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Sustaining a System for High-Quality Teachers

Report 2: Market Opportunities and Typical Wages for Austin Independent School District Teachers and Leavers



Department of
Research and Evaluation
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Executive Summary

This report includes two studies that describe the local context for teacher employment decisions. The first examines the local labor market, and the second examines employment for teachers who left Austin Independent School District (AISD). We used publicly available data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), AISD teacher salary schedules, and data obtained via a data-sharing agreement with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to estimate annual wages for AISD teachers and other local professionals. Results suggest a few key findings.

AISD scheduled salaries for teachers with 10 years of experience were less than the mean wages for local area professionals in most occupation groups. The maximum AISD scheduled salary for teachers was less than the mean wages for local area professionals in seven of the 10 relevant major occupation groups identified using BLS and Federal Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system data. However, even AISD teachers who earned the base salary for a teacher with 10 years of experience earned more than the mean salary for local Austin professionals in education, training, and library professions requiring a bachelor's degree.

About half of AISD teachers with 10 years of experience earned more than their scheduled salary. Teachers earned additional wages from athletic, non-athletic, and AISD REACH stipends. They also earned wages for activities such as curriculum writing, teaching summer school, or attending specialized training opportunities. On average, these teachers earned approximately an additional \$5,500.

Of teachers who left AISD and were not eligible to retire, most who were employed the following year worked in education. Take-home wages for leavers were the same, on average, in AISD and local independent school districts (ISDs). We followed a cohort of AISD leavers to determine the wages they earned in AISD and in the following year. After the 2011–2012 school year, approximately 13% of AISD's teachers who were not eligible for retirement left and did not return for the full 2012–2013 school year. Almost half of teacher leavers were fully employed elsewhere in Texas for 2012–2013; the vast majority went to other school districts. AISD teachers could have earned more money in many other local professional occupations. However, most leavers pursued other educational jobs. After accounting for AISD social security contributions, those who went to local school districts took home about the same wages they had in AISD. Thus, other factors likely influenced their decision to leave.

Future studies of AISD human capital should address precursors to departure, alternative reasons for leaving, and recruitment strengths of AISD.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
List of Figures.....	ii
List of Tables	iii
Inset 1. Sustaining a System for High-Quality Teachers	iv
Purpose	1
Study 1: Local Market Opportunities	2
Method	2
Results.....	3
Conclusions	8
Study 2: Typical Wages for AISD Leavers Before and After Leaving AISD 10	
Method	10
Results.....	11
Conclusions	14
Summary and Future Directions	15
Appendix.....	16
References.....	17

List of Figures

Figure 1. AISD teachers with 10 years of experience earned more, On average, than the highest scheduled salary.....	4
Figure 2. AISD teachers could earn more than their scheduled salary through a variety of opportunities.....	5
Figure 3. About half of AISD teachers with 10 years of experience earned almost \$5,500, on average, more than the highest scheduled salary.....	5
Figure 4. Wage comparisons differed dramatically according to whether the source for AISD data was scheduled salary or actual wages, and whether occupational wage data considered entry-level degree requirements.....	8
Figure 5. Fewer than half of AISD teacher leavers from 2011-2012 were employed elsewhere in Texas for the full 2012-2013 school year. ...	11
Figure 6. AISD leavers who were fully employed in 2012-2013 earned \$2,133 less, on average, than they did in AISD.....	12
Figure 7. Teachers who left for other local school districts took home about the same wages as they did in AISD.....	13

List of Tables

Table 1. AISD teachers with 10 years of experience were scheduled to earn \$44,522 to \$48,866.	2
Table 2. Local professionals in two occupation groups earned less than the minimum scheduled salary for AISD teachers with 10 years of experience.	6
Table 3. The salary estimation method yielded mean wage estimates very similar to mean wages teacher leavers actually earned in AISD	10
Table 4. Fully employed and majority employed leavers were slightly less likely than were other leavers to hold an advanced degree or to have been alternatively certified.....	12

Inset 1.

Sustaining a System for High-Quality Teachers

AISD Department of Research and Evaluation Report Series



Teachers are central to the success of any school system, and human capital systems must support high-quality teachers. Teacher turnover costs school districts the time and money associated with recruiting, hiring, and inducting new teachers, and also the collegial relationships and rapport with students that are lost when a teacher leaves.

This research series addresses the *recruitment, development, evaluation, professional career pathways, and retention of high quality-teachers*. The focus is on identifying critical factors that may be addressed through policy and practice.

The following list describes some of the questions to be addressed through this series.

Recruiting and hiring What practices support attracting, selecting, and placing teachers? How competitive is compensation for teachers compared with compensation in the local market? How does teacher preparation influence initial teacher quality?

Professional development and support What resources are available that differentiate teacher development opportunities to meet the needs of all teachers? What role do supportive teaching and learning conditions play in teachers' success?

Evaluation and feedback What policies and practices support the use of high-quality feedback? Which aspects of teacher evaluations are most critical to teachers' success?

Professional pathways What is the impact of differentiated compensation on teachers' effectiveness and retention? What professional opportunities contribute to teachers' development? What pathways offer advancement for teachers who wish to remain in the classroom?

Retention What are the most common, actionable reasons teachers leave AISD? What are the characteristics of typical teachers who leave AISD? Where are teachers employed after they leave AISD? What are the characteristics of schools with high retention rates?

For more information and to read additional reports in this series, please visit <http://www.austinisd.org/dre>.



Purpose

This report includes two studies that examine local wage data to describe earning opportunities for teachers, both within and outside the Austin Independent School District (AISD). Study 1 examines local wages by employment sector, and study 2 examines subsequent employment for teachers who have left AISD.

Both studies examine salary data from multiple sources to estimate annual wages for AISD teachers and other local professionals. We used publicly available Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data, AISD teacher salary schedules, and actual Texas wage data obtained from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) for current and former AISD teachers. Together, these sources allowed us to describe both the earning opportunities that exist in the market, and subsequent earnings for teachers who left AISD.

In the following sections, we provide an overview of each study and its findings, along with conclusions and suggestions for further study.



Study 1: Local Market Opportunities

In February 2015, the Center for American Progress released the publication *Do More, Add More, Earn More*, which highlighted teacher compensation reform at 10 districts across the United States. The report described best practices in these districts, including a recommendation that district starting salaries for teachers be commensurate with market demand. Analyses showed that in many of the 10 first-mover districts, the salaries for proficient teachers were close to the average salaries for employees in other professional occupations in the respective local metropolitan areas. Given the report's recommendation to keep teachers' salaries competitive with salaries of other professional options available to teachers locally, we examined AISD teachers' salaries compared with local Austin area salaries for other professional occupations.

Method

Comparison of AISD teachers' wages with wages of local area professionals required working with wage data from multiple sources. Consequently, techniques for estimating AISD teacher salaries and local area professional occupation salaries are summarized separately.

Estimating AISD teacher salaries

Two sources were used to represent gross AISD teacher salaries: the 2012–2013 salary schedules for AISD teachers, and TWC wage data for 2012 and 2013. For the 2012–2013 school year, the average experience for teachers in AISD was 12 years and the median was 9 years ($N = 5,906$). Consequently, we approximated various combinations of the typical teacher salary in AISD using step 7, 10 years of experience (Table 1).

Table 1.
AISD teachers with 10 years of experience were scheduled to earn \$44,522 to \$48,866.

Experience prior to 07/01/13	Bachelor's degree			Master's degree or doctorate		
	187-day annual salary	Special education (\$1,000)	Bilingual education (\$2,500)	187-day annual salary	Special education (\$1,000)	Bilingual education (\$2,500)
10	\$44,522	\$45,522	\$47,022	\$45,366	\$46,366	\$47,866

Source. AISD 2012–2013 Salary Schedule, pay grade P6-BA and P6-MA/PhD

Note that AISD's compensation system does not differentiate based on teacher effectiveness or other non-traditional criteria, only based on experience; education; and teaching assignment (i.e., general, bilingual [BIL]/English as a second language [ESL], special education). Step increases are given based on years of experience. An additional \$844 is added to the base salary for masters or doctorate degrees, \$1,000 is added to the base salary for special education (SE) assignment, and \$2,500 is added to the base salary for BIL assignment.

In addition to the salary schedule for AISD teachers (which only represents base district salaries plus adjustments for experience, education, and teaching assignment), TWC wage data were used to gather information on actual earnings. The distribution of

actual wages was used to understand differences between actual wages earned and the posted salary schedule. Three general categories of stipends and extra pay account for salaries greater than the AISD teacher salary schedule: (a) athletic stipends and wages, (b) non-athletic stipends and wages, and (c) REACH stipends. Each category included a wide range of duties and associated payouts, and some included extra paid duty days.

To calculate actual annual wages comparable to the AISD step 7 salary schedule, we limited TWC wage data to employees with a teacher job code; 10 years of professional experience; wage data for the entire 2012–2013 school year; and an annual salary greater than or equal to the minimum salary on the AISD teacher schedule (i.e., \$44,522). Although some wages less than the minimum annual salary schedule were included in the TWC data, they were excluded from our analyses to avoid including any part-time or partial-year wages in the full-time annual comparisons.

Estimating local area professional salaries

We determined local professional salaries for the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos metropolitan statistical area (MSA)¹ using 2013 data from the BLS.² BLS provides annual mean wages within MSAs for each occupation that are based on the 2010 federal SOC system. To mirror the professional occupational category reported in the CAP report (2015), we referenced the definition for high-level aggregation 1: management, business, science, and arts occupations from the [2010 SOC User Guide](#). This group encompasses 10 professionally oriented major occupation groups. Therefore, we used annual salary data for these 10 major occupation groups from the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA.

The 10 major occupation groups represent our best approximation of the professional occupations locally available to teachers changing employers or changing careers; however, we recognized that some of the detailed occupations included in the estimates may be out of a teacher's reach upon immediate exit from the teaching workforce. For example, healthcare practitioner occupations (e.g., veterinarians, psychiatrists, and surgeons) require advanced education and training. Consequently, we instead focused on the occupations with bachelor's degree requirements for entry-level employment based on the [BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook's](#) suggested entry-level education requirements.

Local Austin professional salaries were recalculated excluding the detailed occupations that required advanced education and training.

Results for Study 1

Results of the teacher salary analysis and contrasts with local area professional salaries are presented separately. Results of the local area professional salary analysis are in Appendix A, highlighting Austin area salaries by major occupation group and differences when controlling for entry-level education requirements. The AISD teacher

¹ According to the BLS, MSAs (a) consist of one or more counties (or towns and cities in New England), (b) contain a core area with a substantial population that has a high degree of economic and social integration with the surrounding areas, and (c) must have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more inhabitants.

² BLS MSA data does not include salary information for self-employed workers.

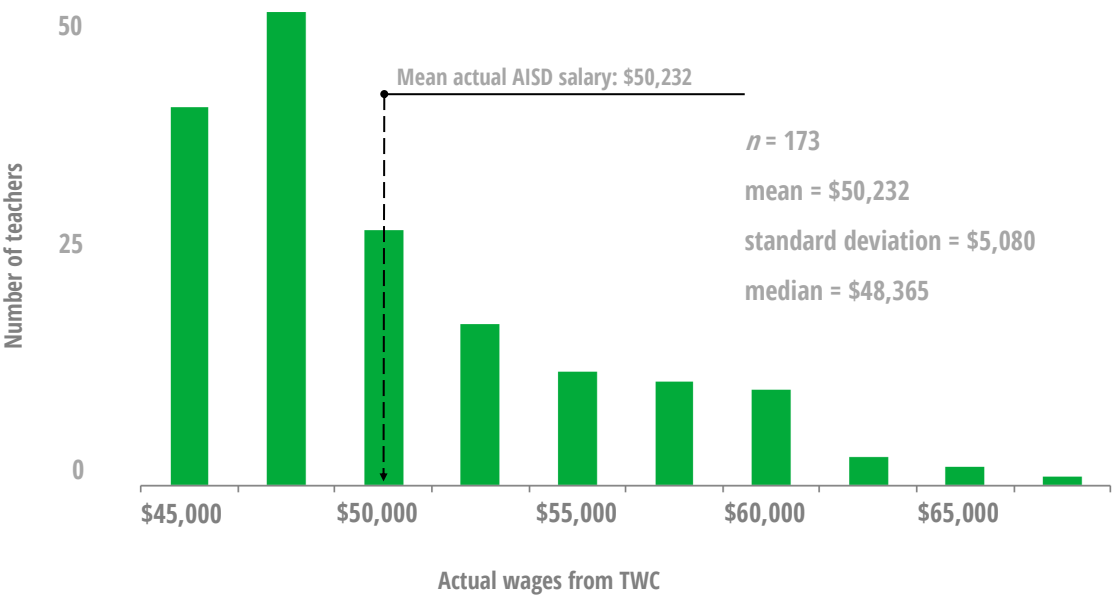
salary analysis highlights the distribution of actual wages earned and the range above the AISD teacher salary schedules attributed to extra pay. Comparisons between AISD teachers and Austin professional occupations emphasize alignment of actual earnings and earning potential for teachers upon immediate exit from the AISD workforce.

AISD teacher salaries

The difference between the minimum and maximum AISD teacher salary schedule for 10 years of experience was \$4,344, representing a differential for a bachelor’s degree (\$44,522) versus a graduate degree with SE and BIL certifications and assignments (\$48,866). Actual wage data for AISD teachers with 10 years of experience revealed that many teachers earned more than their scheduled salaries; consequently, the difference between highest and lowest teacher salaries (\$23,078) was much larger than that shown in the salary schedule. Scheduled earnings did not include additional stipends or wages AISD teachers may have earned, but TWC wage data included all earnings.

The distribution of actual 2012–2013 wages for 173 full-time teachers with 10 years of professional experience (2.9% of AISD teachers in the 2012–2013 school year) is shown in Figure 1. The mean actual salary was about \$1,350 greater than the maximum scheduled salary. For teachers with 10 years of experience, the highest actual salary earned for 2012–2013 was about \$18,700 more than the maximum scheduled earnings. The averages of the top five lowest and highest salaries were, respectively, \$44,685 and \$64,143.

Figure 1.
AISD teachers with 10 years of experience earned more, on average, than the highest scheduled salary.



Source. Texas Workforce Commission 2012–2013 wage data
Note. Raw wage data were rounded to the nearest \$2,500 for grouping in the salary bins shown.

To illustrate how teachers could earn wages greater than the published schedule, three hypothetical cases are described in Figure 2. These represent a few of the many ways teachers could have earned additional wages.

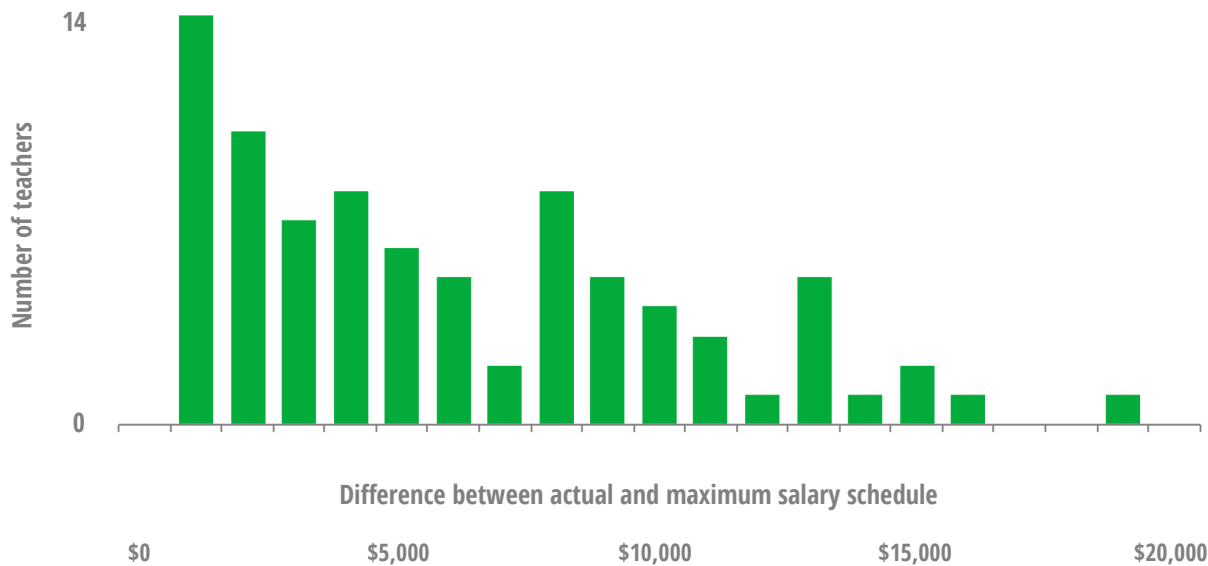
Figure 2.
AISD teachers could earn more than their scheduled salary through a variety of opportunities.



Teachers with extra pay from any category (i.e., athletic stipends and wages, non-athletic stipends and wages, and REACH school stipends) earned an additional \$5,500, on average. However, additional pay could have been upwards of \$10,000, \$15,000, or even \$20,000 more than their scheduled salary.

In the sample of teachers with 10 years of experience, about half ($n = 83$) earned more than the maximum salary schedule for a teacher with a graduate degree and both SE and BIL assignments (i.e., \$48,866). The distribution of the differences between the maximum salary schedule and actual wages earned is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3.
About half of AISD teachers with 10 years of experience earned almost \$5,500, on average, more than the maximum scheduled salary.



Source. Texas Workforce Commission 2012–2013 wage data
 Note. Raw difference data were rounded up to the nearest \$1,000 for grouping into the dollar amounts shown. Of the 83 teachers who earned more than the maximum scheduled salary, 57% worked at schools in the AISD REACH strategic compensation program. The mean difference for REACH teachers was \$6,782, compared with a mean difference of \$3,799 for non-REACH teachers. The actual difference for some REACH teachers likely was even greater than what our study shows, if they earned stipends paid in the 3rd quarter (i.e., campus goals).

To limit salary comparisons to the most realistic estimates at hand, analyses focused on differences between AISD teacher salary schedules, TWC wage data, and Austin area professional occupations with bachelor's degree entry-level requirements.³ Three teacher salary schedules were highlighted: the base salary (BA), the maximum salary (Ma/PhD + SE + BIL), and a common degree and assignment combination (BA + BIL). Austin professional occupations with bachelor's degree entry-level requirements earned an average of \$18,872, \$16,372, and \$14,528 more, respectively, than the salary schedule for AISD teachers with a bachelor's degree, BIL certification/assignment, or a graduate degree and both SE and BIL certifications/assignments (Table 2). AISD teachers with 10 years of experience and the maximum salary schedule were slated to earn more than the average local professional in three groups: (a) community and social service occupations; (b) other education, training, and library occupations; and (c) healthcare practitioner and technical occupations. The largest gap was with

The maximum 2012–2013 salary schedule for AISD teachers with 10 years of experience was less than the salary of local area professionals in seven of the 10 major occupation groups.

Table 2.
Local professionals in two occupation groups earned less than the minimum scheduled salary for AISD teachers with 10 years of experience.
But employees in most occupations earned less than the highest paid AISD teacher with 10 years of experience.

	Differences between local professional wages and...				
	AISD teacher salary schedules			AISD actual wages	
	BA	BA + BIL	Ma/PhD + SE + BIL	Mean	Highest
AISD teachers w/ 10 yrs exp	\$44,522	\$47,022	\$48,866	\$50,232	\$67,605
Professional in Austin	+\$18,872	+\$16,372	+\$14,528	+\$13,162	(\$4,211)
Community and social service	(\$7,082)	(\$9,582)	(\$11,426)	(\$12,792)	(\$30,165)
Education, training, and library	(\$3,088)	(\$5,588)	(\$7,432)	(\$8,798)	(\$26,171)
Healthcare practitioners and technical	+\$2,675	+\$175	(\$1,669)	(\$3,035)	(\$20,408)
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, & media	+\$7,268	+\$4,768	+\$2,924	+\$1,558	(\$15,815)
Legal	+\$11,948	+\$9,448	+\$7,604	+\$6,238	(\$11,135)
Life, physical, and social science	+\$12,671	+\$10,171	+\$8,327	+\$6,961	(\$10,412)
Business and financial operations	+\$24,410	+\$21,910	+\$20,066	+\$18,700	+\$1,327
Architecture and engineering	+\$34,317	+\$31,817	+\$29,973	+\$28,607	+\$11,234
Computer and mathematical	+\$36,921	+\$34,421	+\$32,577	+\$31,211	+\$13,838
Management	+\$67,284	+\$64,784	+\$62,940	+\$61,574	+\$44,201

Source. AISD 2012–2013 Salary Schedule, pay grade P6-BA and P6-MA/PhD, Texas Workforce Commission 2012–2013 wage data, and 2013 Bureau of Labor Statistics data for the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos Metropolitan statistical area

³ The mean salary for professional occupations immediately accessible to the typical AISD teacher was \$9,551 less than the overall mean salary for all professional occupations in Austin. See Appendix A for differences in annual salaries before and after accounting for entry-level requirements. Six major occupation groups were affected by the exclusion of certain occupations with entry-level requirements for advanced degrees. These included research scientists, psychologists, lawyers, judges, college or university professors, and a wide range of medical doctors.

management occupations. The smallest gap (i.e., in which AISD teachers were scheduled to make comparatively less) was with arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations.

We also compared AISD teachers’ actual wages earned with the estimated salaries for the Austin professional occupations immediately accessible to teachers. The far right two columns in Table 2 show the mean and highest actual earnings of an AISD teacher with 10 years of experience, compared with estimated salaries of local Austin area professional occupations with bachelor’s degree entry-level requirements. The average Austin professional earned \$13,162 more than the average AISD teacher with 10 years of experience. Local area professionals in seven out of 10 major occupation groups earned more, on average, than did AISD teachers.

The differences between salaries for local professional occupations and the highest actual AISD salary were dramatic. Figure 4 illustrates the relative salaries for AISD teachers with various scheduled wages plus additional possible AISD wages, compared with the average salaries for other local area professionals with bachelor’s or advanced degree requirements. The highest actual salary a teacher with 10 years of experience earned was about \$4,200 greater than the average professional occupation salary (\$67,605 and \$63,394, respectively). In fact, the highest actual earnings of an AISD teacher with 10 years of experience in 2012–2013 were greater than the average for six out of the 10 major occupation groups. The only four local professional occupation groups that earned more, on average, than did the highest AISD teacher salary were (a) management occupations, (b) computer and mathematical occupations, (c) architecture and engineering occupations, and (d) business and financial operations.

The highest actual salary a teacher with 10 years of experience earned was about \$4,200 greater than the average salary for Austin professionals.

This graphic representation shows how the data sources used to estimate (a) AISD teachers’ earnings and (b) the wages of the local occupations available to AISD teachers can influence judgments about possible financial gain or loss in the local Austin market for AISD teachers. Collectively, the salary analyses demonstrate the potential for AISD teachers to earn more than the salary schedule (e.g., approximately 50% of the TWC

The likelihood of any individual AISD teacher earning more or less money from another job in Austin may vary according to the new occupation group and the stipends earned while in AISD.

sample earned more the maximum salary schedule). Analyses further suggest that the likelihood of any individual AISD teacher experiencing a gain or loss from changing employers or changing careers plausibly depends on (a) the occupation group of the new job and, (b) potentially, where in the range of actual earnings

she or he was in the last year of AISD employment (i.e., earners below the AISD mean salary might experience gains and earners above the mean might experience losses).

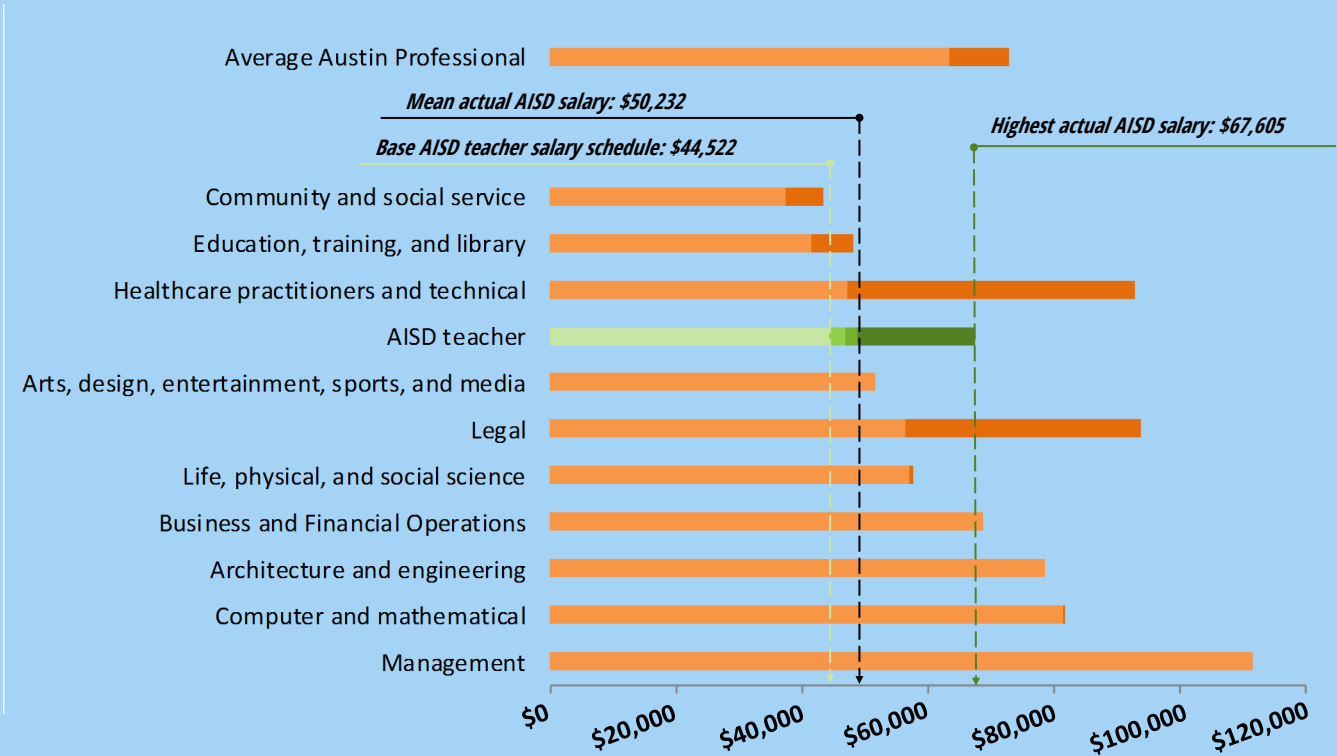
Figure 4.
Wage comparisons differed dramatically according to whether the source for AISD data was scheduled salary or actual wages, and whether occupational wage data considered entry-level degree requirements.

AISD Teachers with 10 Years of Experience:

Base salary + Bilingual assignment + Graduate degree + special education assignment + Other AISD wages

Local Professionals:

BA entry level occupations Graduate degree entry level occupations



Source. AISD 2012–2013 Salary Schedule, pay grade P6-BA and P6-MA/PhD, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) 2012–2013 wage data, and 2013 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data for the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA
Note. AISD salary schedules are based on 2012–2013 AISD teacher salary schedules for pay grades P6-BA and P6-Ma/PhD. Actual AISD teacher salaries are based on wage data obtained from the TWC for full-time teachers in 2012–2013 with 10 years of experience. Austin professional occupations and associated salary estimates are based on BLS data.

Conclusions for Study 1

Our BLS estimates suggest that regardless of earnings in the last year of active employment in AISD, teachers have the potential to gross more annually (in the long run even if not immediately) if they enter the Austin workforce in the (a) management, (b) computer and mathematical, (c) architecture and engineering, or (d) business and financial occupations. However, AISD teachers have the potential to earn less than their last year of active AISD employment if they enter the Austin workforce in the (a) healthcare; (b) other education, training, and library; or (c) community and social service occupations. For AISD teachers who leave the district to work locally in the (a) life, physical, and social science; (b) legal; or (c) arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations, the gain or loss in salary might partially depend upon whether they were a high earner in AISD relative to peers in their step prior to changing careers.

Redefining the Teacher Wages Research Problem

It should be noted that (a) management; (b) business and financial operations; (c) computer and mathematical; (d) architecture and engineering; and (e) arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupation groups included very few detailed occupations requiring more than a bachelor's degree for entry-level employment. Two potential implications might be considered. First, these five occupation groups with bachelor degree requirements for entry-level positions could be the most teacher-accessible local occupations out of the 10 examined, with the exception of parallel employers within the same education, training, and library occupations. Second, it could be presumed that the entry-level salaries of these occupation groups are less than the means calculated for each occupation group. Analyses could not account for differences in wages between upper- or mid-level positions and entry-level positions within qualifying occupation groups.

Before adjusting for both actual teacher earnings and earnings of the occupations immediately accessible to teachers, the comparison of AISD teacher salaries with local Austin area professionals appeared to demonstrate a considerably large financial deficit for AISD teachers. For example, before adjusting the BLS salary estimates of Austin professional occupations for entry-level degree requirements, the highest paying step 7 2012–2013 AISD teacher salary schedule was lower than the average for nine out of 10 Austin occupations and was about \$23,000 less, on average, than the local Austin professional salary. However, comparison of actual AISD teacher salaries earned with the subset of Austin professional occupations with bachelor's degree entry-level requirements revealed a different story.

Approximately 50% of AISD teachers with 10 years of experience in 2012–2013 earned more than the maximum salary schedule after additional stipends were accounted for in their earnings. The mean actual 2012–2013 AISD teacher salary was greater than the average for three out of the 10 Austin professional occupation groups and was more than \$7,000 greater than the average estimated salary for education, training, and library occupations in the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA. The mean of the top five highest salaries in 2012–2013 for teachers with 10 years of experience in the TWC data (i.e., \$64,143) was greater than the average for six out of the 10 Austin area occupations when controlling for education and training, and, exceeded the adjusted group mean (\$63,394) and median (\$56,832) of all local Austin area professional occupations.

When making comparisons between AISD teacher salaries and the professional occupations available to teachers in the local Austin area, it is important to compare what teachers actually earned (including all additional stipends) with the salaries of the occupations reasonably available to those teachers in the local market place. Failing to account for observed differences between scheduled and actual earnings, in addition to salary differences between local occupational groups, can portray a dramatically different financial opportunity in the local job market for AISD teachers. To further explore the actual earning opportunities for AISD teachers, as well as the actual occupations that AISD teachers enter after changing employers, we studied the earnings of a cohort of 2011–2012 teacher leavers in their last year at AISD relative to their actual earnings in subsequent employment situations during 2012–2013.

Study 1 addressed a critical question regarding the competitiveness of AISD teacher salaries with salaries for other local professions. The answer informs a key policy decision: whether AISD should consider paying teachers more to improve retention.

Study 1 suggested the competitiveness of AISD teacher salaries depends on both actual AISD take-home pay (including stipends and other wages above and beyond the scheduled salary) and the occupations into which teachers enter after AISD.

Study 1 also highlighted a critical problem of definition in the study of AISD wages. AISD salary tables do not accurately reflect what teachers actually earn after stipends and extra duty opportunities are considered. Additionally, unadjusted BLS local occupation salary estimates neither reflect the wages possible for the subset of occupations accessible to teachers, given education requirements, nor reflect the wages actually earned by former AISD teachers employed in those occupations. Furthermore, the two publicly available wage data sources shed no light on which occupations former AISD teachers actually leave for.

Therefore, to understand what AISD teachers actually earn while at AISD and to compare those earnings with their earnings elsewhere after leaving AISD, it was necessary to study a cohort of teacher leavers using TWC wage data. This was the task of study 2.

Study 2: Typical Wages for AISD Leavers Before and After Leaving AISD

Next, we examined the employment patterns of AISD leavers, including the wages they earned elsewhere and the sectors they entered after leaving the district. After the 2011–2012 school year, approximately 13% of AISD’s teachers who were not eligible for retirement left the district and did not return for the full 2012–2013 school year ($n = 572$).⁴ Using wage data obtained from the TWC, we analyzed their subsequent employment and wages.⁵ Leavers who were not eligible for retirement and who were employed in AISD all quarters of 2011–2012 earned \$48,790 that year, on average. The following case study describes wages teachers earned before and after leaving AISD.

Method

Teachers were included in the following analysis if they earned wages only from AISD during all four quarters of the 2011–2012 school year. The resulting study sample ($n = 437$) earned slightly higher wages in AISD in 2011–2012 than did the larger group (\$49,106 and \$48,790, respectively, or a difference of \$316). Although actual annual wages were available in the TWC data, we did not assume teachers would leave AISD for employment elsewhere without a gap in employment. Even among those with wages for all four quarters before and after leaving AISD, quarterly wages suggested a gap between jobs. Therefore, to make comparisons of salaries before and after leaving AISD, we estimated annual salaries based on the average of wages earned in the final three quarters of the school year: quarter 4 (October–December), quarter 1 (January–March), and quarter 2 (April–June). This method yielded estimated annual wages that were quite similar to actual annual wages teachers earned while employed in AISD (Table 3).

Table 3.
The salary estimation method yielded mean wage estimates very similar to mean wages teacher leavers actually earned in AISD.

School year	Mean actual AISD wages	Mean estimated AISD wages	Estimated minus actual
2011–2012	\$49,106	\$49,083	- \$23

Source. Texas Workforce Commission wage data

⁴ We computed retirement eligibility based on years of teaching experience and birth date, according to the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) definition for eligibility. Of the 5,593 teachers who were employed in AISD the entire 2011–2012 school year (i.e., those who earned wages in all four quarters), 1,073 (19%) were eligible for retirement.

⁵ This study is part of an ongoing series examining employment patterns of teachers who left AISD between 2007–2008 and 2012–2013. Because wage data were not yet available for the entire 2013–2014 school year, this study examined the 2012–2013 wages for AISD leavers from 2011–2012.

⁶ Estimated 2011–2012 wages less than the minimum possible AISD annual teacher salary and estimated 2012–2013 wages less than \$30,000 suggest 12 leavers likely were employed less than full time or used significant leave without pay at some point during either school year. Although data were not available to verify this assumption, these leavers were excluded from the annual wage comparison.

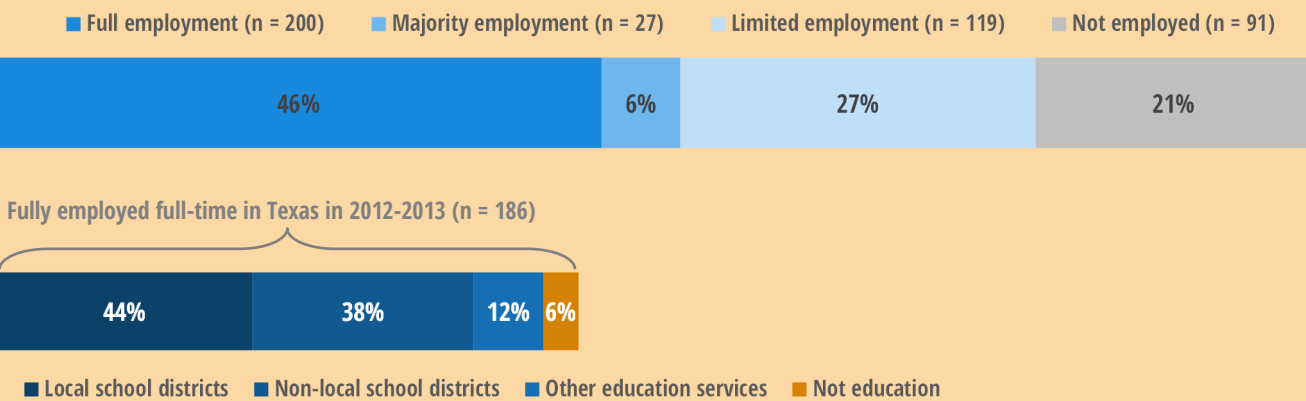
We compared estimated annual wages for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 to determine whether teachers earned more or less in the year following their departure from AISD. Because our data did not specify the level of employment (i.e., full time or part time), those identified as employed in Texas after leaving AISD were limited to leavers who earned at least the minimum wage at 20 hours a week.

Results for Study 2

There were 437 teacher leavers from 2011–2012. More than half were employed in Texas for at least the majority of the 2012–2013 school year, but almost one fourth were not employed in Texas (Figure 5). The vast majority of teacher leavers who worked in the year after leaving AISD pursued jobs in education. Only 6% (*n* = 11) of fully employed leavers were employed outside the educational services sector. The remaining leavers were nearly evenly divided between local independent school districts and a variety of other educational service employers, including community colleges, assessment companies, and school districts outside the local area.

Of the 437 teachers who left AISD for 2011–2012 for reasons other than retirement, fewer than half were employed in Texas the entire 2012–2013 school year.

Figure 5.
Fewer than half of AISD teacher leavers from 2011–2012 were employed elsewhere in Texas for the full 2012–2013 school year.
Very few leavers employed full time for the entire 2012–2013 school year left the field of education.



Full employment = wages reported all four quarters of 2012–2013 school year
Majority employment = wages reported for Q4 of 2012, Q1 and Q2 of 2013
Limited employment = wages reported for one or two quarters of 2012–2013 school year
Not employed = no wages reported in Texas during 2012–2013 school year

Source. Texas Workforce Commission 2012–2013 wage data
Note. Local school districts included Bastrop, Del Valle, Dripping Springs, Eanes, Hayes Consolidated, Leander, Manor, Pflugerville, and Round Rock. Estimated 2011–2012 wages less than the minimum AISD annual teacher salary and estimated 2012–2013 wages less than \$30,000 suggest 12 leavers likely were employed less than full time or used significant leave without pay at some point during either school year.

We examined the characteristics of fully employed leavers and leavers who were not employed in Texas or were employed in Texas less than the full 2012–2013 school year. Leavers employed for at least the majority of the 2012–2013 school year were slightly less likely than were those with limited or no employment to hold an advanced degree or to have been alternatively certified (Table 4).

Table 4.

Fully employed and majority employed leavers were slightly less likely than were other leavers to hold an advanced degree or to have been alternatively certified.

Teacher characteristic	Full employment (<i>n</i> = 200)	Majority employment (<i>n</i> = 27)	Limited employment (<i>n</i> = 119)	Not employed (<i>n</i> = 91)
Years experience	6.5 yrs	7.4 yrs	5.1 yrs	6.9 yrs
Advanced degree	21%	22%	45%	29%
Alternatively certified	26%	30%	36%	33%

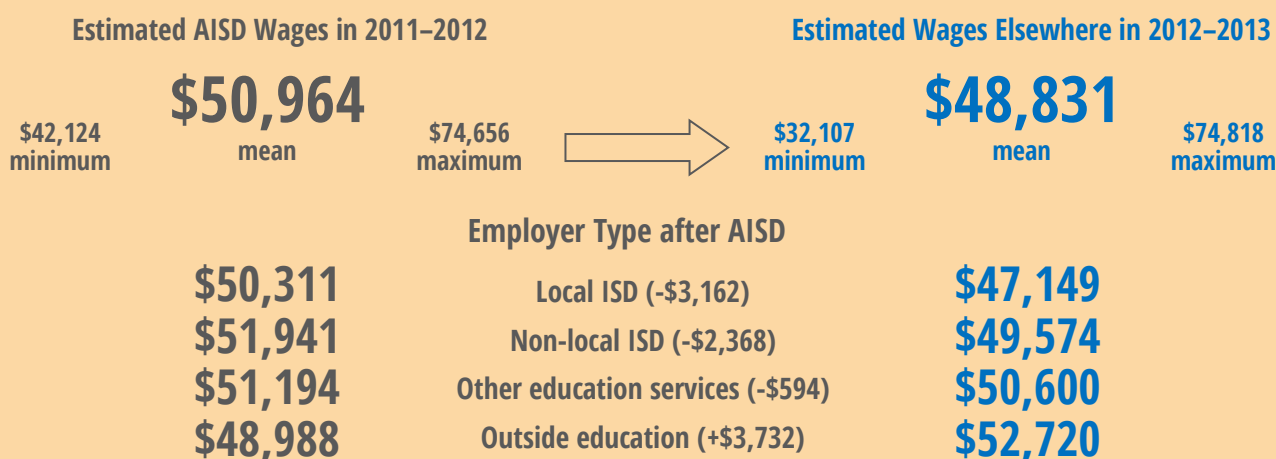
Source. Texas Workforce Commission wage data, AISD human resources data

Before considering the issue of take-home pay, the AISD leavers who were fully employed in the 2012–2013 school year earned less, on average, than they had in AISD (Figure 6). Their maximum estimated annual salaries were similar before and after teachers left AISD. The teachers' minimum estimated annual salary was about \$10,000 lower after leaving AISD than the minimum they had earned in AISD. At first glance, it appeared that teachers left AISD for lower wages.

Figure 6.

AISD leavers who were fully employed in 2012–2013 earned \$2,133 less, on average, than they did in AISD.

But estimated wages did not consider that AISD employees took home a lower percentage of pay than did employees in most other independent school districts and education services, due to Social Security deductions.



Source. Texas Workforce Commission wage data

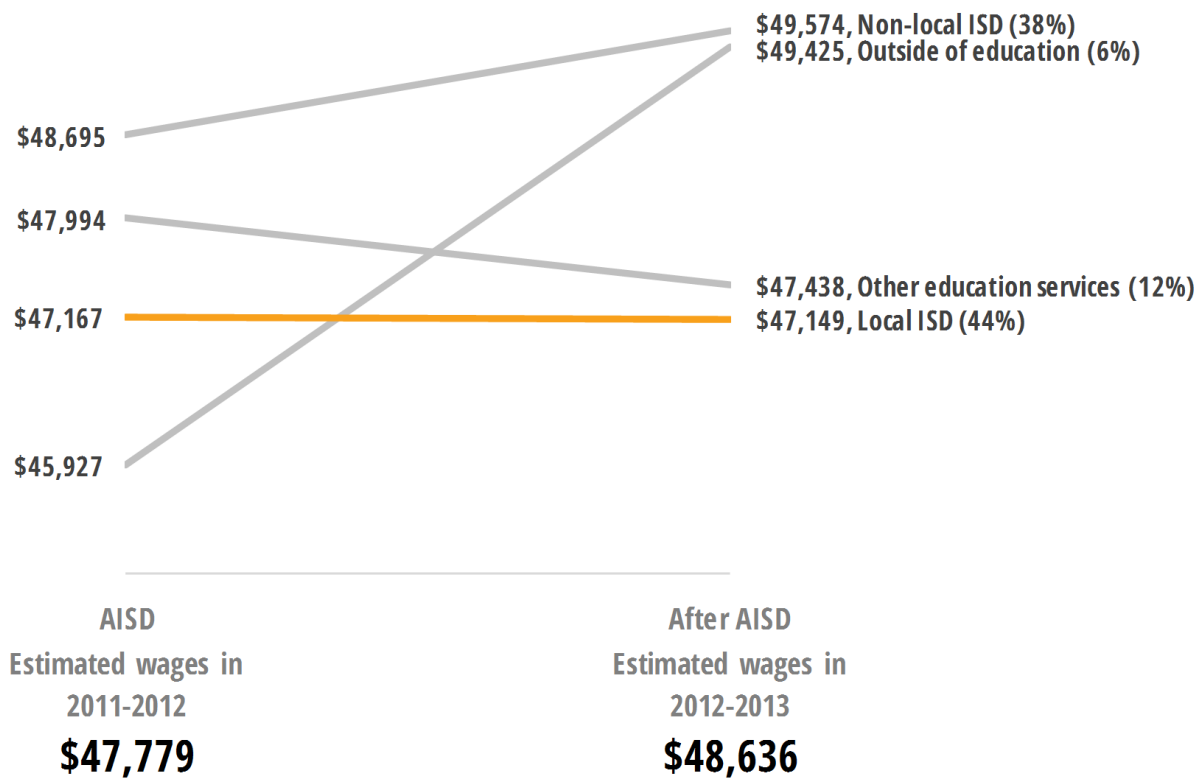
Note. Wage data in this analysis were limited to teacher leavers who were employed in AISD all four quarters of 2011–2012, earned estimated wages at or above the minimum AISD teacher salary, and were full time as of May 2012. Leavers who earned less than 30,000 after AISD were excluded; however, teachers included in the analysis may have been employed in all four quarters of either year, with some employed less than full time.

In Texas, AISD is one of only 17 school districts that participates in Social Security for full-time employees (“Texas public school districts that participate in Social Security,” 2015). Therefore, the take-home pay for teachers in AISD is reduced relative to that of teachers with comparable salaries in 1,230 other public school districts. None of the local school districts in the AISD area participate in Social Security. Consequently, AISD faces a competitive disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining teachers who are relatively new to the workforce. Although AISD retirees may receive benefits

from both Social Security and the Teacher Retirement System of Texas, full Social Security benefits are not available to employees with fewer than 30 years of Social Security contributions. In fact, teachers who have contributed 20 or fewer years receive only 40% of the full Social Security benefit. Thus, comparisons of wages must consider the relative take-home pay teachers earn in AISD versus other options.

After adjusting AISD wages to account for the Social Security deduction, teachers who left AISD for other educational employment earned slightly more (~\$850) than they had in AISD (Figure 7).⁷ The difference between take-home wages in AISD and in other local independent school districts was negligible (< \$20).

Figure 7.
Teachers who left for other local school districts took home about the same wages as they did in AISD.
But teachers who left for other jobs in education took home a little more.



Source. Texas Workforce Commission wage data
Note. AISD, other education services, and outside of education occupation wages in this figure reflect take-home wages after the Social Security deduction. Wage data in this analysis were limited to teacher leavers who were employed in AISD all four quarters of 2011–2012, earned estimated wages at or above the minimum AISD teacher salary, and were full time as of May 2012. Teachers included in the analysis may have been employed in all four quarters of either year, with some employed less than full time.

⁷ Only 17 Texas public school districts and charter schools participate in Social Security for full-time employees. However, we did not know the number of other education service employers who participate in Social Security. Therefore, the comparison between adjusted AISD wages and unadjusted wages for other education services must be interpreted with caution.

Conclusions for Study 2

Study 2 explored the actual wages a cohort of AISD teachers earned before (i.e., 2011–2012) and after (2012–2013) leaving AISD, and documented the actual industry sectors teachers entered after leaving AISD. Approximately 94% of teachers who left AISD after 2011–2012 changed employers but remained in the education services sector.

The prior analyses of local market opportunities for AISD teachers (i.e., study 1) suggested actual earnings, as opposed to salary schedules, are necessary for accurate descriptions of teacher earnings. Furthermore, study 1 suggested the actual increase or decrease in salary after AISD employment would be influenced by occupation group. However, despite the potential for earning greater pay in other occupation groups, study 2 revealed teachers who remained in the Texas workforce typically did not switch from education to another higher-paying occupation.

Study 1 indicated teachers entering into other education occupations within the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA would likely earn less than they did in their last year of active full-time employment as a teacher in AISD. At first glance, results from study 2 supported this assertion. Wage data obtained from the TWC showed that, on average, former AISD teachers earned approximately \$2,100 less after leaving AISD. However, annual wage estimates did not account for the competitive disadvantage AISD faces due to the Social Security deduction.

After adjusting to allow for comparisons in take-home pay, data showed teachers who left for subsequent employment in local school districts brought home approximately the same wages before and after leaving the district. This finding is perhaps the most critical from these studies. Unlike teachers who left for employment in non-local school districts, those who left AISD for local school districts were not required to move beyond the local area. Rather, they switched employers within the area and took home about the same amount, on average, as they did in AISD.

AISD teacher salaries appeared competitive with the local market opportunities teachers. Thus, data support the conclusion that teacher turnover depends not on money, but on other factors. Finally, study 2 indicated local market opportunities outside the field of education were largely irrelevant.

Teachers who remained in the Texas workforce did not switch from education to another higher-paying occupation, nor did they leave AISD for other educational jobs that paid more.



Summary and Future Directions

In this report, we presented two studies that described the local context for teachers' employment decisions. In sum, AISD teachers could have earned more money in many other local professional occupations. However, most leavers who pursued employment took educational jobs that at first glance paid less than they earned in AISD. After adjustments to take-home pay, data showed leavers who pursued jobs in local school districts earned pay comparable to what they earned in take-home pay at AISD. Thus, AISD teacher salaries on the whole appeared competitive with the local education opportunities.

Teachers who were attracted to AISD in the first place did not leave the district for higher pay. However, these studies did not address the factors contributing to recruitment of teachers into AISD. In the absence of information such as actual wage data from the TWC, teachers must consider a multitude of other factors when selecting their initial employment in the Austin area education market. District salary schedules, benefits, and working conditions certainly influence initial employment in AISD, and all are likely to influence subsequent decisions to leave. The wages AISD teachers earn through stipends and opportunities outside the salary schedule represent additional workload that may not be required to earn comparable wages elsewhere.

Future studies in this report series will examine the potential precursors to initial employment in AISD, look for factors that trigger a decision to leave, and compare the characteristics of teachers who leave with the characteristics of those who stay. Finally, future studies will also estimate the financial and other costs of turnover in AISD.

Appendix A

Table A shows the 10 professionally oriented major occupation groups under high-level aggregation 1: Management, Business, Science, and Arts Occupations from the *2010 SOC User Guide*. Salaries within major occupation group and high-level aggregation are shown using BLS data for the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA. Also shown are the salaries for the subset of occupations within each major occupation group (and overall for the high-level aggregation) based on the *BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook's* suggested entry-level education requirements per detailed occupation.

Table A.
Mean BLS Salaries for the Entire Occupation Group and the Subset of Occupations With Bachelor's Degree Entry-level Requirements.

Major occupation group	Overall mean salary	Difference	Mean salary for subset with bachelors entry requirement
Overall Austin Professional	\$72,945	-\$9,551	\$63,394
Community and social service	\$43,575	-\$6,134	\$37,440
Education, training, and library	\$48,135	-\$6,701	\$41,434
Healthcare practitioners and technical	\$92,912	-\$45,714	\$47,197
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	\$51,790	\$0	\$51,790
Legal	\$93,981	-\$37,511	\$56,470
Life, physical, and social science	\$57,889	-\$696	\$57,193
Business and financial operations occupations	\$68,932	\$0	\$68,932
Architecture and engineering	\$78,839	\$0	\$78,839
Computer and mathematical	\$81,590	-\$148	\$81,443
Management occupations	\$111,806	\$0	\$111,806

Source. 2013 BLS data for the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Author

Lisa Schmitt, Ph.D.

Shaun Hutchins, Ph.D.

Department of Research and Evaluation



1111 West 6th Street, Suite D-350 | Austin, TX 78703-5338
512.414.1724 | fax: 512.414.1707
www.austinisd.org/dre | Twitter: @AISD_DRE

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