

News Of Education



Where Does School Money Go? Not To Teachers, Study Shows

(NAPSA)—There are a little over 3 million teachers in America's public schools and for the majority of them, interacting with children is the best part of the job. That's just as well, since for too many, salary and working conditions are pretty poor.

In fact, for more than 20 years, teacher salaries have not even been keeping up with the cost of inflation. According to a recent report by Benjamin Scafidi, Ph.D., a professor of economics at Kennesaw State University, there's been a great Teacher Salary Stagnation and between 1992 and 2014, real average salaries for public school teachers actually fell by 2 percent.

Where The Money Went

While spending on education has risen in many states, instead of increasing teacher salaries, the public schools added personnel at a rate almost four times that of student enrollment growth—and these new hires were disproportionately nonteachers.

If this increase in "other staff" had matched student enrollment growth, the schools would have saved almost \$35 billion a year. That could have meant an \$11,100 raise for every teacher or education savings accounts (ESAs) for more than 4 million students to offset tuition payments at private schools, to save for college, or to pay for other educational services, therapies, curricula and materials.

Essentially, taxpayers spent a lot more per student, but teachers didn't see much of it. That may be one reason so many school systems have been seeing teacher strikes lately.

What Students Got

What's more, this had no measurable



If parents had a greater say in where education money goes, teachers and students would both be better off, a professor contends.

positive effect on students. National Assessment of Educational Progress Long-Term Trend scores for 17-year-olds fell by three points in reading and are flat in mathematics since 1992.

What Can Be Done

Dr. Scafidi suggested states should expand school choice and create incentives for schools to compete for teacher talent and students.

How? By empowering parents to choose the best educational fit for their kids—and allowing the funding to follow them. This, Dr. Scafidi said, lets families, not bureaucrats, decide where and how school dollars are spent. And if schools aren't paying teachers what they deserve, those teachers should be able to teach where they'll be paid for their hard work.

Learn More

Dr. Scafidi's research was published by EdChoice, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing full and unencumbered educational choice as the best pathway to successful lives and a stronger society. To read the entire report, go to www.edchoice.org/StaffingSurge.