

Wisconsin Teacher Pay Brief

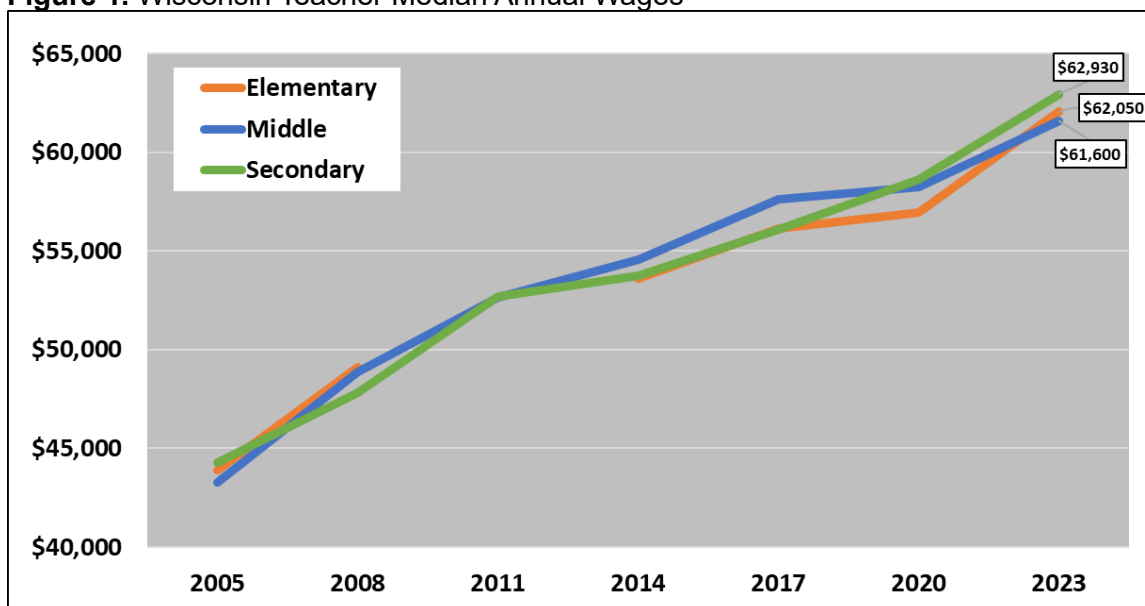
In light of the staffing challenges that many Wisconsin school districts are facing, teacher pay in the state has been an oft-covered topic in recent years. Various reports highlight the subject, including the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) [2023 Educator Preparation Program and Workforce Analysis Report](#) and [Wisconsin's Teacher Pay Predicament](#) from the Wisconsin Policy Forum.

Wisconsin DPI salary information is used in the aforementioned pieces; while informative, it does not readily allow for cross-state comparisons. This report leverages Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)¹ estimates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to analyze teacher pay in Wisconsin and across US states. Gaps of three years were used to avoid overlapping survey data panels.

Intrastate Comparisons Across States

Nominal (not inflation adjusted) median pay²³ for Wisconsin elementary⁴, middle⁵, and secondary⁶ school teachers⁷ has increased over the last several years.

Figure 1. Wisconsin Teacher Median Annual Wages



Source: Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
Note: Median annual wage for Elementary in 2011 is not available. Wages are not inflation adjusted.

¹ For more information about OEWS, see here: https://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_emp.htm

² Because each year has data panels that span multiple years, inflation adjustment was not undertaken.

³ Establishments responding to the OEWS survey are instructed to report annual rates for occupations that are typically paid at an annual rate but do not work 2,080 hours per year, such as teachers: https://www.bls.gov/oes/2023/may/oes_tec.htm. The number of hours that teachers are contracted to work throughout the year varies by school district.

⁴ Excludes special education and kindergarten teachers.

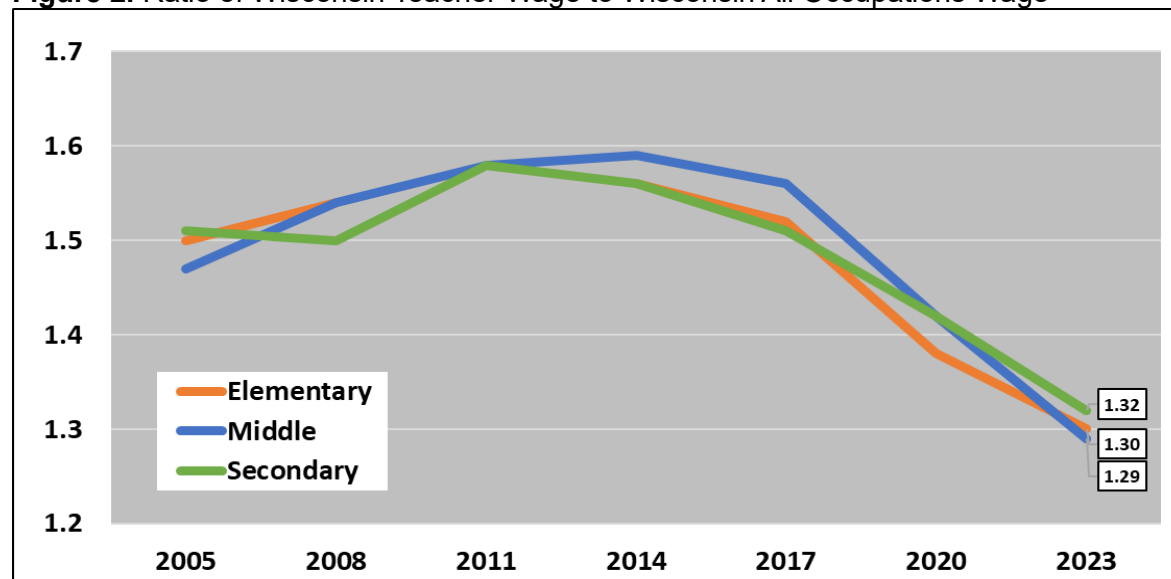
⁵ Excludes special and career/technical education teachers.

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⁷ Selected teacher occupation definitions remained the same across different standard occupational classification (SOC) systems. For more information about using OEWS across time, see OEWS FAQ Subject F: https://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm

Relative to other occupations, however, pay growth has not kept pace. The chart below shows the ratio of Wisconsin teacher median pay to the median pay for all Wisconsin occupations.⁸ The ratios have decreased every year since 2014. The picture looks similar nationally, as very few states have higher 2023 ratios than 2014.⁹

Figure 2. Ratio of Wisconsin Teacher Wage to Wisconsin All Occupations Wage



Source: Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

Note: Ratio for Elementary in 2011 is not available. Annual median is used for teacher and all occupations wages.

Example calculation for secondary teachers in 2023:

2023 WI secondary teacher annual median wage = \$62,930

2023 WI All Occupations annual median wage = \$47,590

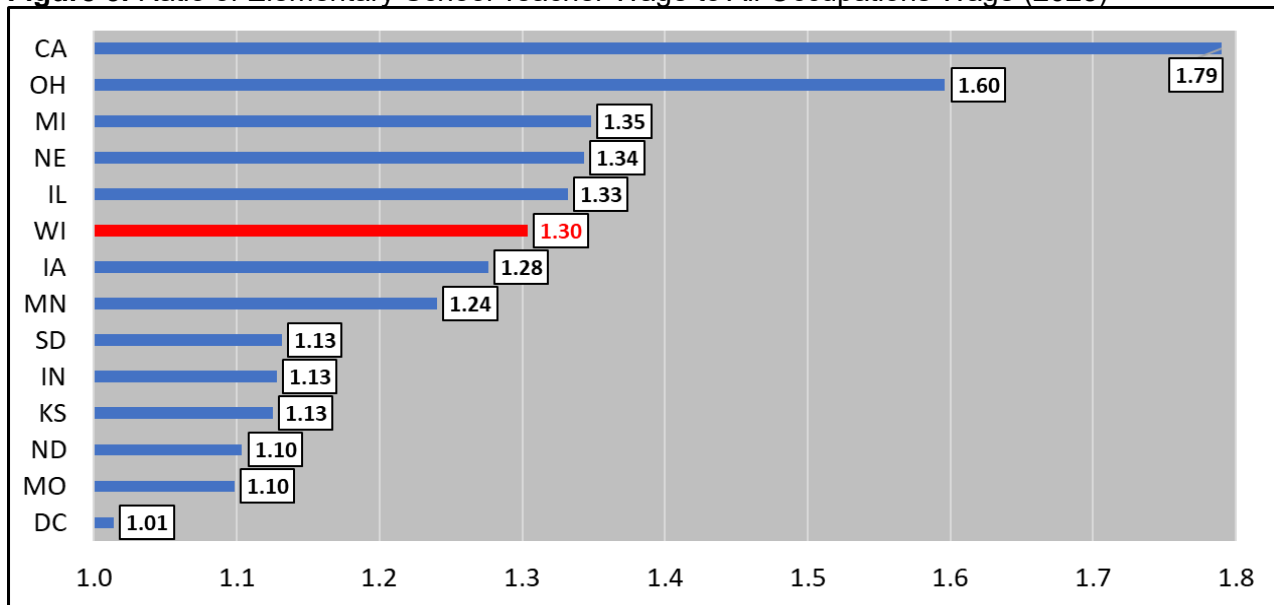
Ratio: $\$62,930 / \$47,590 = 1.32$

The charts below show the ratio of median teacher pay to the median pay for all occupations for Midwest Census Region states and for states with the highest and lowest ratios nationally to provide broader context. All figures are for 2023. Ohio stands out among Midwest states for relatively high teacher pay compared to other occupations in the state. It should be noted that a high (low) ratio could be driven by either high (low) teacher pay or low (high) pay for other occupations, or a combination of the two. Regardless, it is a wage metric that provides some indication of the relative attractiveness of the profession within a state. Wisconsin's teacher ratios rank in the middle across Midwest states.

⁸ OEWS data does not readily allow for occupational comparisons based on degree requirements, so 'all occupations' is used.

⁹ Two states/DC have a higher 2023 elementary teacher ratio than 2014, six for middle, five for secondary.

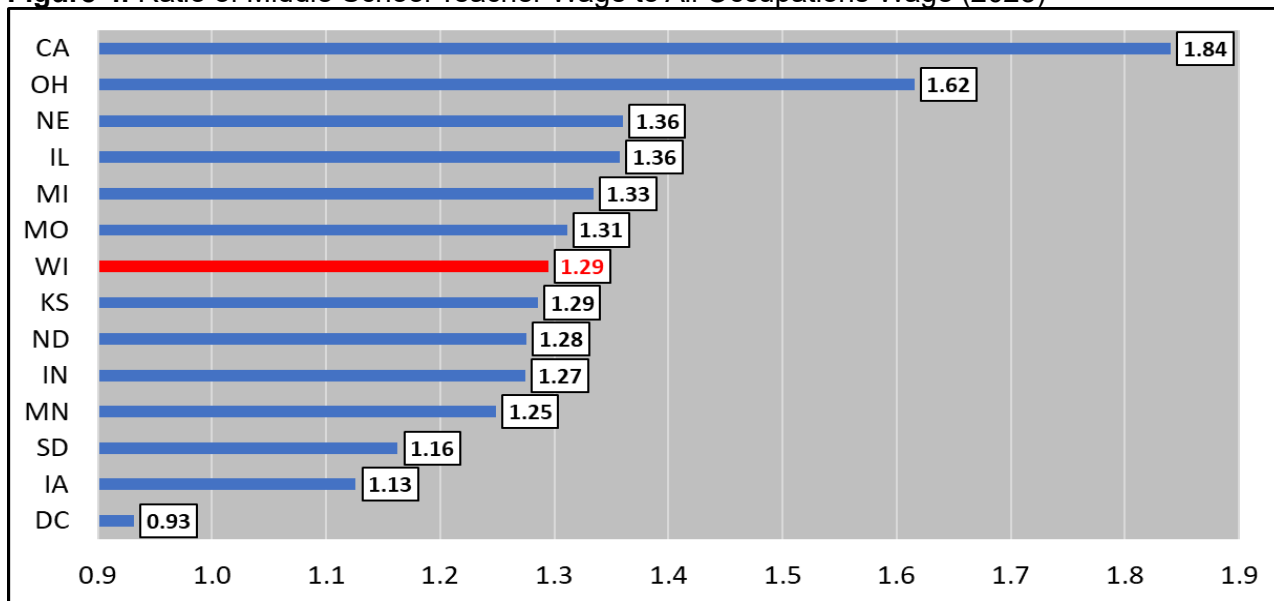
Figure 3. Ratio of Elementary School Teacher Wage to All Occupations Wage (2023)



Source: Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

Note: Annual median is used for elementary school teacher and all occupations wages.

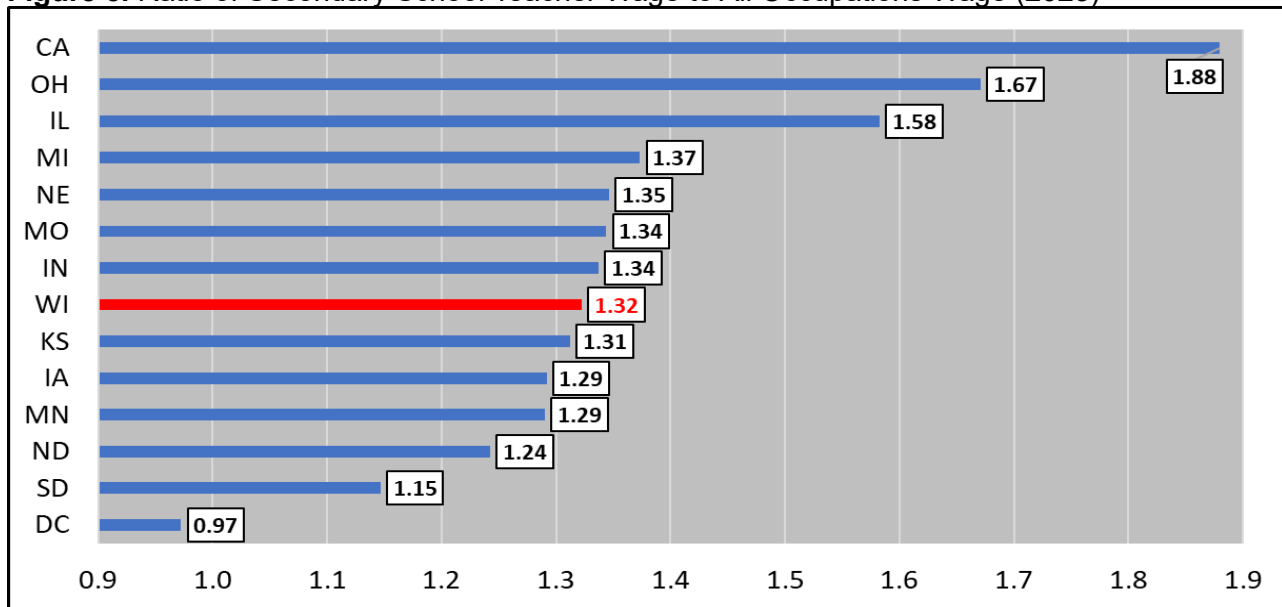
Figure 4. Ratio of Middle School Teacher Wage to All Occupations Wage (2023)



Source: Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

Note: Annual median is used for middle school teacher and all occupations wages.

Figure 5. Ratio of Secondary School Teacher Wage to All Occupations Wage (2023)



Source: Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
 Note: Annual median is used for secondary school teacher and all occupations wages.

Interstate Comparisons - Regional Price Parities

Regional price parities (RPPs) from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) allow for wage comparisons that adjust for differences in the cost of living across states. The below tables show Midwest state teacher pay ranks after adjusting with the RPPs. Additionally, the highest and lowest ranked state nationally in 2023 is shown. The tables are sorted by 2023 rank. Though relatively stable, Wisconsin's ranks have come down (higher number) over the last several years.

Table 1. Rank of Elementary School Teacher Median Annual RPP-Adjusted Wage State Ranks

State	Year					
	2008	2011	2014	2017	2020	2023
Rhode Island	1	1	1	6	4	1
Ohio	3	4	8	9	8	4
Nebraska	31	33	25	14	16	14
Michigan	4	7	2	8	9	17
Iowa	46	25	21	20	24	19
Wisconsin	13	Not Avail.	15	17	23	20
Illinois	8	19	22	24	21	24
Minnesota	25	12	12	13	22	31
North Dakota	26	37	37	29	29	36
Kansas	42	40	43	40	35	40
South Dakota	49	49	48	49	50	42
Indiana	15	24	28	34	40	45
Missouri	40	46	40	41	49	49
Arizona	51	50	51	50	51	51

Source: Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); Regional Price Parities (RPPs), Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

Note: Only 49 states + D.C. have median annual wage in 2011

Table 2. Rank of Middle School Teacher Median Annual RPP-Adjusted Wage State Ranks

State	Year					
	2008	2011	2014	2017	2020	2023
California	9	8	9	9	6	1
Ohio	4	11	7	10	9	4
North Dakota	Not Avail.	Not Avail.	22	14	22	18
Nebraska	24	25	29	11	18	19
Illinois	6	28	10	21	24	23
Michigan	2	10	5	5	13	24
Wisconsin	14	15	16	19	21	26
Kansas	37	38	40	39	31	31
Minnesota	43	18	17	12	23	32
Missouri	35	36	36	40	47	33
Indiana	12	24	25	35	41	35
Iowa	42	20	19	16	26	43
South Dakota	45	49	48	48	50	44
Florida	28	42	47	49	38	51

Source: Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); Regional Price Parities (RPPs), Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

Note: Only 49 states + D.C. have median annual wage in 2008 and 2011

Table 3. Rank of Secondary School Teacher Median Annual RPP-Adjusted Wage State Ranks

State	Year					
	2008	2011	2014	2017	2020	2023
Washington	14	6	12	17	9	1
Ohio	4	8	10	10	7	4
Illinois	1	10	4	15	11	11
Nebraska	33	30	25	18	16	19
North Dakota	37	47	37	33	30	21
Michigan	13	9	8	9	17	22
Iowa	46	33	29	22	22	24
Wisconsin	23	17	18	23	21	25
Minnesota	32	21	14	12	20	28
Missouri	42	48	45	43	50	30
Kansas	43	38	41	41	37	31
Indiana	19	25	27	32	41	32
South Dakota	49	50	50	49	49	50
North Carolina	40	43	51	48	44	51

Source: Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); Regional Price Parities (RPPs), Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

Note: Only 49 states + D.C. have median annual wage in 2020

Conclusion

Wisconsin teacher nominal pay has increased over the years, though not at the rate of other occupations, mirroring the situation in most states. Considering current (2023) teacher pay compared to pay for other occupations in the state, Wisconsin's ratio measure is comparable to other Midwestern states. Wisconsin's latest RPP-adjusted teacher pay figures across all teacher occupations considered rank in the 20s nationally.

Contact [Tom Pethan, Economic Research Unit Lead Worker](#) with any questions on the report.