than in 1999–2000 (3.0 million). These changes were accompanied by a 7 percent increase in public school

enrollment in kindergarten through 12th grade, from 45.9 million students in fall 2000 to 49.0 million students in fall 2015. At the elementary school level, the number of teachers was 19 percent higher in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000 (1.6 million), while at the secondary school level the number of teachers was 37 percent higher in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000 (1.4 million).

**Figure 1. Percentage distribution of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by instructional level and sex: School years 1999–2000 and 2015–16**

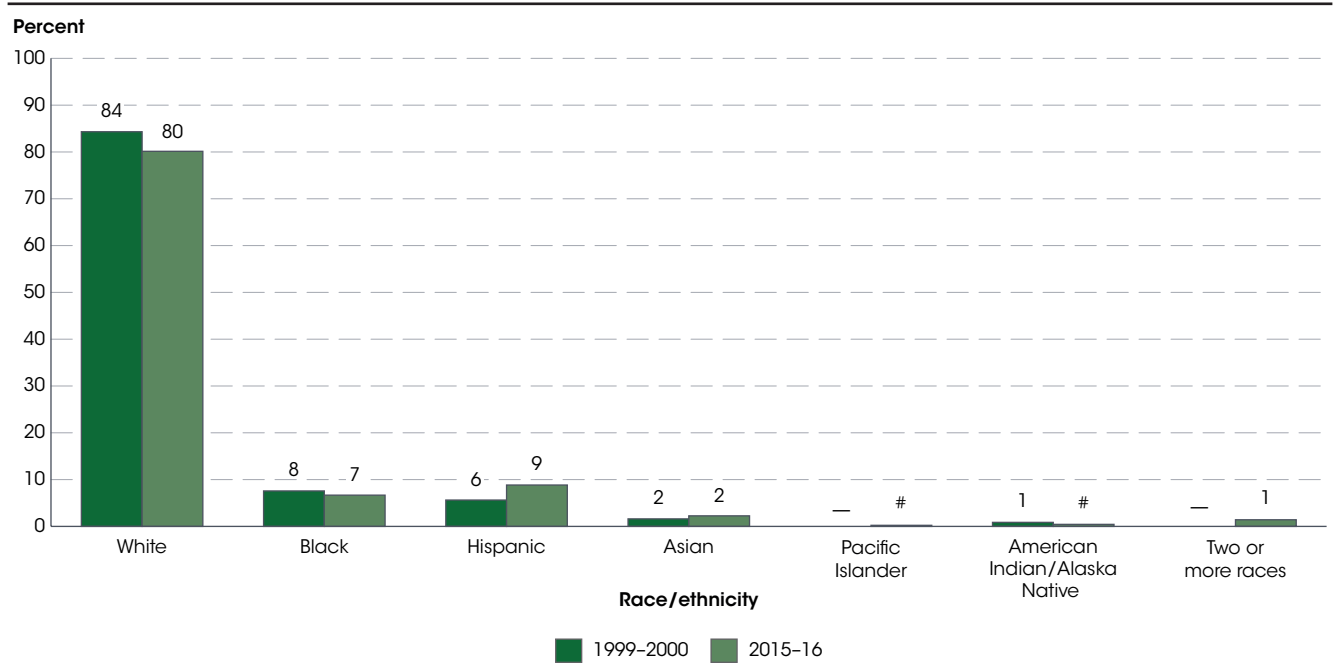


NOTE: Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time teachers rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent teachers. Teachers were classified as elementary or secondary on the basis of the grades they taught, rather than on the level of the school in which they taught. In general, elementary teachers include those teaching prekindergarten through grade 6 and those teaching multiple grades, with a preponderance of grades taught being kindergarten through grade 6. In general, secondary teachers include those teaching any of grades 7 through 12 and those teaching multiple grades, with a preponderance of grades taught being grades 7 through 12 and usually with no grade taught being lower than grade 5.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Teacher Data File," "Charter School Teacher Data File," "Public School Data File," and "Charter School Data File," 1999–2000; and National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2015–16. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 209.22.

About 77 percent of public school teachers were female and 23 percent were male in 2015–16, with a lower percentage of male teachers at the elementary school level (11 percent) than at the secondary school level (36 percent). Overall, the percentage of public school teachers who were male was 2 percentage points lower in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000.

At the elementary school level, the percentage of male teachers was 1 percentage point lower in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000. By comparison, at the secondary school level, the percentage of male teachers was 5 percentage points lower in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000.

**Figure 2. Percentage distribution of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity: School years 1999–2000 and 2015–16**



— Not available.  
 # Rounds to zero.

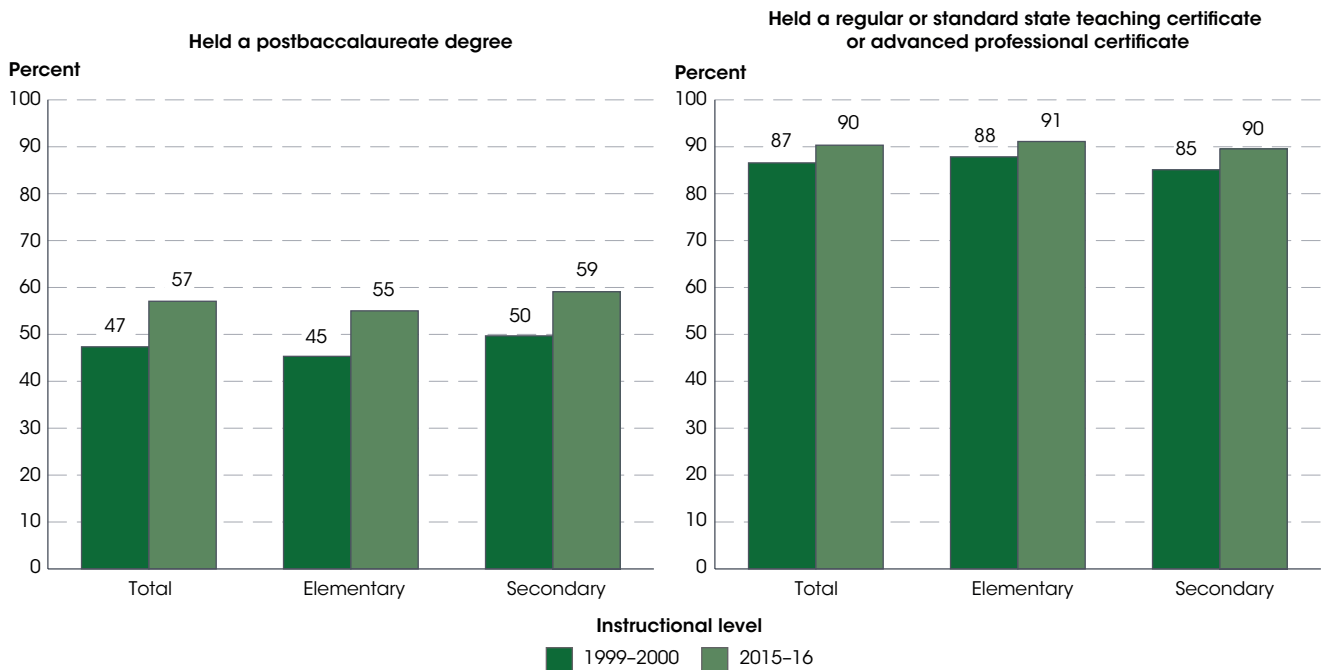
NOTE: Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time teachers rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent teachers. Data for 1999–2000 are only roughly comparable to data for 2015–16; in 1999–2000, data for teachers of Two or more races were not collected as a separate category and the Asian category included Pacific Islanders. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded estimates. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Teacher Data File," "Charter School Teacher Data File," "Public School Data File," and "Charter School Data File," 1999–2000; and National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2015–16. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 209.22.

In 2015–16, about 80 percent of public school teachers were White, 9 percent were Hispanic, 7 percent were Black, 2 percent were Asian, and 1 percent were of Two or more races; additionally, those who were American Indian/Alaska Native and those who were Pacific Islander each made up less than 1 percent of public school teachers.

The percentages of public school teachers who were White and Black were lower in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000, when 84 percent were White and 8 percent were Black.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the percentage who were Hispanic was higher in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000, when 6 percent were Hispanic.

**Figure 3. Percentage of public school teachers who held a postbaccalaureate degree and percentage who held a regular or standard state teaching certificate or advanced professional certificate, by instructional level: School years 1999–2000 and 2015–16**

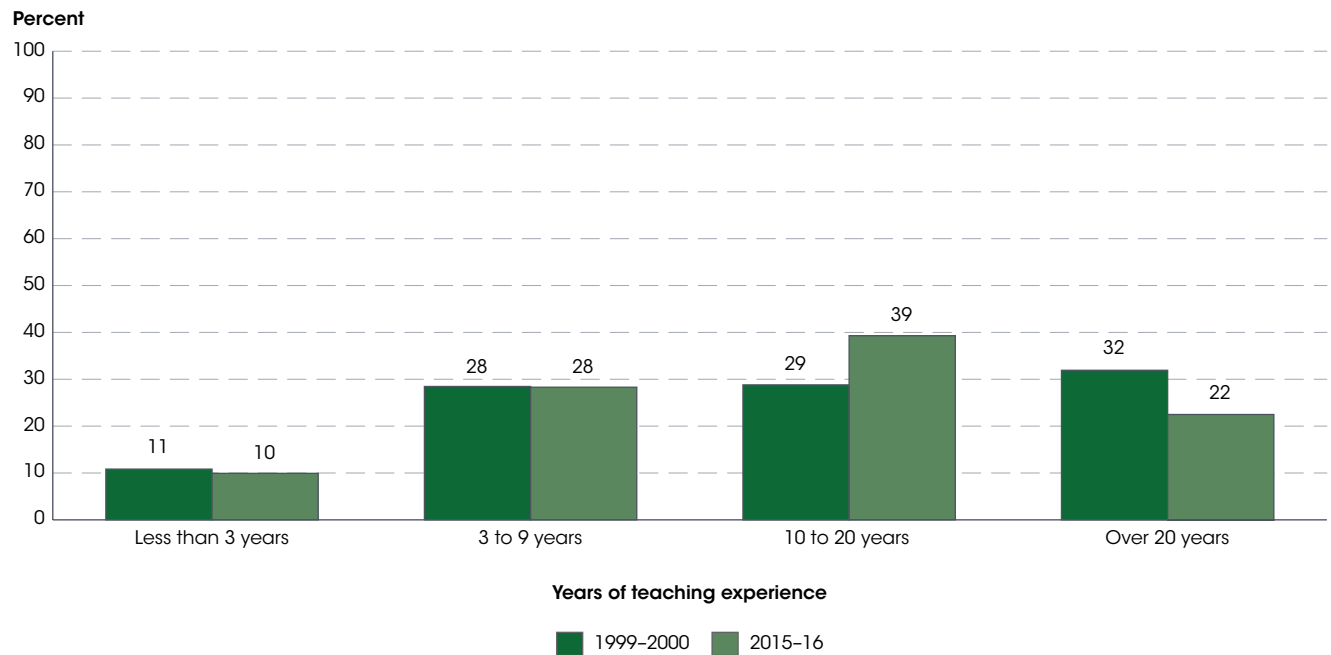


NOTE: Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time teachers rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent teachers. Postbaccalaureate degree recipients include teachers who held a master’s, education specialist, or doctor’s degree. Education specialist degrees or certificates are generally awarded for 1 year’s work beyond the master’s level, including a certificate of advanced graduate studies. Doctor’s degrees include Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral level, as well as first-professional degrees, such as M.D., D.D.S., and J.D. degrees. Teachers were classified as elementary or secondary on the basis of the grades they taught, rather than on the level of the school in which they taught. In general, elementary teachers include those teaching prekindergarten through grade 6 and those teaching multiple grades, with a preponderance of grades taught being kindergarten through grade 6. In general, secondary teachers include those teaching any of grades 7 through 12 and those teaching multiple grades, with a preponderance of grades taught being grades 7 through 12 and usually with no grade taught being lower than grade 5.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), “Public School Teacher Data File,” “Charter School Teacher Data File,” “Public School Data File,” and “Charter School Data File,” 1999–2000; and National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), “Public School Teacher Data File,” 2015–16. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 209.22.

The percentage of public school teachers who held a postbaccalaureate degree (i.e., a master’s, education specialist, or doctor’s degree)<sup>2</sup> was higher in 2015–16 (57 percent) than in 1999–2000 (47 percent). This pattern was observed at both the elementary and secondary levels. Some 55 percent of elementary school teachers and 59 percent of secondary school teachers held a postbaccalaureate degree in 2015–16, whereas 45 and 50 percent, respectively, held a postbaccalaureate degree in 1999–2000. In both school years, a lower percentage of elementary school teachers than secondary school teachers held a postbaccalaureate degree.

In 2015–16, some 90 percent of public school teachers held a regular or standard state teaching certificate or advanced professional certificate, 4 percent held a provisional or temporary certificate, 3 percent held a probationary certificate, 1 percent held no certification, and 1 percent held a waiver/emergency certificate. A higher percentage of teachers in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000 held a regular certificate (90 vs. 87 percent). In both school years, a higher percentage of elementary than secondary school teachers held a regular certificate (88 vs. 85 percent in 1999–2000; 91 vs. 90 percent in 2015–16).

**Figure 4. Percentage distribution of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by years of teaching experience: School years 1999–2000 and 2015–16**

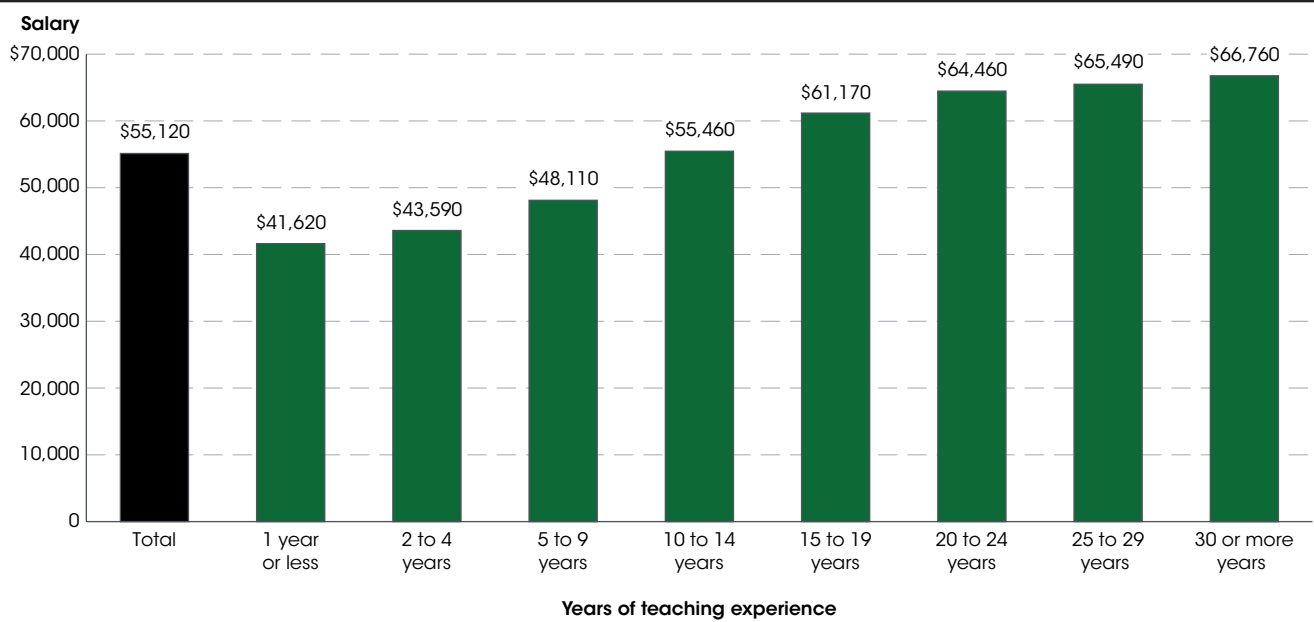


NOTE: Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time teachers rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent teachers. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Teacher Data File," "Charter School Teacher Data File," "Public School Data File," and "Charter School Data File," 1999–2000; and National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2015–16. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 209.22.

In 2015–16, about 10 percent of public school teachers had less than 3 years of teaching experience, 28 percent had 3 to 9 years of experience, 39 percent had 10 to 20 years of experience, and 22 percent had more than 20 years of experience. Lower percentages of teachers in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000 had less than 3 years of experience (10 vs. 11 percent) and over 20 years of

experience (22 vs. 32 percent). However, the percentage who had 10 to 20 years of experience was higher in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000 (39 vs. 29 percent). There was no measurable difference between 1999–2000 and 2015–16 in the percentage of teachers with 3 to 9 years of experience.

**Figure 5. Average base salary for full-time teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by years of full- and part-time teaching experience: 2015–16**

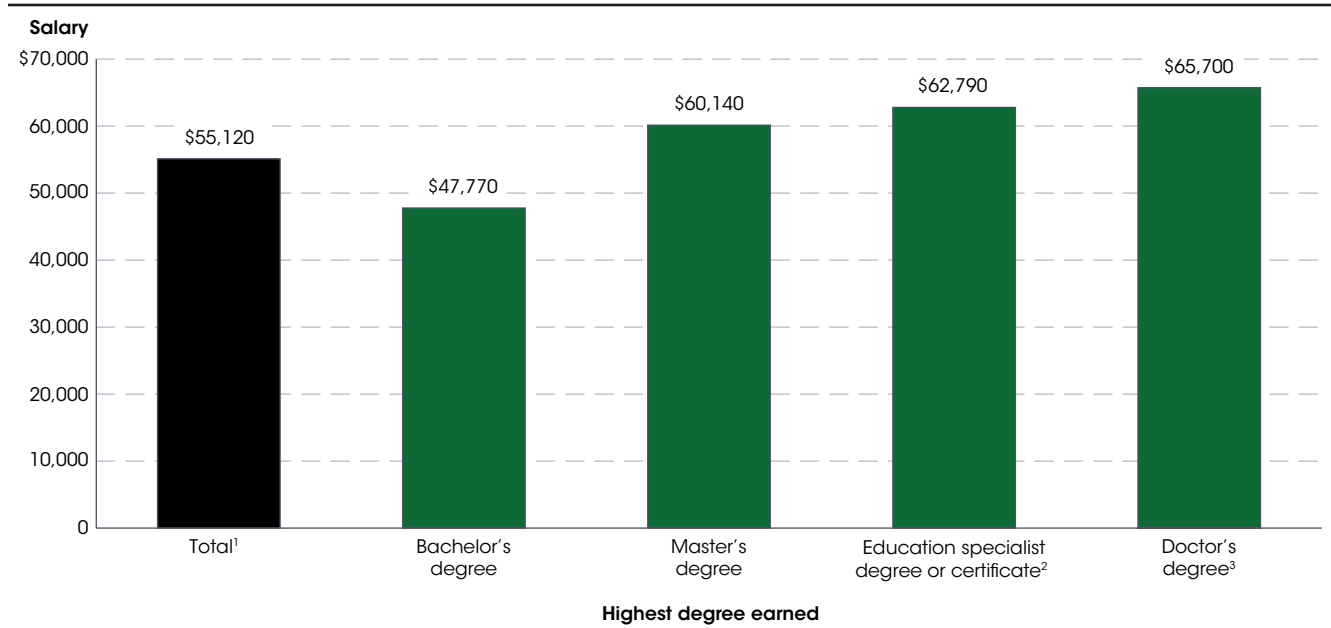


NOTE: Amounts presented in current 2015–16 dollars. Estimates are for regular full-time teachers only; they exclude other staff even when they have full-time teaching duties (regular part-time teachers, itinerant teachers, long-term substitutes, administrators, library media specialists, other professional staff, and support staff).  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2015–16. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 211.10.

Earlier sections of this indicator explore characteristics of all full-time and part-time public school teachers. Teacher salary information is also available, but only for regular full-time teachers in public schools.<sup>3</sup> In 2015–16, the average base salary (in current 2015–16 dollars) for full-time public school teachers was \$55,120. Average salaries for full-time public school teachers in 2015–16 tended to increase with years of full- and part-time teaching

experience, with the exception that average salaries for teachers with 25 to 29 years of experience were not measurably different from those for teachers with 20 to 24 years of experience or those for teachers with 30 or more years of experience. Average base salaries, in current 2015–16 dollars, ranged from \$41,620 for teachers with 1 year or less of experience to \$66,760 for teachers with 30 or more years of experience.

**Figure 6. Average base salary for full-time teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by highest degree earned: 2015–16**



<sup>1</sup> Includes teachers with levels of education below the bachelor's degree (not shown separately).  
<sup>2</sup> Education specialist degrees or certificates are generally awarded for 1 year's work beyond the master's level, including a certificate of advanced graduate studies.  
<sup>3</sup> Doctor's degrees include Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral level, as well as first-professional degrees, such as M.D., D.D.S., and J.D. degrees.  
 NOTE: Amounts presented in current 2015–16 dollars. Estimates are for regular full-time teachers only; they exclude other staff even when they have full-time teaching duties (regular part-time teachers, itinerant teachers, long-term substitutes, administrators, library media specialists, other professional staff, and support staff).  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2015–16. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 211.10.

Higher educational attainment was associated with higher average base salaries for full-time public school teachers who held at least a bachelor's degree. For example, in 2015–16 the average salary for teachers with a doctor's degree (\$65,700) was 38 percent higher than the salary of teachers with a bachelor's degree (\$47,770), 9 percent higher than the salary of teachers with a master's degree (\$60,140), and 5 percent higher than the salary of teachers with an education specialist degree or certificate (\$62,790).

In 2015–16, the average base salary (in current 2015–16 dollars) for full-time public school teachers was lower for elementary school teachers (\$54,020) than for secondary school teachers (\$56,180). Female teachers had a lower average base salary than male teachers (\$54,560 vs. \$56,920).

Average salaries were higher for Asian (\$61,350), Pacific Islander (\$59,900), and Hispanic teachers (\$56,240) than for White teachers (\$55,120), teachers of Two or more races (\$52,750), and Black teachers (\$52,420), and were lowest for American Indian/Alaska Native teachers (\$48,600). In addition, average salaries were higher for Asian than for Hispanic teachers and were higher for White teachers than for Black teachers and teachers of Two or more races.

Trends in average full-time public school teacher salaries can be explored using constant 2016–17 dollars.<sup>4</sup> From 1999–2000 to 2015–16, the average base salary for full-time public school teachers declined from \$57,190 to \$56,140.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Data for 1999–2000 are only roughly comparable to data for 2015–16; in 1999–2000, data for teachers of Two or more races were not collected as a separate category, and the Asian category included Pacific Islanders.

<sup>2</sup> Education specialist degrees or certificates are generally awarded for 1 year's work beyond the master's level, including a certificate of advanced graduate studies. Doctor's degrees include Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral level, as well as first-professional degrees, such as M.D., D.D.S., and J.D. degrees.

<sup>3</sup> Salary data are available for regular, full-time public school teachers only; the data exclude other staff even when they have full-time teaching duties (regular part-time teachers, itinerant teachers, long-term substitutes, administrators, library media specialists, other professional staff, and support staff).

<sup>4</sup> Constant dollar estimates are based on the Consumer Price Index, prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, adjusted to a school-year basis.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, tables 209.22, 211.10, and 211.20; *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 203.10

**Related indicators and resources:** [Characteristics of Public School Principals](#); [Characteristics of Public School Teachers Who Completed Alternative Route to Certification Programs](#) [*The Condition of Education 2018 Spotlight*]; [Spotlight A: Characteristics of Public School Teachers by Race/Ethnicity](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Teacher Turnover: Stayers, Movers, and Leavers](#) [*web-only*]

**Glossary:** Bachelor's degree; Doctor's degree; Education specialist/professional diploma; Elementary school; Master's degree; Public school or institution; Secondary school