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150 South State Street, Suite 444
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

801.355.1400
utahfoundation.org

Teacher Pay in Utah Increasing Significantly but Still Lags National Average *Study Reveals Wide Range of Pay Among Districts within Utah*

(April 10, 2019) – The average salary of a teacher in Utah’s public schools is \$47,604. That’s significantly lower than the national average, according to a new Utah Foundation research report *Apples to Apples? How Teacher Pay in Utah Stacks Up to the Competition*. It’s also the lowest average salary among the eight states in the Mountain West. However, as the new report explains, it’s important to look beyond averages.

The report also details how some of Utah’s largest school districts have made serious efforts to raise teacher pay, particularly for new professionals. But those salaries remain well behind what professionals with similar levels of education are paid in the private sector.

Key findings of the report include:

- Utah’s average teacher pay (\$47,604) is significantly lower than the national average (\$60,483).
- When comparing teacher pay in Utah to other Mountain States, Utah fares a bit better than it does nationally, but is still nearly 10% below the median state (\$52,389). Utah’s average pay is also the lowest among the eight Mountain States. However, when factoring in experience and education levels, Utah is in the middle of the pack.
- Teacher pay varies widely among school districts within Utah, with pay for comparable levels of education and experience ranging nearly 40%.
- Utah’s teachers on average earn less than three-quarters of what private sector professionals with bachelor’s degrees in other fields earn.
- The state’s largest districts increased teacher pay by more than 10%, on average, for the 2017-18 school year – through a combination of increases to the state’s Weighted Pupil Unit program and increases in local funds, including property taxes.
- Additional increases in pay could come indirectly from the Utah Legislature or through higher local property taxes, but the level of teacher compensation is to some extent a matter of district priorities.
- A key consideration for policymakers is to consider pay in the context of total compensation, with an eye toward calibrating the compensation components to attract and retain a highly effective teaching corps.

- Nearly one out of every five education dollars is spent on teacher benefits, though a recent survey shows that most prospects for college teaching programs appear to be more interested in pay than benefits.

Utah Foundation President Peter Reichard says that any consideration of teacher pay should involve more than just comparing average paychecks. “When examining teacher pay, it’s important to take into account differences in experience, education and cost of living, as well as what the total compensation picture looks like,” Reichard says. “But at the end of the day, pay is critical to attracting and retaining strong teachers.”

Special thanks to **The Larry H. & Gail Miller Family Foundation** and **The Lawrence T. and Janet T. Dee Foundation** for providing grant funding to support this report. *Apples to Apples? How Teacher Pay in Utah Stacks Up to the Competition* is available on the Utah Foundation website at www.utahfoundation.org.

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Founded in 1945, Utah Foundation’s mission is to produce objective, thorough and well-reasoned research and analysis that promotes the effective use of public resources, a thriving economy, a well-prepared workforce and a high quality of life for Utahns. Utah Foundation seeks to help decision-makers and citizens understand and address complex issues. Utah Foundation also offers constructive guidance to improve governmental policies, programs and structures.

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Contacts:

Dan Bammes
Communications Director, Utah Foundation
(801)355-1400, ext. 5 Cell: (801)349-5937
dan@utahfoundation.org

Shawn Teigen
Vice President and Director of Research / Principal Author, Utah Foundation
(801)355-1400, ext. 3
shawn@utahfoundation.org

Peter Reichard
President, Utah Foundation
(801)355-1400, ext. 1
peter@utahfoundation.org

