

# Teacher Satisfaction With Salary and Current Job

**DATA POINT**  
June 2021

NCES 2018-116rev  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Publication of the National Center for Education Statistics at IES

The Teacher Questionnaire was administered as part of the 2015-16 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), which is a nationally representative sample survey of public K-12 schools, principals, and teachers in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

## Are public school teachers satisfied with their teaching salary, and does this vary by school and teacher characteristics?

Public school teachers were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement “I am satisfied

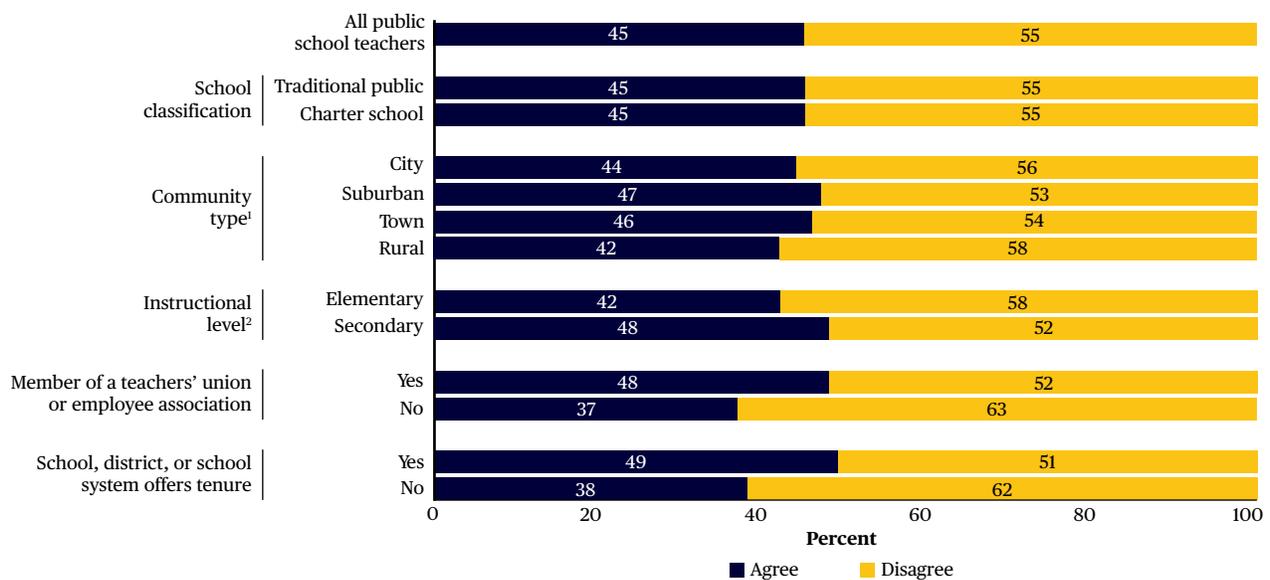
with my teaching salary” (strongly agree; somewhat agree; somewhat disagree; strongly disagree). Overall, 45 percent of teachers agreed that they were satisfied with their salary, and 55 percent disagreed (**FIGURE 1**).

In both traditional public and charter schools, 45 percent of teachers

agreed they were satisfied with their salary.

A lower percentage of teachers in rural schools agreed they were satisfied with their salary than teachers in city, suburban, and town schools (42 percent compared to 44, 47, and 46 percent, respectively).

**FIGURE 1. Percent of public school teachers who agree or disagree that they were satisfied with their teaching salary, by selected school and teacher characteristics: 2015-16**



<sup>1</sup> Community type is defined by the urban-centric school locale code based on the 2010 Decennial Census data, collapsed into four categories: city, suburban, town, and rural.

<sup>2</sup> Instructional level refers to the grade levels taught by a teacher and divides teachers into elementary or secondary based on a combination of the grades taught, main teaching assignment, and the structure of their classes.

NOTE: Interpret data on city teachers with caution. After nonresponse adjustments, the nonresponse bias for this category is greater than for other characteristics.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), “Public School Teacher Data File,” 2015-16.

## Teacher Satisfaction With Salary and Current Job

A lower percentage of teachers in city schools agreed they were satisfied than teachers in suburban schools.

A lower percentage of teachers of elementary grades (42 percent) agreed they were satisfied with their salary than teachers of secondary grades (48 percent).

A higher percentage of teachers who were a member of a teachers' union or an employee association similar to a union (49 percent) agreed they were satisfied with their salary when compared to nonmembers (37 percent). A higher percentage of teachers whose school, district, or school system offered tenure agreed than teachers whose jurisdictions did not offer tenure (49 percent, compared to 38 percent).

### How does public school teachers' satisfaction with their jobs vary by their satisfaction with their salary?

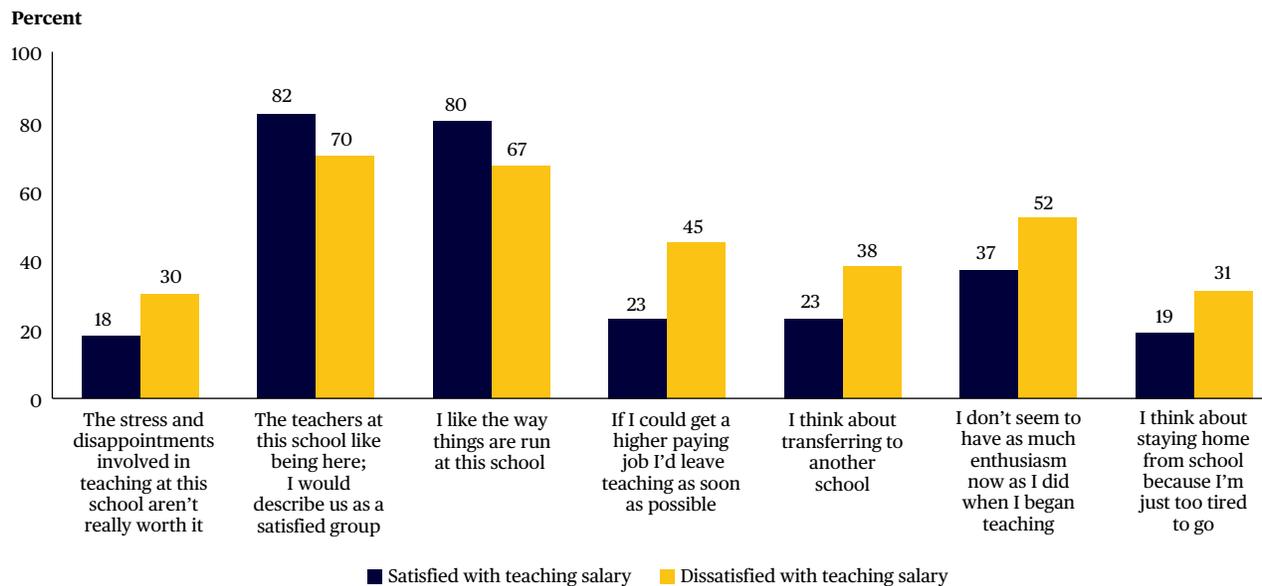
Public school teachers were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed (strongly agree; somewhat agree; somewhat disagree; strongly disagree) with various statements about their current job.

A higher percentage of teachers who were satisfied with their salaries agreed, "The teachers at this school like being here; I would describe us as a satisfied group," than teachers who were dissatisfied with their salaries (82 percent compared to 70 percent). Similarly, a higher percentage of teachers who were satisfied with their salaries agreed, "I like the way things are run at this

school" (80 percent compared to 67 percent) (**FIGURE 2**).

A higher percentage of teachers who were dissatisfied with their salary agreed, "The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren't really worth it" (30 percent), "If I could get a higher paying job I'd leave teaching as soon as possible" (45 percent), "I think about transferring to another school" (38 percent), "I don't seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching" (52 percent), and "I think about staying home from school because I'm just too tired to go" (31 percent) than teachers who were satisfied with their salary (18 percent, 23 percent, 23 percent, 37 percent, and 19 percent, respectively).

**FIGURE 2. Percent of public school teachers who agree with various statements about their job satisfaction, by whether they are satisfied with their teaching salary: 2015-16**



NOTE: "Agree" includes teachers who selected "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree."

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2015-16.