

Florida's Teacher Salary Increase Allocation

James V. Shuls, Ph.D. & Mathias Esteves De Macedo

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Florida's Teacher Salary Increase Allocation (TSIA), enacted in 2020 through House Bill 641, aimed to boost starting teacher salaries statewide with an initial \$500 million investment.¹ The goal was to significantly raise the average starting pay, dramatically improving Florida's national ranking. Although the predicted jump to #5 nationally did not occur, the policy has succeeded in elevating starting salaries. According to NEA data, Florida's district-average starting salary increased from \$38,724 in 2019-20 to \$44,040 in 2020-21 and has continued to rise. By 2025, only 9 of 67 districts offered less than \$47,500, while 27 provided \$50,000 or more.

TSIA funding has grown substantially, exceeding \$1.36 billion in 2025-26, primarily as maintenance funds to sustain prior raises, with additional amounts for further increases.² Districts must submit salary distribution plans by October 1 to receive new funds. In 2025-26, 41 districts missed this deadline—largely due to prolonged union-district negotiations—delaying raises and withholding over \$76 million statewide.

While effective for starting pay, evidence suggests limited impact on overall average teacher salaries, raising concerns about salary compression for veteran teachers and potential over-reliance on TSIA funds at the expense of local district resources.

INTRODUCTION

In this brief, we examine Florida's Teacher Salary Increase Allocation (TSIA), including its impact on starting teacher salaries and challenges to implementation. The TSIA was included as part of a larger education reform bill (House Bill 641) in 2020.³ The primary goal of the TSIA was to increase starting teacher salaries. As then Florida Department of Education (DOE) Senior Chancellor, Jacob Oliva, wrote in a DOE memo to school district superintendents at the time, "This monumental investment in Florida's education system prioritizes \$400 million (80% of the allocation) for increasing teachers' minimum base salary statewide, providing funds to elevate Florida teachers' average starting pay from less than \$38K to \$46.5K, a 21% increase, #26 to #5 respectively amongst the 50 states."⁴

While the TSIA did not move Florida up in the rankings nearly as much as predicted, it has raised starting teacher salaries. According to the National Education Association (NEA) in the 2019-2020 school year, the starting average pay for Florida's school districts was \$38,724.⁵ The following year, the district average starting teacher salary jumped to \$44,040 and Florida moved up to 16th place.⁶ From there the district starting teacher salary has continued to climb, helping Florida to remain relatively steady in the rankings (see Table 1).

Table 1. District Starting Teacher Salaries, Florida and the Nation

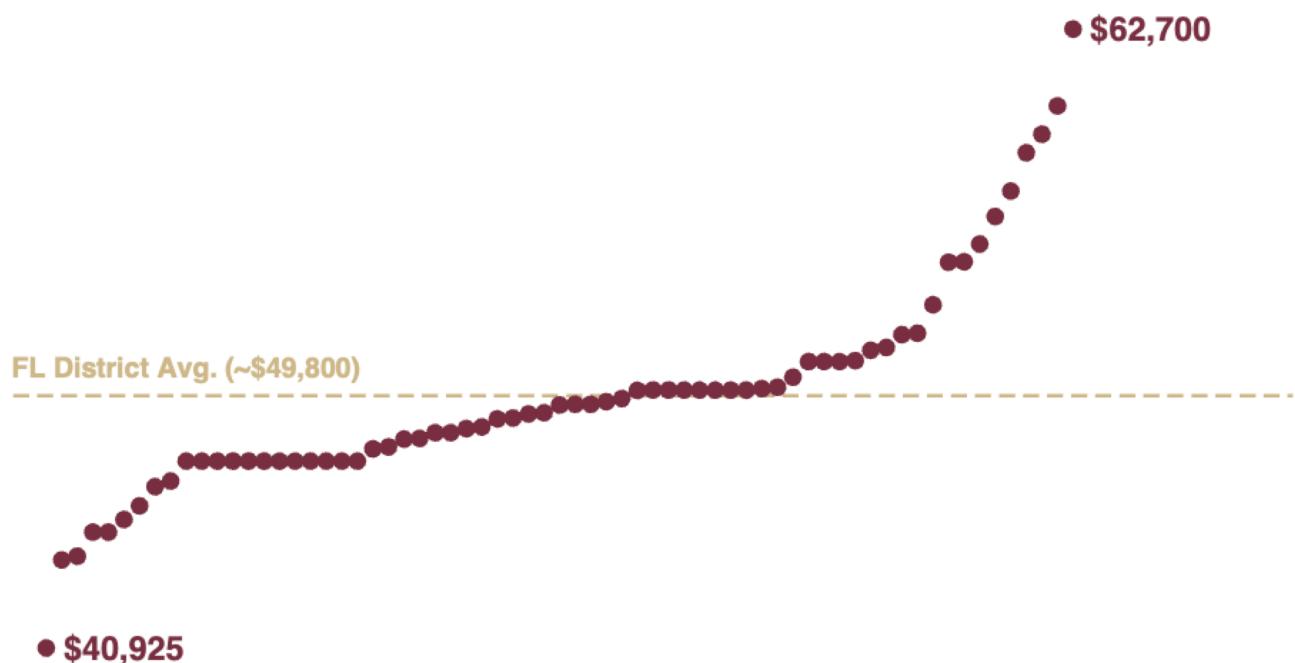
Year	Rank	Florida	National Average
2017-18	26	\$37,636	\$39,249
2018-19	29	\$37,932	\$40,154
2019-20	30	\$38,724	\$41,163
2020-21	16	\$44,040	\$41,770
2021-22	15	\$45,337	\$42,845
2022-23	16	\$47,178	\$44,530
2023-24	17	\$48,639	\$46,526
2024-25	NA	\$49,800	NA

Note: Data for 2017-18 through 2023-24 were obtained from the National Education Association's Teacher Salary Benchmark Report for each year. The Florida average for 2024-25 was author-calculated using the most up-to-date salary schedules as of November 2025.

It should be noted that these comparisons of starting salaries, including the NEA estimates, use district averages. This means each district, regardless of the number of teachers, are treated the same, so these computations do not provide a true average starting teacher salary. Figure 1 displays the starting district salary of every school district

in Florida. In 2025, just 9 school districts had a starting salary less than the desired. \$47,500.⁷ Meanwhile, 27 districts had a starting salary of at least \$50,000. Monroe (\$62,700) and Sarasota (\$60,000) have the highest starting teacher salaries in the state.

Figure 1. Florida School District Starting Teacher Salaries, 2025



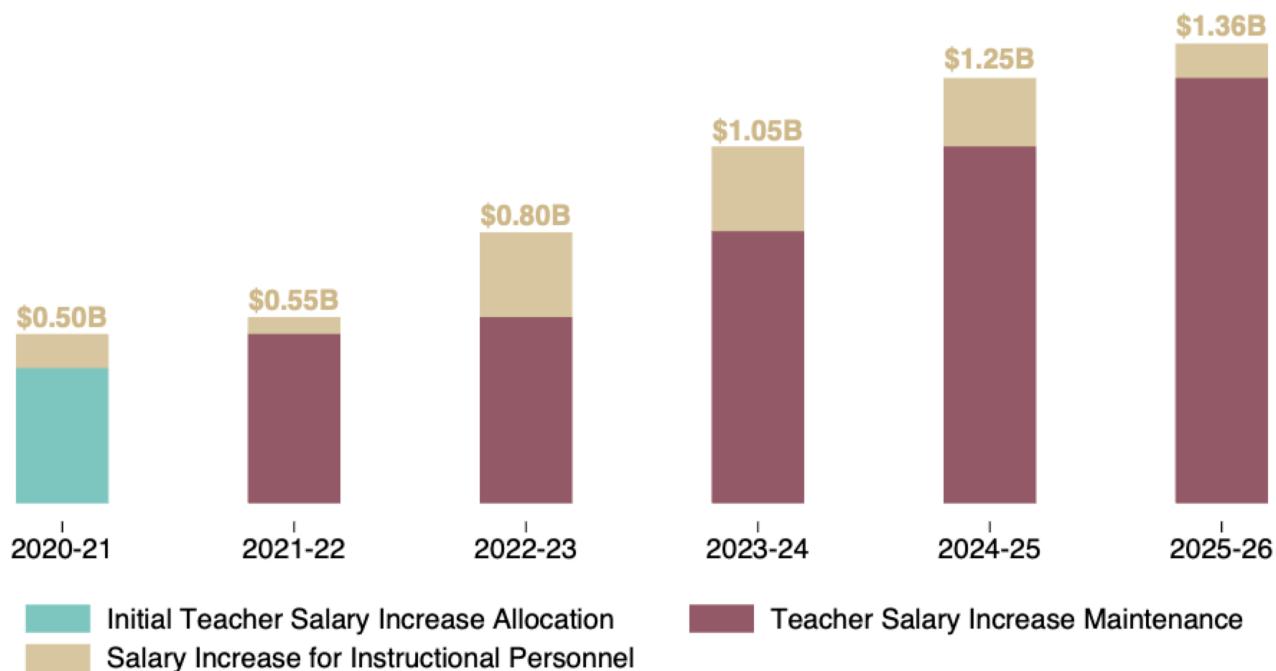
Though the TSIA has increased starting teacher salaries, limited evidence suggests it has had a smaller impact on average teacher salaries overall. The average Florida teacher earned \$49,102 in the 2019-2020 school year according to the National Center for Education Statistics.⁸ This ranked the Sunshine State 48th in the nation, \$11,476 behind the average Georgia teacher and \$4,993 behind Alabama.⁹ In 2021-22, the average had increased \$2,128 to \$51,230 and Florida had climbed one spot in the rankings. More recent data are not presently available from NCES.

TEACHER SALARY INCREASE ALLOCATIONS

Following the initial investment of \$500 million, the legislature has increased the TSIA in each subsequent year. In 2024-25 the allotment was over \$1.25 billion (Figure 2). After the initial year, the majority of TSIA funds go to a maintenance allowance that equals the amount given in the prior year (represented in red in Figure 2). This allows school districts to maintain the salary increases set in previous years. The state also opts each year to

provide additional funds to further increase teacher pay (represented in gold). The maintenance allocation is paid to school districts with no additional requirements. To receive the additional funds marked for further salary increases school districts must submit a salary distribution plan to the DOE by October 1st. If negotiations between the union and district impede this reporting by the due date, districts must notify the FDOE with reasons for the delay and a resolution timeline they will follow.¹⁰

Figure 2. Florida Teacher Salary Increase Allocation by Year (\$ in billions)



Despite allocating funding to raise teacher salaries, these funds often do not make it to teachers in a timely fashion. School districts across the state often miss the reporting deadline. By failing to submit plans by October 1, school districts and teacher unions prevent the district from receiving the funds from the DOE and increasing teacher pay at the start of the school year. During the 2025-26 school year, 41 of 67 school districts failed to submit a plan by the deadline (Table 2).¹¹ These schools are eligible to receive the funds upon the submission of their plan and teachers may receive back pay.

Table 3 displays descriptive statistics of the districts that did and did not submit their plan on time. On average, districts that submitted plans tended to be smaller than those that did not submit a plan. They also tend to serve fewer minority students. The average

district that did not submit a plan was due to receive roughly \$1.87 million to support raises for teachers. In total, by failing to submit a plan, Florida school districts and teacher unions have held up more than \$76 million from being distributed to school districts for teacher pay raises.¹²

Table 2: List of Districts that Did and Did Not submit plans

Plans Not Submitted by October 1			
ALACHUA	DESOTO	LEON	PALM BEACH
BAKER	DUVAL	LIBERTY	PINELLAS
BAY	ESCAMBIA	MANATEE	POLK
BREVARD	FLAGLER	MARION	PUTNAM
BROWARD	GADSDEN	MARTIN	SANTA ROSA
CALHOUN	GILCHRIST	MIAMI-DADE	ST. JOHNS
CITRUS	GLADES	MONROE	ST. LUCIE
CLAY	HERNANDO	NASSAU	SUMTER
COLLIER	LAKE	OKEECHOBEE	TAYLOR
COLUMBIA	LEE	ORANGE	VOLUSIA
Plans Submitted by October 1			
DIXIE	HIGHLANDS	LAFAYETTE	PASCO
FRANKLIN	HILLSBOROUGH	LEVY	SARASOTA
GULF	HOLMES	MADISON	SEMINOLE
HAMILTON	INDIAN RIVER	BRADFORD	SUWANNEE
HARDEE	JACKSON	CHARLOTTE	UNION
HENDRY	JEFFERSON	OKALOOSA	WAKULLA
		OSCEOLA	WASHINGTON

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Florida Districts by Salary Increase Plan Submission, 2025

	Submitted Plan	Did Not Submit Plan
Number of School Districts	26	41
Average Salary Increase Funds Available	\$905,373	\$1,865,013*
Percent Free or Reduced-Price Lunches	61.0%	54.3%
Average Number of Students	25,785	51,580*
Average Number of Teachers	1,428	2,853*
Average Percent Minority Students	46.3%	50.7%**

Note: *p.<0.10; **p.<0.05

The delay in submitting a plan to spend the salary increase portion of the TSIA is almost exclusively a failure of school district leadership and teacher unions to reach an agreement on how to distribute the funds. For example, Collier County Public Schools announced that since its bargaining teams have not come to a full agreement, the district proposed a limited TSIA plan to comply with the October 1st deadline but did not submit it to the FDOE per department public records.¹³ Polk County Public Schools issued a statement that their local teachers union rejected their TSIA proposal. With this, Polk could not submit its plan by October 1st, delaying its teacher of salary increases.¹⁴ As Florida Commissioner of Education, Anastasios Kamoutsas, stated in a July 30, 2025 memo to school district superintendents:

Despite historic investments in teacher compensation by the Governor and Legislature, local teachers' unions continue to delay salary increases through unnecessary and prolonged contract negotiations. These delays have prevented hard-earned dollars from reaching the teachers for whom they were intended, sometimes by months. In fact, in past years the State Board of Education has had to require superintendents to explain why funds were not distributed timely and in accordance with Florida law.¹⁵

Governor Ron DeSantis similarly stated in July 2025, "Last year, you had six, seven, eight months that went by where some of these unions were holding up the pay increases for the teachers."¹⁶

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The TSIA was initially implemented to raise starting teacher salaries. It has largely been successful in this goal. The average district starting teacher salary is over the \$47,500 goal and just 10 school districts presently have a starting salary lower than this mark. While the TSIA has been successful in meeting this first goal, it has had other challenges. Here, we identify three challenges and propose potential solutions.

I. The requirement for annual collective bargaining negotiations delays raises to teachers.

As noted, the dollars appropriated for teacher raises are continually delayed. Under normal circumstances, school districts and teachers' unions collectively bargain on a multi-year basis. For instance, they may set a pay structure in place for a three-year period. Since TSIA funds must be collectively negotiated, this has increased the union's leverage for bargaining annually. What was once a process that happened every three years or so is now a process that occurs each year and now results in delays to teacher raises. The legislature could address this in one of two ways.

First, the legislature could require or encourage multi-year bargaining of TSIA funds. In November 2025, we obtained every school district's current collective bargaining agreement (CBA). By our count, only six school districts directly mention TSIA in their CBA. When it is mentioned, the CBAs either mention the intent of the TSIA or how the funds are spent in the current CBA. None of the CBAs outline a plan for how they would distribute future TSIA funds. The amount of funds in the TSIA change each year, this adds complexity to the negotiation process, however future plans based on percentages that can be applied to future allotments whatever their amounts would solve this issue. Second, the legislature could include penalties for not submitting the allocation plans by the October deadline. These penalties could result in a loss of funds or could trigger DOE action to determine the allocation of the dollars.

II. The TSIA has raised starting teacher pay but may be leading to salary compression.

Though the data are limited, the TSIA does not appear to have had a significant impact on average teacher salaries. This may mean starting salaries are rising significantly faster than raises for veteran teachers. This may lead to salary compression where teachers see small raises as they advance through their career. The CBA for the Pasco County Schools mentions this concern, "The Board and Union agree to continue to meet and work to identify strategies to address instructional salary compression concerns and other perceived salary equity issues created by the state mandated Teacher Salary Increase Categorical."¹⁷ Increasingly emphasizing a focus on raises, rather than base salary adjustments, in future TSIA funding may address this issue over time.

III. The TSIA may be supplanting district funds for salaries rather than supplementing them.

A bigger concern is that the TSIA is increasingly seen as THE mechanism for teacher raises. The TSIA was initially seen as a supplemental fund designed to aid school districts in raising teacher starting teacher salaries. It may increasingly be relied upon as the primary vehicle for determining teacher raises, eventually supplanting other district sources to provide pay raises. By relying on TSIA for raises, districts may reallocate other funds for other purposes (i.e. reducing class sizes, increased administrator pay, more paraprofessionals, etc.). This shift could undermine the purposes of the TSIA. Moreover, the funds may not be going to salaries at all. In Pasco County, the school board and the union agreed to apply the funds to cover "the increased health insurance and benefit package cost for eligible instructional staff members."¹⁸ Though these issues are out of the scope of this brief, they are worthy of further study.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

James V. Shuls, Ph.D., is the Head of the Education Liberty branch of the institute for Governance and Civics at Florida State University.

Mathias Esteves de Macedo is an undergraduate student majoring in Political Science at Florida State University, where he serves as an Ambassador for the Institute for Governance and Civics.

¹ In 2023, the legislature changed TSIA from categorical funding to part of the Florida Education Finance Program. The name was also changed to the Classroom Teacher and Other Instructional Personnel Salary Increase Allocation. In this brief, we continue to use the original TSIA name as it is also regularly used on the DOE website. In the 2023-24 fiscal year, the legislature removed the TSIA as a separate categorical within the FEFP and incorporated these funds into the Base Funding Allocation.²

² Florida Department of Education. "2025-26 FEFP Conference Calculation Classroom Teacher and Other Instructional Personnel Salary Increase Allocation." Florida Department of Education. Accessed January 23, 2026. <https://www.fl DOE.org/file/5638/2526-SIAM-1.pdf>.

³ Florida, Legislature, House of Representatives, An Act Relating to Funds for the Operation of Schools, HB 641, enrolled, 2020, chap. 2020-94, Laws of Florida, <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2020/641/BillText/er/PDF>.

⁴ Florida Department of Education, "Teacher Salary Increase Allocation," Memorandum DPS 2020-69 (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Education, July 17, 2020), <https://info.fl DOE.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-8918/dps-2020-69.pdf>.

⁵ National Education Association, 2019-2020 Teacher Salary Benchmark Report (Washington, DC: National Education Association, Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy Department, 2021), <https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/2019-2020Teacher%20Salary%20Benchmark%20Report.pdf>.

⁶ The NEA calculation of starting teacher pay is an average of starting district salaries. This weights each district equally and is not an actual average of starting teachers.

⁷ These estimates were determined using publicly available collective bargaining agreements. At the time of data collection, the Liberty, Jackson, and Calhoun CBAs were for 2025-26, the Holmes, Washington, Baker, and Hamilton CBAs covered 2024-25. Meanwhile the Madison and Taylor CBAs covered 2023-24 and we were informed negotiations to update the salary were ongoing.

⁸ National Center for Education Statistics, "Table 211.60. Estimated Average Annual Salary of Teachers in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, by State: Selected Years, 1969-70 through 2020-22," in Digest of Education Statistics 2021 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2021), https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_211.60.asp

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Florida. Legislature. House of Representatives. House Bill 641: Funds for the Operation of Schools. Enrolled version. Tallahassee: Florida House of Representatives, 2020. <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2020/641/BillText/er/PDF>.

¹¹ Data obtained via Florida Department of Education records request.

¹² This figure is the total district allocation for salary increases, which includes allotments for lab schools and charter schools within the district.

¹³ Collier County Public Schools, "Labor Relations," Collier County Public Schools, last updated October 7, 2025, <https://www.collierschools.com/exploreccps/labor-relations>.

¹⁴ Polk County Public Schools, "Teacher Salary Increase Allocation Negotiations," Polk County Public Schools, September 30, 2025, https://www.polkschoolsfl.com/news/teacher_salary_increase_allocation_negotiations.

¹⁵ Florida Department of Education, "Teacher Salary Increase Allocation Implementation," memorandum (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Education, July 30, 2025), <https://www.fl DOE.org/file/5673/TSIA-supers.pdf>.

¹⁶ WFLA, "DeSantis Blames Unions for Delay in Teacher Pay Raises," July 30, 2025, <https://www.wfla.com/news/florida/desantis-blames-unions-for-delay-in-teacher-pay-raises/>.

¹⁷ United School Employees of Pasco and Pasco County Schools, 2023-2026, Instructional Negotiations Master Contract.

¹⁸ United School Employees of Pasco. Instructional Ratification Package 2025-2026: Best and Final. United School Employees of Pasco, 2025. <https://useponline.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/25-26-Instructional-Package.pdf>.