



Table 3. State rankings, current expenditure per pupil, 2002-03 school year.

Table 4. State rankings, average salaries of public school teachers, 2002-03 school year.

If you have only looked at two education input statistics in your entire life, chances are good they were per-pupil spending and average teacher salary. State rankings of these two measures are ubiquitous in the nation's newspapers and magazines, as well in public policy reports and government fiscal analyses. State legislatures below the national average in either one of these categories are relentlessly lobbied to increase spending until the national average is reached. Of course, the national average is a moving target, and the more states that succeed in getting increases, the harder it is for all states to maintain or better their rankings.

Table 3 ranks the states according to their per-pupil spending for 2002-03. These figures do not account for all spending in public education. Interest on debt and capital outlays, for example, are not computed into current expenditures.

As we saw in the previous table, states in the Northeast dominate the per-pupil spending ranks, and states in the South and Mountain states fall at the bottom. Otherwise, there are few distinguishing characteristics for high-spending states in terms of achievement. Low-achieving DC is nearly \$3,000 dollars per-pupil ahead of high-achieving Connecticut. Large, sparsely populated Alaska ranks just ahead of small, more densely populated Rhode Island and Delaware.

Table 4 ranks the states according to average salaries of public school teachers for the same year. It bears mentioning that the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers appear to be the only organizations that gather and compute average salary data. Even the U.S. Department of Education simply uses NEA and AFT statistics. This causes a small amount of difficulty, because the NEA and AFT figures do not agree with each other. Moreover, both organizations update the figures from past years as more comprehensive and detailed figures become available to them.

Many states have rankings five places apart or less on the two measures. Other states - California, Vermont, Wyoming and others - rise or fall significantly between the two. Is there something about the interaction between these two sets of statistics that can help illuminate how and why money is spent in public education?



Table 3. State rankings, current expenditure per-pupil, 2002-03 school year
(Derived from Table 8 – Public Education Finances 2003, US Census Bureau, March 2005)

| U.S. \$8,019 | | | | | |
|--------------|----|----------|-----|----|---------|
| 1) | DC | \$13,328 | 27) | IA | \$7,534 |
| 2) | NJ | \$12,202 | 28) | OR | \$7,460 |
| 3) | NY | \$12,140 | 29) | MT | \$7,449 |
| 4) | CT | \$10,372 | 30) | CO | \$7,316 |
| 5) | VT | \$10,322 | 31) | KS | \$7,292 |
| 6) | MA | \$10,223 | 32) | MO | \$7,262 |
| 7) | AK | \$9,919 | 33) | ND | \$7,153 |
| 8) | DE | \$9,669 | 34) | WA | \$7,101 |
| 9) | PA | \$9,367 | 35) | TX | \$7,076 |
| 10) | RI | \$9,315 | 36) | SC | \$7,047 |
| 11) | WY | \$9,202 | 37) | NM | \$6,870 |
| 12) | WI | \$8,993 | 38) | LA | \$6,868 |
| 13) | MD | \$8,921 | 39) | KY | \$6,647 |
| 14) | ME | \$8,847 | 40) | NC | \$6,635 |
| 15) | MI | \$8,588 | 41) | SD | \$6,532 |
| 16) | OH | \$8,555 | 42) | FL | \$6,450 |
| 17) | IL | \$8,409 | 43) | AR | \$6,408 |
| 18) | NH | \$8,285 | 44) | AL | \$6,395 |
| 19) | WV | \$8,218 | 45) | TN | \$6,201 |
| 20) | HI | \$8,100 | 46) | OK | \$6,127 |
| 21) | MN | \$8,073 | 47) | NV | \$6,084 |
| 22) | IN | \$7,948 | 48) | ID | \$6,034 |
| 23) | VA | \$7,832 | 49) | MS | \$5,816 |
| 24) | NE | \$7,743 | 50) | AZ | \$5,672 |
| 25) | GA | \$7,724 | 51) | UT | \$4,860 |
| 26) | CA | \$7,691 | | | |

Table 4. State rankings, average salaries of public school teachers, 2002-03 school year
(From Table 1 - National Education Association Rankings & Estimates Fall 2004 Update, revised figures for 2002-03, released November 30, 2004)

| U.S. \$45,810 | | | | | |
|---------------|----|----------|-----|----|----------|
| 1) | CA | \$56,283 | 27) | VT | \$41,491 |
| 2) | CT | \$55,367 | 28) | AZ | \$40,894 |
| 3) | NJ | \$54,166 | 29) | SC | \$40,362 |
| 4) | MI | \$53,563 | 30) | FL | \$40,281 |
| 5) | NY | \$53,017 | 31) | ID | \$40,148 |
| 6) | MA | \$51,803 | 32) | TX | \$39,974 |
| 7) | IL | \$51,475 | 33) | TN | \$39,186 |
| 8) | PA | \$51,428 | 34) | IA | \$39,059 |
| 9) | RI | \$51,076 | 35) | KY | \$38,981 |
| 10) | DC | \$50,763 | 36) | WY | \$38,840 |
| 11) | AK | \$49,685 | 37) | ME | \$38,518 |
| 12) | MD | \$49,677 | 38) | WV | \$38,481 |
| 13) | DE | \$48,791 | 39) | UT | \$38,268 |
| 14) | OR | \$47,600 | 40) | AR | \$38,167 |
| 15) | GA | \$45,533 | 41) | NE | \$37,896 |
| 16) | OH | \$45,490 | 42) | KS | \$37,795 |
| 17) | IN | \$44,996 | 43) | MO | \$37,655 |
| 18) | WA | \$44,958 | 44) | LA | \$37,166 |
| 19) | MN | \$44,745 | 45) | NM | \$36,965 |
| 20) | HI | \$44,464 | 46) | MT | \$35,754 |
| 21) | WI | \$42,775 | 47) | AL | \$35,152 |
| 22) | CO | \$42,680 | 48) | OK | \$34,877 |
| 23) | VA | \$42,432 | 49) | MS | \$34,555 |
| 24) | NC | \$42,411 | 50) | ND | \$33,869 |
| 25) | NH | \$41,909 | 51) | SD | \$32,416 |
| 26) | NV | \$41,795 | | | |