



Compensation Survey Results

Executive Summary

The Louisiana Federation of Teachers is thankful to the 3,823 teachers and staff who shared their thoughts and perspectives. The 2,772 teachers represent 7% of all Louisiana public school teachers. Teachers and staff identified themselves as employees with more than three years of experience. More than half served in rural or suburban communities. The study's purpose is to elevate the voices of Louisiana teachers and school employees to administrators, school board members, and legislators.

In this survey, most teachers (97%) and staff (98%) disagreed that teachers and support staff are paid enough to raise a family. Many commented, "it is not a livable wage." Despite modest salary increases in the last few years, 2007 was the last time Louisiana teachers met the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) average for teacher pay¹.

More than 1,200 teachers recommended **\$60,000 as a minimum** starting salary for beginning teachers. More than 1,500 teachers recommended a salary in the range of **\$65,000 to \$75,000 to retain experienced educators.**

Pre-existing staff shortages have deepened since the pandemic². Both teachers and support staff report they have had to serve as substitute teachers to cover classes for teachers who needed to be absent or take on additional duties to cover these shortages. Extra duties for both teachers and support staff are in addition to job requirements, meaning that while time is used covering extra duties; main duties are suspended. However, the deadlines and expectations for performing their hired role are not. **Teachers (64%) and staff (43%) agreed that they were required to work extra without additional compensation.** One solution is to pay anyone serving beyond the scope of their regularly prescribed duties and responsibilities additional compensation.

Under no circumstances is there a teacher shortage. What is happening is an exodus. There are plenty of people who want/wanted to teach, but the pay is insulting given the enormous amount of work and pressure from district, state, and community leaders. I am a thirteen year teacher. I am 37. I am a single mom. Given the cost of living, I have to have a roommate--another teacher. She is in her 5th year of teaching. Even with our combined income (AND child support), we are both still paycheck to paycheck. I overdraft every single month. It is IMPOSSIBLE to support myself on a teacher salary. Teacher

¹ Louisiana Budget Project. "Louisiana Can Do Better on Teacher Pay." 2022. <https://www.labudget.org/2022/04/louisiana-can-do-better-on-teacher-pay/>

² Barnum, Matt. "Why Some US School Districts are Seeing Extreme Teacher Shortages." *USA Today*. March 6, 2023. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2023/03/06/more-teachers-quitting-than-usual-driven-stress-politics-data-shows/11390639002/>

- More than a third of teachers and staff (37%) are working at least one other job.
- Most teachers (81%) and staff (62%) would consider leaving the school and education if additional duties were added to current responsibilities.
- Most Louisiana teachers (84%) and staff (62%) have considered leaving their current position.
- Most teachers (97%) and staff (98%) disagreed that teachers and support staff are paid enough to raise a family.
- Most Louisiana teachers (93%) and support staff (92%) are not satisfied with their salary.

While teachers and staff were thankful to have a pay increase in recent years, they were also frustrated that the increase was consumed by increases in insurance premiums, groceries, and other monthly expenses. **Most teachers (90%) and staff (81%) said that salary increases were less than increases in the cost of living.** There is a strong likelihood that many teachers (84%) and staff (68%) who consider their current salary insufficient may begin looking for employment that pays better (Table 9). This was also supported by comments made on the survey. (*Illustrative comments are included throughout this document and in the appendices.*)

Most teachers (76%) disagreed with the statement “paying teachers for higher scores is more equitable than step increases.” Respondents cited the many variables that affect a student’s performance that is beyond the teacher’s control. Teachers reported feeling that Louisiana’s evaluation system is does not accurately reflect the accomplishments of teachers or students. Thus, using it as a basis for compensation is unfair. (*Illustrative comments are included throughout this document and in the appendices.*)

Standardized test scores are a terrible way to measure student or teacher success.
Teacher

Test scores do not equate to quality of teaching. Teacher

You cannot predict student scores. It makes teachers not want to teach at challenging schools. Teacher

These responses and results from this survey strongly suggest that schools are understaffed. The clear solution is to increase salaries and improve working conditions of certified personnel such that staff and teachers are not “*overworked and underpaid.*” This solution will have the added benefit of attracting more and better candidates.

Teachers and staff enjoy serving their communities. They are feeling the stresses of expanding work and responsibilities with no consideration.

Policy changes supported by this survey emphasize:

1. \$60,000 starting salary for teachers. **Annual increases** based upon documented and satisfactory completion of duties for teachers and staff.
2. Review job descriptions to focus on **teaching and learning**; reassign “non-teaching and learning” duties.
3. **Protected time for planning** and continuous improvement functions.
4. **End the use of merit pay** as a method of determining salary increases or any component of remuneration.

The time for “doing more with less” has passed. Doing “more with less” was supposed to be a temporary measure. Teachers and staff have been doing “more with less” for fifteen years. They have had additional duties and burdens put on them while the cost of health insurance, groceries, and other living expenses have increased. LFT has expressed these concerns for years, and we are starting to see the impact that disinvestment has on our school system. The result of poor policy and disinvestment in our education workforce has forced excellent, dedicated teachers and school employees to leave our schools and caused teaching to become a less-than-desirable profession. Without adequate, competitive compensation, Louisiana students will not receive the education they need and deserve.

**Larry Carter,
President Louisiana Federation of Teachers**

Survey Data

In 2020-21, there were 42,569 full time classroom teachers according to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE).³ Additional demographic information was collected (Appendix A). There were 3,823 Louisiana school employees (2,772 teachers and 1,051 staff⁴) who participated in this survey. Based on the 2020-21 LDE census, this represented 7% of all public-school teachers.

Invitations were sent electronically using a variety of means. A survey link was available on the LFT's website - <http://la.aft.org>. Respondents were neither asked nor required to be members of the Louisiana Federation of Teachers (Appendix B). They could opt out of the survey at any time. Respondents were anonymous. The survey directed respondents to determine their level of agreement with statements (Appendix C). The statements are usually identical to the presented; otherwise, the statement follows in the narrative. The percentages for agreement or disagreement are combined.

I am satisfied with my salary.

Most Louisiana teachers (93%) and support staff (92%) **are not satisfied** with their salary. In the question, “What do you wish administrators and elected officials knew about your salary or benefits?”

Staff wrote.

Support personnel does not get a fair amount of pay. It's not enough to support our families with the amount of pay that we get. I've been employed on my job for 23 years and I don't gross \$1200 a month! Need I say more.

A teacher wrote.

Every year brings new responsibilities which are meant to be squeezed into my working hours and it is an impossible ask. I cannot do my job without working outside of paid hours. Workloads are too much and pay is too little.

Table 1
Salary satisfaction.

	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,768)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,050)
Strongly disagree	1,683 (61%)	667 (64%)
Somewhat disagree	880 (32%)	295 (28%)
Neither	129 (5%)	60 (5%)
Somewhat agree	53 (2%)	18 (2%)
Strongly agree	23 (1%)	10 (1%)

³ LDE. “2020-2021 Actual Public Classroom Teacher Salary Average by School District.” Accessed March 30, 2023. <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/workforce-attributes>

⁴ Those who selected “other” responded to questions not designated for teachers.

Teachers and support staff are paid enough to meet the needs of raising a family.

Clear and convincing evidence exists that teachers and staff are not paid enough to raise a family. Most teachers (97%) and staff (98%) disagreed that teachers **and** support staff are not paid enough to raise a family.

Table 2
Meeting family needs.

	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,767)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,049)
Strongly disagree	2,376 (86%)	943 (90%)
Somewhat disagree	313 (11%)	83 (8%)
Neither	21 (1%)	8 (1%)
Somewhat agree	23 (1%)	8 (1%)
Strongly agree	34 (1%)	7 (1%)

A teacher wrote.

\$2,300 bring home is barely enough to live and support a family. We work hard and care even harder for our students. We pay for tons of supplies out of our own pockets because we want our kids to have the opportunities that other children have in higher economic areas. ... I am happy to have received an increase, but what's the point in giving a raise if cost of living is higher and medical premium increases eats the raise? I LOVE what I do and all kids need good teachers that care, but teachers deserve the compensation and support to reflect this. After all ... without teachers, there wouldn't be politicians, administrators, doctors, lawyers, and the like. Shouldn't those raising the next generation be compensated for the knowledge given to create such a society of professionals and citizens?

What minimum salary would attract teachers to the profession?

Nearly half of Louisiana teachers (46%) identified a salary in the range of \$60,000 and \$65,000 as the ideal salary to attract someone to a career in education.

A teacher wrote.

After teaching for 10 years of teaching my salary has increased from around \$40,000 to \$55,000 and I have a master's degree. I think teacher salaries should start at \$60,000 and increase based on a combination of years in service and effectiveness. At this point in my career, I should be taking home at least \$5,000 a month after taxes/benefits/etc. and instead it's about \$3,400.

What salary would keep teachers in the profession?

More than half of Louisiana teachers (57%) identified the minimum salary to retain veteran teachers must be between \$65,000 and \$75,000.

In 2022-2023, teachers (\$1500) and support staff (\$750) received raises. How much of an increase have you seen in your monthly “take home” pay?

Most teachers (90%) and support staff (95%) saw less than \$75 increase in their monthly “take home” pay.

Table 3
Take home pay.

	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,723)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,025)
Less than \$25	959 (35%)	517 (50%)
\$26 - \$50	948 (35%)	320 (31%)
\$51-75	547 (20%)	132 (13%)
More than \$75	269 (10%)	56 (5%)

Teachers wrote.

I would like [administrators and elected officials] to consider the breakdown of a \$1500 raise over the course of a year, after all taxes, retirement, insurance is taken out. It's barely equivalent to an extra tank of gas.

The \$1500 raise divided across the pay periods doesn't even cover a tank of gas and considering cost-of-living increases, homeowners insurance skyrocketing, food, gas etc. Most teachers are single parents trying to hold things together and it's difficult. Our salaries do not meet the needs of today. We feel neglected and unappreciated. We should not have to work 2 or 3 jobs to make ends meet. This is disgraceful that we have to sacrifice our families and work other jobs to cover our basic needs.

Staff wrote.

That \$25,000.00 is not enough for a single mother with one child to live on. Imagine if it was 2, 3 or more instead of 1. The state thinks I make too much to qualify for SNAP.

As a single woman with basic living expenses, my bills total approximately \$2,900. My net pay is \$3,300. The monthly salary isn't sufficient to cover basic needs and leave enough for a college educated person to experience peace of mind that other expenses including medical, etc., can be paid.

There is more to education than test scores.

Teachers were asked to respond to the statement that “Paying teachers for higher scores was more equitable than step increases.” Most teachers (76%) disagreed with that statement. The follow-up question asked, “**Why would step increases be better** than paying teachers for performance?” Many comments from teachers focused on there being too many variables that influence the test score which are beyond the teacher’s control. Those variables identify a student’s home life, socio-economic status, truancy, and motivation (Appendix D).

Table 4
Performance pay.

	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,761)
Strongly disagree	1,560 (57%)
Somewhat disagree	534 (19%)
Neither	391 (14%)
Somewhat agree	198 (7%)
Strongly agree	78 (3%)

Why would step increases be better than paying teachers for performance?

Teachers said.

A teacher’s pay can’t depend on students who don’t care.

Standardized test scores are a terrible way to measure student or teacher success.

Years of experience matter just as much as high scores.

Reward for growing professionally and staying in profession. Turnover hurts children.

Other comments mentioned special education students, English language learners, and the unequal distribution of challenging or disadvantaged students. This system of remuneration is not equitable, because of the vast differences in student groups being taught and measured.

I am required to work extra duties without compensation (e.g., club sponsor, covering classes).

Teachers (64%) and staff (43%) agreed that they were required to work extra duties without additional compensation. Extra duties: Carpool, morning, lunch, after school, and bus duties were identified by teachers. Others were required to sponsor clubs, chaperone, or work at athletic events most of which occur after school hours. These duties along with professional development and planning meetings occur during the time a teacher should be analyzing student work and planning lessons.

Table 5
Uncompensated duties.

	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,757)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,040)
Strongly disagree	285 (10%)	218 (21%)
Somewhat disagree	239 (9%)	104 (10%)
Neither	465 (17%)	266 (26%)
Somewhat agree	611 (22%)	160 (15%)
Strongly agree	1,157 (42%)	292 (28%)

Support staff and teachers had the opportunity to describe the kinds of extra duties. Support staff made 415 (40%) comments and teachers made 1,638 (60%) comments.

Teachers and staff identified covering additional classes due to the lack of available substitutes. This may be described as “subbing,” “covering classes,” or “splitting classes.” Splitting classes is when the absent teacher’s classes are split between other teachers and those students are temporarily assigned to another teacher for the day. The challenge is if all the classes are at or near capacity, the teacher is now responsible for more students than can be appropriately taught. Additionally, the content may be out of line with what the absent teacher is planning to cover that day. The other point of frustration is that it is not always clear what happens to the funding set aside for the un-hired substitute teacher. Special education teachers wrote about the administrative paperwork, eSER, IEPs, and 504 plans.

Many support staff have been asked to substitute and cover classes due to the ongoing teacher shortage. They are asked to cover bus duties and carpool duties before and after school, this includes time not scheduled for late arriving busses or parents after school. Librarians are now asked to regularly cover classes as substitutes. Teachers and staff supervising students during the students’ lunch time often do not get a designated lunch time themselves. One participant reported that they had to substitute for three different teachers in one day. Illustrative comments follow.

Teachers and staff wrote.

I do not get lunch breaks; I am required every day to have lunch duty. At least 2-3 days a week I have meetings, so I do not get a planning period. There are weeks that we get no planning periods. This causes me to have to get to school early (6am) and leave late (415pm) just to be able to be prepared for my lessons. I spend hours after school at home creating flipcharts, lesson planning and grading papers.

Grading papers at home, after school hours, because there isn't enough time in a school day to grade them. Coming up with different ways to differentiate lessons and studying the next day's lessons. Preparing student activities, developing different curriculum/worksheets for students who are not capable of completing regular curriculum assignments. "Baby sitting" kids until the tutoring teachers come to get them, coming to work after 5pm for parents/teacher nights?? I do not get paid for this. I'm just expected to be there.

Programs after school. I AM REQUIRED to attend meetings during my planning period 2 days a week. Several times a week I'm REQUIRED to attend programs and other things during my planning period. Sometimes I don't get a break all week. On the days I don't get a break I go all day without even using the restroom.

Staff wrote.

Sometimes we must cover classes for teachers being out, cover duties, and I have a duty post now. ... We were told by the person at the school board that we are paid for 35 hours a week, but they have the right to work us 40 hours. Well, we work 40 hours a week. Any time there is parent conferences, open house, teacher work days, we are required to be at work. Covering a class is not so bad but we don't get any extra pay, but when a bus driver covers a class, they get paid for it.

Open house, family night, duty, lesson planning, grading papers. Our prep time is mostly taken for SBLC mtg, parent meetings, copies, and PLC. When subs are not available, students are divided up and sent to us. We should get paid for having these extra kids in our classes all day. Need to increase the amount we are paid for PD. \$12.50/hour is not acceptable. We should be paid for any meetings held after school. We should not have students eating breakfast in our classrooms daily. They should eat in cafeteria. We should have a duty-free lunch to ourselves... We are professionals and should not have to eat with the kids.

As a SPED ParaEducator we do not get paid enough for all the duties we are required to do. Some days we have to sub for an absent teacher and unless we are subbing for more than 3 hours at a time, we do not get the extra pay for subbing. We, as paras, are always getting pulled from helping our students because someone is absent. The pay we receive as a para is not able to support a family on your own.

I work another job in addition to this one.

More than a third of teachers and staff (37%) are working at least one other job. In the question, “What do you wish administrators and elected officials knew about your salary or benefits?” there were many comments indicating that employees were either living paycheck to paycheck or they were falling behind on their bills. Several teachers said they were working two extra jobs.

Table 6
Working second jobs.

	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,748)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,030)
Working one now	1,015 (37%)	377 (37%)
Never	508 (18%)	262 (25%)
Have worked additional job	1,225 (45%)	391 (38%)

Teachers said.

I do not make enough to live on my own. After the 8th of each month, I have roughly \$400 left in my account after all my bills are paid. This is a reoccurrence every month and has caused me to get a second job. Honestly, if you are a teacher, a second job adds more stress to your life and doesn't allow you to put 100% into your classroom. I have to spread myself as much as possible so that I am still performing well in class. I only imagine what kind of teacher I'd be if I had the time to dedicate myself fully to one job. ... The insurance premiums are ridiculous, and we as teachers should not pay as much as we do. I know people with corporate jobs, making six figures, and they pay way less on their premium than the average teacher. If we can't get raises, we need lower insurance premiums soon.

I have to work two side jobs, in addition to teaching, to make ends meet. This means I work 7 days a week, with no time off. I cannot rest 1 day ..., because I have to pick up extra work hours; just to live a regular decent life.

I have to work 2 extra jobs to be able to afford living as a single mom with 2 children yet the expectations of teaching are becoming more and more all-consuming. I work hours at home on school plans and charts to show student achievement and how to intervene to raise scores. Keep in mind this is done on my own time between being a parent, driving for Waitr, tutoring students at a local library, and babysitting for care.com. It is my 21st year as a teacher- I am not young enough to work this hard to afford the basic living expenses. I am exhausted and as much as I hate to say it, I have one foot out of the door. I feel like I am working myself to death to educate the future and provide for my own children.

Have you needed to use public assistance?

The state average for teachers needing public assistance was 26% and 36% for staff.

Table 7
Public assistance.

	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,586)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,039)
Yes	709 (26%)	380 (37%)
No	1,839 (67%)	599 (58%)
Other	208 (8%)	60 (6%)

Staff said.

I had to apply for WIC, Food Stamps, LA Medicaid and other state assistance programs for the first time because the compensation is not enough to cover the cost of childcare, let alone the cost of other bills and groceries. My husband has picked up a second job and I have been contemplating leaving the education field due to the inadequate compensation.

I qualify for government assistance, and it is a necessity to see these benefits to take care of my family.

It is nearly impossible for a paraprofessional to live off our current salary with the cost of living and raising two children without working a second job and needing government assistance. I currently live with family because I cannot afford to live on my income without living paycheck to paycheck.

Teacher said.

We are currently paying experienced teachers a salary that is below the poverty limit for a family such that I qualify for governmental financial assistance and have a second job. It's shameful.

If new policies added to my duties, I would consider leaving the school and education.

Most teachers (81%) and staff (62%) would consider leaving the school and education if additional duties were added to current responsibilities.

Table 8
Potential effect of new policies.

	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,760)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,036)
Strongly disagree	92 (3%)	68 (7%)
Somewhat disagree	107 (4%)	69 (7%)
Neither	344 (12%)	252 (24%)
Somewhat agree	961 (35%)	332 (32%)
Strongly agree	1,256 (46%)	315 (30%)

I have considered leaving this position.

Most teachers (84%) and two-thirds of staff (68%) have considered leaving their current position.

Table 9
Considered leaving current position.

	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,760)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,041)
Strongly disagree	126 (5%)	93 (9%)
Somewhat disagree	111 (4%)	579 (6%)
Neither	200 (7%)	181 (17%)
Somewhat agree	831 (30%)	331 (32%)
Strongly agree	1,492 (54%)	377 (36%)

Salary increases given in the last three years ...

Few teachers (6%) reported that the previous salary increase was sufficient. Teachers left comments such as, “*My weekly paycheck is less this year than last.*” “*After 25 years no increase in salary. Completely unfair. Smaller raises to older teachers.*” “*Raises do not keep up with inflation. The longer you teach the less you make.*” Staff (5%) were similarly situated. Staff left comments such as, “*As a cafeteria manager we do the work of 3 people because positions have been done away with or we are short of employees to fill positions. We work over and are not compensated for it. Over worked and under paid...*” “*I had to apply for WIC, Food Stamps, LA Medicaid and other state assistance programs for the first time because the compensation is not enough to cover the cost of child care, let alone the cost of other bills and groceries...*”

Most teachers (90%) and staff (81%) selected that salary increases in the last three years **were less than increases in the cost of living**. There is a strong case that could be made that those teachers (94%) and staff (95%) who think that the current salary is insufficient, will begin looking for employment that pays better.

Table 10
Previous salary increases.

<i>Select all that apply.</i>	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,750)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,033)
Salary increases given in the last three years ...		
were consumed by rise in insurance premiums.	2,134 (78%)	707 (68%)
were less than increases in cost of living.	2,496 (91%)	905 (88%)
were less than what was personally spent on classroom supplies.	1,521 (55%)	258 (25%)
were sufficient to keep my standard of living.	153 (6%)	55 (5%)
Other	111 (4%)	67 (6%)

What do you wish administrators and elected officials knew about your salary or benefits?

There were 3,131 responses (82% of all respondents). Many comments focused on the rising costs of benefits and maintaining a household. In a variety of ways many teachers and staff said it was “not a livable wage,” “it is insufficient,” or “not enough to keep up with the rising costs of living.”

There were more than 100 responses about the challenges of being a teacher who is single. The challenge to provide was even greater for single mothers. An illustrative summary and sample from teachers and staff follow. Additional comments are in Appendix E.

I wish they knew it isn't enough to cover life's expenses. Compensation received does not parallel the responsibilities nor expectations that come with teaching. Teachers are expected to be everything to every student. We give so much of ourselves. ... Teachers are so burned out and frustrated with what comes with the profession. We don't have enough time or energy to devote to our own families. The quality of life for a teacher is depressing and dismal. If elected officials knew or exhibited the slightest concern for how teachers lived, there wouldn't be a need for conversation. They should be embarrassed and ashamed of themselves. Yet, they're not! How do they show their appreciation for teachers? They throw pennies at us, then pile on more responsibility, expecting us to perform miracles and make do with less. We are on the cusp of the poverty. It's a sad day when, as a teacher, you make \$38 above the limit to qualify for public assistance.

Single teachers said.

I can no longer afford my rent being a single mom. My monthly income has actually decreased because of insurance and basic living. It is discouraging to know my 21 years of teaching is not worth anything and I get paid pretty much the same as a new teacher. It devalues teachers.

I am a single mom with 3 kids. I cannot afford groceries yet make too much for public assistance. I never dreamed having a college education would have me not even able to afford basic things. I bring home about 3000.00 a month and that is with over 22 years of being a teacher. I cannot afford to take my kids to the dentist and that is with insurance.

I don't make enough money to pay bills and raise my three daughters. I've had my electricity disconnected twice when the bill was high during the hot months because I didn't have the money to pay for it. I'm a single parent of 3 girls. I do not get child support or any other assistance. I can't afford groceries to last all month anymore. I put off doctor visits for myself because I don't have enough money to last us all month.

I wish they knew how hard it is to have a decent standard of life. I wish they knew how much I struggle daily just to make ends meet. I wish they knew how tired and worn I am from having to work 2 jobs at the age of 59. That's not even considering that I work from 5:30 pm - 10:00 pm, 3-5 days a week then turn around and get up at 5:30 am to prepare to start all over. But always come into work and give my students and my school 150%!!!

As a single person with a mortgage, I live paycheck to paycheck. I am responsible for all my utilities I do not shop excessively and do not have gym memberships nor time/money for self-care. I work, come home, plan & go back to work. We should compensate our teachers for their work and sacrifices to at least get close to the national average. \$25 a month doesn't cover the increase in utilities this year.

I am currently in my 5th year of the profession. I am a single adult. If I were given more guidance, I would have never entertained the idea of this profession. I earn enough money to drive a decent, used vehicle, but can only afford to live in a tiny, efficiency, run-down apartment; it is an embarrassment. ... To eat, I rely on credit cards and often have to limit both the amount of food I eat and how many times I eat. The vicious cycle of low pay affects every aspect of my life and is exhausting mentally. Due to expenses, it is nearly impossible to save. I am one of the few people who have graduated college in my family and am only 8 classes away to complete a master's degree. But there is no real incentive. I feel pigeonholed because I only see myself as a teacher. However, the lifestyle that comes with the profession is quite depressing.

Other teachers said.

Because of cost-of-living increases, even with minor raises, we have taken a pay cut.

I wish they understood how little compensation we receive for the number of hours we work. I work extra hours every day between duties and grading papers and recording grades. I spend my weekends grading papers as well. My job is seven days a week and probably 15 hours a day we don't even make minimum wage when you figure the number of hours we work into our salary.

I have been teaching for 15 years. I'm a single mother with 3 kids who can barely make ends meet I can't receive govt assistance because I make "too much" money. The cost of living is steadily rising and while I'm grateful for any additional raise, a measly \$1000 a year barely pays for a tank of gas a month.

I take home less now than I did 8 years ago because of rising health benefits.

Any time a raise is passed, someone takes from us elsewhere (insurance, etc.) so I really have never seen a raise on my paycheck since I started working. As someone who has stayed in the profession for almost 10 years, I should be getting increases of pay that are more than simply \$400 a year. Now that the cost of living has increased even more, my salary is not what keeps me here. The only reason I stay is the insurance and as soon as something else works out with my husband's job, I will leave. I love what I do, and I love my students, but I don't feel like I am fairly contributing to my family with such a low income position, especially considering I have a master's degree and am a go-getter. I do it because I love it, not because of the pay. But I can only last so much longer doing something I love while getting low pay, people constantly looking over my shoulder and talking down about my profession.

I wish they would try to live off \$3500 a month with three college degrees.

The salary and benefits are not enough compared to the cost of living. Teachers should not have to work 2 or 3 jobs just to make it. We are the lowest college degree -required job. Other jobs

that require a college degree pay a lot more. You say you appreciate teachers - put your money where your mouth is. Teachers should not be struggling. A significant raise that is not eaten up by rising insurance premiums would make a world of difference in my life. It would be so nice not to struggle every single month no matter how I cut back.

Support staff comments

The one comment that seemed to sum up many support staff comments was, “The cost of everything is going up except our pay. People are living paycheck to paycheck. Electric, gas, groceries medicine, all insurances medical homeowners flood and it is causing mortgages to go up also in our state. We are all struggling to get our needs met. You can forget your wants because that is not happening.”

I am a para educator; we don't make enough for everything that we do. We change diapers, clean behinds (and sometimes bodies) of our students. We teach them. Change their clothes if needed. When they are sick, we clean that up too. Most teachers don't assist or are willing to do the things we do. When teachers get raises, we only get half of what they get. It's not fair. Our kids come to us when they are hurt, hungry, or having a bad day. We comfort them, nurture them, and let them know they are loved. Some of these kids don't get that at home. Some live in group homes, some don't feel they have worth. We let them know they do. We don't let them go without if there is any way we can help, we do. We buy them things we know they like. Come the holidays, no matter which one, we make sure they have presents. If they need supplies for school we get it. If they need a belt, shoes, or other clothing we get it. We get them hygiene supplies if they need it. We love them as our own.

I am a 20 year support staff member. I make 26,000 a year and I am maxed out.

I work SpEd severe and profound self-contained. One of the toughest jobs mentally physically and emotionally in the education system. There is very little training if any offered, the teachers are overwhelmed. In the last 4 yrs. I have had 6 teachers in the room I work in. Help us with retention of good teachers and staff, compensate us with a living wage relative to our education, experience, abilities, and loyalty.

As a single mom it is impossible to survive on school pay alone. I am forced to work two jobs and miss out on so much time with my kids because of it. This causes exhaustion and leaves me feeling burned out with my current situation.

As a cafeteria manager we do the work of 3 people because positions have been done away with or we are short of employees to fill positions. We work over and are not compensated for it. Over worked and under paid to save money but it is breaking us down in the process. The techs or also in the same predicament.

After taxes and insurance are taken out of my check my take home is less than half of my gross pay.

After 28 years I still do not take home \$1000 as a high school secretary who works 10.5 months. My salary is eaten up with insurance and taxes.

Appendix A Demographics

Representation

According to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) data, in 2020-21, there were 42,569 full time classroom teachers.⁵ Respondents to the survey included 2,772 Louisiana teachers and 1,051 support staff. Those who selected “other” responded to the support staff questions. This represented 7% of the total teachers based on the 2020-21 LDE census.

There was wide participation from around the state including charters, state, and laboratory schools. Employees in most districts responded. Table 15 shows from where the greatest number of responses came.

Responses came from teachers and staff in 66 public school districts and 42 charter, lab, and state schools.

Table 11
Respondents.

	Teachers	Support Staff	Total
Louisiana	2,772	1,051	3,823

Which category best describes the community of students you serve?

Many respondents described their work environments as rural (36%) and suburban (35%) communities. Some who identified as other served in magnet schools that enrolled students from across the district or parish.

Table 12
Communities served by respondents.

Communities	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,752)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,031)
Rural	998 (36%)	385 (37%)
Suburban	967 (35%)	276 (27%)
Urban	575 (21%)	178 (17%)
Not sure	150 (5%)	154 (15%)
Other	62 (2%)	38 (4%)

⁵ LDE. “2020-2021 Actual Public Classroom Teacher Salary Average by School District.” Accessed March 30, 2023. <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/workforce-attributes>

How many total years of service?

Most teachers (89%) and most staff (84%) had more than three years of experience.

Table 13

Total years of service.

Years	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,591)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,036)
0-3	298 (11%)	169 (16%)
4-6	357 (13%)	161 (16%)
7-10	482 (17%)	177 (17%)
11-20	875 (32%)	291 (28%)
More than 20	748 (27%)	238 (23%)

My annual salary is ...

More than half of the teachers (52%) earn less than \$50,000.

Table 14

Annual salary.

	Louisiana Teachers (n = 2,753)	Louisiana Support Staff (n = 1,034)
Less than \$30,000	17 (1%)	638 (62%)
\$30,000-\$35,000	66 (2%)	55 (5%)
\$35,000-\$40,000	174 (6%)	31 (3%)
\$40,000-\$45,000	423 (15%)	22 (2%)
\$45,000-\$50,000	764 (28%)	54 (5%)
\$50,000-\$55,000	722 (26%)	78 (8%)
\$55,000-\$60,000	422 (15%)	83 (8%)
More than \$60,000	165 (6%)	73 (7%)

Appendix B Protocol and Front Page of Survey

All surveys were reviewed by the LFT Executive Board.

Respondents were anonymous. LFT membership was not required to take the survey. Respondents could opt out of the survey at any time. There was no benefit offered or provided to respondents.

Responses were collected electronically between March 6 to March 31, 2023.

This statement preceded survey participation.

Purpose: The Louisiana Federation of Teachers (LFT) is undertaking surveys to better understand your perceptions as a school employee. Your responses will help the LFT in conversations with legislators, state and local school board members, and other stakeholders. The survey will take less than 10 minutes. The items on the survey do not address sensitive or confidential information, just your views of professional issues.

Contact: The following investigator is available for questions, MF, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Richard A. Baker Jr., PhD at rbaker@lft-aft.org or 225.293.1037.

Inclusion criteria: To participate in this study you must be serving as a Louisiana educator or support staff.

Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names will be collected from respondents. Data will be reported at an aggregate (e.g., content or grade) level. Survey responses will remain confidential unless release is legally compelled.

By continuing to the survey, you are giving consent to participate in this study.

Appendix C Compensation Survey Items

1. What role best describes your employment?
2. I am satisfied with my salary.
3. Teachers and support staff are paid enough to meet the needs of raising a family.
4. What minimum salary would attract teachers to the profession?
5. What salary would keep teachers in the profession?
6. In 2022-2023, teachers (\$1500) and support staff (\$750) received raises. How much of an increase have you seen in your monthly “take home” pay?
7. Paying teachers for higher scores is more equitable than step increases.
8. Why would step increases be better than paying for teachers’ performance?
9. I am required to work extra duties without compensation (e.g., club sponsor, covering classes, tutoring).
10. Please describe extra duties.
11. I work another job in addition to teaching.
12. If new policies headed to my duties, I would consider leaving the school and education.
13. I have considered leaving this position.
14. Have you needed to use public assistance?
15. Salary increases given in the last three years... (Select all that apply.)
16. What do you wish administrators and elected officials knew about your salary or benefits?

Demographic questions

17. In what district or charter are you employed?
18. Which category best describes the community of the students you sure?
19. How many total years of service?
20. My annual salary is...

Appendix D
Illustrative Teacher Responses About Step Increases

Why would step increases be better than paying teachers for performance?

All teachers deserve a raise. It should not be dictated by unmotivated students.

Because not all students care about test scores.

Test scores do not equate to quality of teaching.

Too many variables not in teacher control: student mental health, attendance, low motivation.

We are not responsible for home lives. Students do NOT study or do homework. Truancy is a problem.

Standardized test scores are a terrible way to measure student or teacher success.

Because not all teachers have the same level students. This causes dissension among teachers.

Years of experience matter just as much as high scores.

You cannot predict student scores. It makes teachers not want to teach at challenging schools.

We can't control negative situations in the students' home life. We can't control the effort of students but paying us for our experience and keeping us in the profession.

Loyalty AND performance. Higher pay for a contract signed for longer promised years of service.

We can't control all aspects of students' life. Due to student's home life, they do not feel secure.

Reward for growing professionally and staying in profession. Turnover hurts children.

Teachers pay can't depend on students who don't care.

There is no equitable way to measure student performance from one year to the next. Steps are fair.

You can retain teachers. I have a master's in education and only get \$800 more per year.

Appendix E Additional Illustrative State Responses

The following heading is the prompt to which participants were asked to respond. There were 3,131 responses or 82% of all respondents. Following are illustrative responses from teachers and support staff.

What do you wish administrators and elected officials knew about your salary or benefits?

I live in 2 income household or I could not support my family, I have had maybe 2 raises in the last 10+ years, both raises were eaten up by increase in health insurances, cost of living/inflation keep going up but my salary does not; I have young children at home or I would probably seek different employment; the biggest benefit to teaching is the schedule which allows me to be home with my children when they are not in school; not only have my insurance premiums gone up; so has the cost of medicines; also change in drug coverages is costing me more out of pocket money as well as the lack of control over where I purchase my medications.

Even though I love making a difference in my students lives, I cannot afford to live on my current salary with the increases in groceries, gas, insurance premiums and paying for my own kids' education.

Elected officials seem to take the attitude that teachers only work half the year, when the hours that educators put in at school, after school, and during breaks would be comparable to any other job. Additionally, it is getting a bit ludicrous how much responsibility is being asked of teachers in relation to their pay. In a family with two teachers that live modestly, it is becoming increasingly difficult to stay in the profession and raise a family in Louisiana. With a college degree, it is becoming increasingly enticing to move to a profession with better pay and similar benefits, or to move to a state that will reciprocate my retirement.

We are exhausted. The people who show up daily are overworked and underpaid. We do it for the kiddos but all of the paperwork and policies they keep adding to our plate are unacceptable.

How much better I would be at my job if I did not have to worry about having enough money to take care of my family.

Under no circumstances is there a teacher shortage. What is happening is an exodus. There are plenty of people who want/wanted to teach, but the pay is insulting given the enormous amount of work and pressure from district, state, and community leaders. I am a thirteen-year teacher. I am 37. I am a single mom. Given the cost of living, I must have a roommate--another teacher. She is in her 5th year of teaching. Even with our combined income (AND child support), we are both still paycheck to paycheck. I overdraft every single month. It is IMPOSSIBLE to support myself on a teacher salary. I have considered declaring bankruptcy. I cannot stay in this profession unless we receive a 25% raise. Teachers have no ability to negotiate salary, unlike other positions in education. School districts across the state need a wholesale audit of finances in regards to spending, as we know it is being misappropriated. Money is being dumped into our district, but teachers see none of it. Ever.

I wish administrators and elected officials knew the secrets of the harder schools. Teachers who work in “easy” schools deserve a raise. The teachers in the “hard” school DEFINITELY deserve a raise. Teachers deal with students who don’t care about their education, have no support from home, and cannot effectively acclimate to the classroom because we don’t have the resources. No one seems to understand that. There are good and bad teachers. There are good and bad students. Most teachers do the best we can every day to help our students, but sometimes it feels like we are not appreciated.

Every time we get a raise our insurance rates go up so it’s like we never get a raise.

As a single mom, I cannot support myself and my daughter without finding ways to supplement my income. As a teacher with a master’s degree, this is unacceptable. A teacher should not have to rely on a second job or income of a spouse to be able to live comfortably. The cost of living has risen so drastically. Why are we not valued more? The responsibilities keep piling on, but where is the compensation? I can’t even go to the doctor when I’m sick because insurance doesn’t pay a dime unless I’ve met a \$6,000 deductible. How is that ok? Do better.

Under no circumstances is there a teacher shortage. What is happening is an exodus. There are plenty of people who want/wanted to teach, but the pay is insulting given the enormous amount of work and pressure from district, state, and community leaders. I am a thirteen year teacher. I am 37. I am a single mom. Given the cost of living, I have to have a roommate--another teacher. She is in her 5th year of teaching. Even with our combined income (AND child support), we are both still paycheck to paycheck. I overdraft every single month. It is IMPOSSIBLE to support myself on a teacher salary. I have considered declaring bankruptcy. I cannot stay in this profession unless we receive a 25% raise. Teachers have no ability to negotiate salary, unlike other positions in education. School districts across the state need a wholesale audit of finances in regards to spending, as we know it is being misappropriated. Money is being dumped into our district, but teachers see none of it. Ever.

How much time we actually put into our jobs and what is expected. Especially days when we have NO break, even for the restroom! Teachers DO NOT work 8-3. I get to work at 6:30 am and usually leave between 5 and 5:30 in the afternoon. We work anywhere from 45-55 plus hours a week and usually have to bring work home. Also, teaching 30 kids in a class is way too many. If you want teachers to be successful with test scores, etc. lower teacher student ratio.

It is not nearly enough. The lack of pay is a huge reason why so many of my colleagues have left the profession over the years. We love our job, however the low pay and ever-increasing workload causes educators to leave. If we are to ever get serious about retaining our best educators, and across the board pay raise (not tied to "student performance") of a substantial amount will be needed. Too many teachers in this state are working second jobs. This is unacceptable.

You keep adding on to my responsibilities, take nothing away and with inflation and rising costs on insurance I make less in year 10 than I did in year 1. You want me to do more with less and I have zero incentive to do better because I don't any compensation for good test scores. Current salary and "benefits" are demoralizing, keeping young people from becoming teachers and forcing experienced teachers out because they live below poverty.

I love teaching and am happy to do my job, but the amount that I get paid does not nearly compensate for the work that I do. I am a highly educated professional and should be paid as such. The amount that we are paid feels like an indicator that society/government does not value the work that we do, however they are happy to point the finger in our direction any time there is negative sentiment towards public education. Current salary is not enough to attract the caliber of graduate that we need teaching, and it is no longer sufficient to keep people in the profession. Raises are nice, but when you consider how little we make to begin with and cost of living increases over the last ten to twenty years, I make less than I did as a first-year teacher and the raises don't even scratch the surface. ... teachers should be paid like professionals. I am a taxpayer with children in the public school system and it breaks my heart to see the state.

I am lucky enough to work at a school with a strong charter union, but that is the only reason my salary has gone up. The vast majority of teachers in this state cannot make a decent living in the classroom. We need to bring teacher pay up to be AT LEAST commensurate with our neighboring states or we will continue to hemorrhage teachers. I know so many teachers who are leaving the profession or retiring early, because of all the additional responsibilities and because their raises aren't keeping pace with the cost of living increases. This is why we keep having to fill positions with uncertified and unqualified "teachers". Our young people are our most precious resource, and we are doing them, and our communities and state a disservice by not giving them the education they deserve. If this state wants to improve, we need to improve the education of our young people. We can't do that without quality teachers, and we can't attract quality teachers without adequate wages. Fair Pay NOW!!!!