



NEW YORK STATE TEACHER CERTIFICATION GUIDE

TEACH
MAKE A DIFFERENCE



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1 EARN YOUR NEW YORK TEACHING CREDENTIAL



If you're considering teaching in **New York State**, it's important to learn about all the requirements to receive your **teaching credential**, also known as teaching certification or a teaching certificate. A teaching credential proves that you have satisfied the academic, testing and experience requirements to **become a teacher** in the state of New York. The certification process is adminis-

tered through the New York State Office of Teaching Initiatives, which is an agency within the state's education department.

Before you can satisfy teaching certification requirements, you must determine which type of certificate makes sense for your academic background and career goals. Teaching certificates are defined by the following categories:

TYPE

This refers to your level of education and teaching experience. The types most commonly earned are **initial and professional**, but several additional categories are available for conditional and specialty certifications, such as adult, community and continuing education.

GRADE LEVEL

New York teachers are certified to teach specific grade levels. Categories include early childhood (up to second grade), childhood (first through sixth grade), middle childhood (fifth through ninth grades) and adolescent (seventh through twelfth grades). There is also a category for each grade.

SUBJECT AREA

This refers to the subject or content area that you will teach, such as math, English or biology.

TITLE

This is a combination of grade level and subject area, such as childhood education or math, grades seven through twelve.



Once you have determined the title of the certification that you want to earn, you should learn more about requirements for certification. Entry-level classroom teachers begin their New York teaching career with the initial certificate, which requires a bachelor's degree and completion of a **teacher preparation program** approved by the New York State Education Department or equivalent course work combined with at least 40 days of student teaching.

Before an initial certificate is awarded, teachers must complete a series of **New York State Certification Exams**. In most cases, this includes the Liberal Arts and Sciences Test and Assessment of Teaching Skills for either elementary or secondary grade levels. A subject area test, known as the Content Specialty Test is also required. Teachers who want to teach in specialty areas such as bilingual education are required to pass an additional content test.

After all certification requirements are met, the initial certificate is valid for five years. Before the certificate expires, New York teachers are expected to earn a professional certificate. After earning this certification, teachers must maintain their credential by satisfying a **professional development** requirement of 175 hours every five years.

Visit the New York State Education Department's **Office of Teaching Initiatives website** to read descriptions of available types of certificates and licenses and learn all of the requirements for certification.

NEW YORK TEACHING CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

There are different sets of requirements (referred to as pathways) for each certificate title. For example, the childhood education title has separate pathways for teachers who complete New York State-approved teacher education programs, teachers who are taking advantage of interstate reciprocity and teachers who have National Board Certification.

APPLYING FOR CERTIFICATION

Teachers who are applying for initial certification must pass a set of examinations. In 2012, the New York State Board of Regents approved a new set of testing regulations that will take effect in April 2014. Until then, teaching candidates can take either the current set of exams or the new set. Teachers and teaching candidates who want to **teach in New York** should visit the New York **State Teacher Certification Examinations** website for more information about exams.

Once all requirements for the certificate are complete, the certification application process can begin. Applications are completed through the online **TEACH system**. Supporting documentation, including official transcripts, exam scores and copies of certifications from other states, must be submitted by mail. After the application has been completed, it will be reviewed by a certification specialist. Applicants can return to the TEACH website to check on the status of their evaluation.

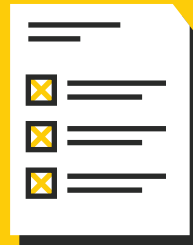
In addition to submitting supporting documentation, applicants must pay a certification fee (currently \$91.50) and complete a fingerprint clearance. If no criminal history is found, certification will be issued. (Teachers with a criminal history can request special consideration with proof of good conduct and rehabilitation.) Only higher-level certifications, such as professional, are mailed to recipients. For initial certification, which is classified as temporary, school districts can access the TEACH system to verify a teacher's certification status. Classroom teachers who receive an initial certificate have five years to complete the requirements for the professional certificate before their certification expires.

PREREQUISITE COURSEWORK IN NEW YORK

NEW YORK TEACHERS CAN FOLLOW ONE OF THREE PATHS TO TEACHER CERTIFICATION:



Completion of a bachelor's or master's level teacher program;



Evaluation of credentials (for experienced teachers who satisfy all certification requirements); OR



Completion of an approved alternative teacher preparation program.

For each of these paths, specific coursework requirements must be completed before certification is granted by the New York State Education Department.

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (GRADES 1 THROUGH 6)

Teaching in New York at the elementary school level requires six semester hours in each of these subject areas: history and social sciences, mathematical processes, scientific processes and pedagogical core courses. Three semester hours in teaching literacy skills are also required. In addition, **elementary school teachers** must complete two training workshops related to school violence and child abuse. Each workshop is two hours in length.

SECONDARY EDUCATION (GRADES 7 THROUGH 12)

Teachers who want to work in **middle schools** and **high schools** in New York must complete 30 semester hours of core courses in liberal arts and science, and 21 semester hours in pedagogical core courses. A minimum of 30 semester hours in the target subject area is also required. Completion of two training workshops related to child abuse and school violence is an additional requirement.

Secondary school teachers are required to complete at least 40 hours of student training, which is usually included in a teacher preparation program. Teachers who want to work at the secondary school level must complete their student training in the subject area that they want to teach.

The New York State Education Department Office of Teaching Initiatives provides an **online search tool** that allows teachers to find the specific requirements for all types of New York State teacher certifications, including 30 different secondary school subjects and special education.

ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Approved **alternative teacher programs** are designed for competent professionals in other fields who already have a bachelor's degree and want to become a teacher in New York. Coursework is delivered in an accelerated format and focuses on teaching skills. In order to be admitted to an alternative program, teaching candidates must have majored in the subject in which they will be certified to teach (for secondary school teachers) or majored in liberal arts and science (for elementary school teachers).

REQUIRED TESTS FOR NEW YORK



The examination component of New York State Teacher Certification helps ensure that New York teachers have the knowledge and skills required to serve in public school classrooms. Exams cover liberal arts and science, teaching theory and practice, and specialty subject areas. Here is an overview of the main certification tests required to become a teacher in New York (the format of these tests is multiple-choice, with a written component included for each test):

LAST (Liberal Arts and Sciences Test): This test assesses teachers' knowledge in science, math and the humanities. It also tests research and analysis skills, communication and expression.

CST (Content Specialty Test): This test measures a teacher's competency in the subject area that is being certified (e.g. math, English or biology).

ATS-W (Assessment of Teaching Skills – Written): There are both elementary and secondary variants of this test, which measures a teachers' pedagogical and professional knowledge for the grade level they want to teach.

Note that these test requirements will be in effect until May 1, 2014. Teaching candidates applying for certification after May 1, 2014, will be required to take a different set of tests that will include the Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST), Educating All Students Test (EAS) and Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA). The Content Specialty Test (CST) will remain a requirement.

The New York State Education Department contracts with Pearson for administration of certification exams. **Test sites** for paper-based testing are located throughout the state, and **test dates** are scheduled six times per year. Some tests may be taken in either a paper-based or a computer-based format. Testing by computer is recommended for teacher candidates who are out of state or who need test scheduling flexibility, although test fees are higher for computer-based testing than for paper-based tests (\$149 and \$79, respectively). Four hours are allotted for completion of each test, regardless of whether the format is paper-based or computer-based.

There are additional exam requirements for special types of certifications, such as bilingual education. For more information about specific examinations that are required for teaching in New York, visit the New York State Education Department **Office of Teaching Initiatives website and the New York State Teacher Certification Examination (NYSTCE) website.**

NEW YORK TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

The pathway to **New York teacher certification** includes completion of an approved teacher preparation program. In order to be approved, a program must satisfy all **coursework requirements** for teacher certification and must be registered with the New York State Education Department.

THERE ARE TWO MAIN TYPES OF APPROVED PREPARATION PROGRAMS FOR NEW YORK TEACHERS



The first type is offered by a college or university and targets either undergraduate or graduate students. **The New York State Teacher Preparation Institutions website** includes a list of 114 schools in the state with approved teacher preparation programs.

The second type of certification program for teaching in New York follows the alternative preparation model. This type of program is designed for mid-career professionals who have a desire to become a teacher in New York and involves a partnership between a college and a local school district. After completing an accelerated initial component, teaching candidates are employed to teach while completing additional coursework for certification.

ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION IN NEW YORK

In order to attract competent professionals who have a bachelor's degree in a subject area where they'd like to teach but lack teacher training, New York State has approved alternative teacher preparation (ATP) programs. These programs are designed to support mid-career professionals who are transitioning to new careers as New York teachers.

There are two categories of ATP programs: Transitional B and Transitional C. Transitional B programs are intended for applicants with undergraduate degrees in the subject area of certification. Transitional C programs are for applicants who hold graduate degrees in the certification subject.

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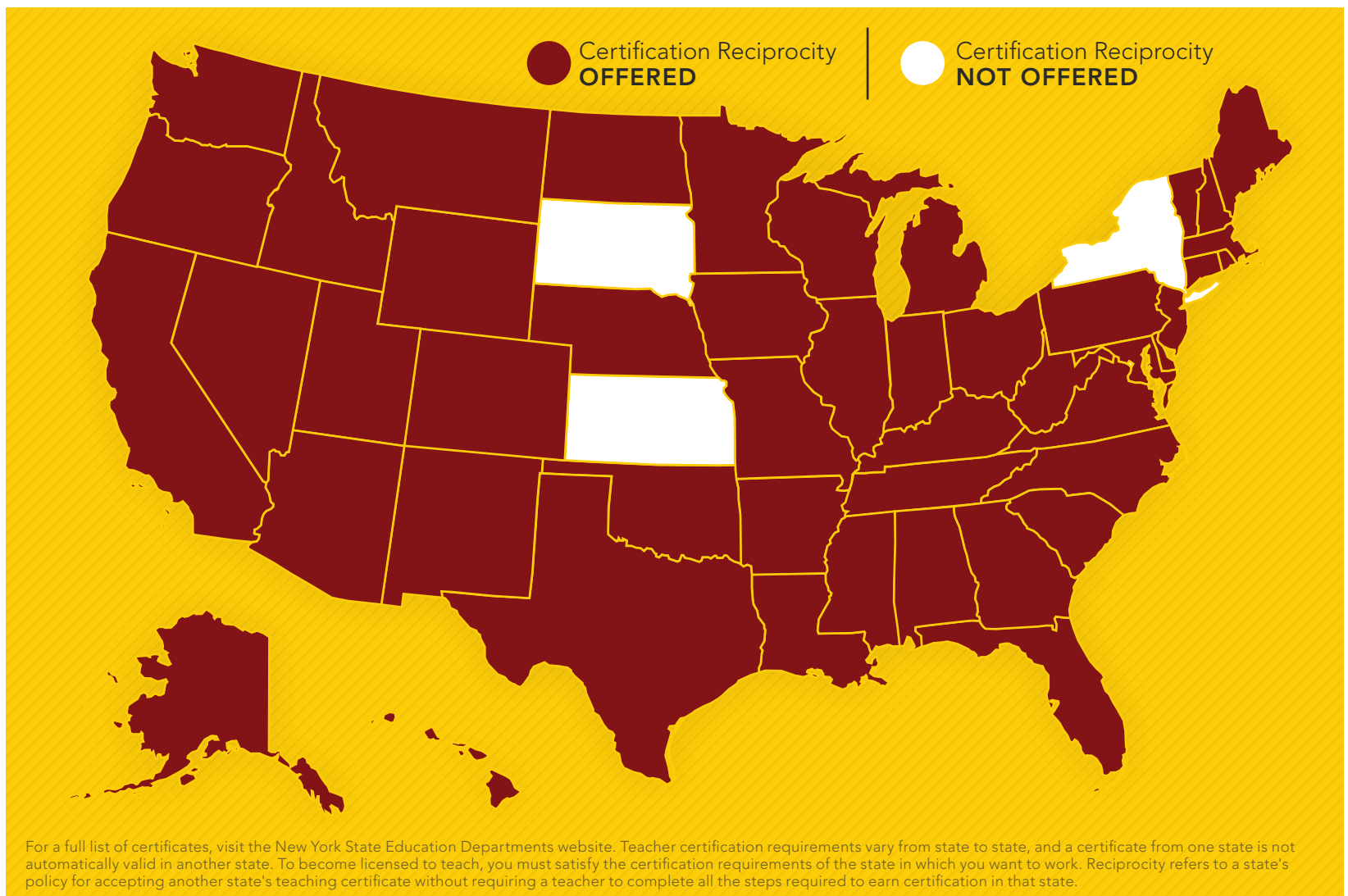
TRANSITIONAL B CERTIFICATION is intended for teacher candidates with bachelor's degrees. Before classroom teaching begins, candidates must complete 200 hours of introductory course work that includes 40 hours of student teaching. Candidates also must pass New York State Teacher Certification exams. While teaching, the candidate completes all remaining course work for certification while receiving mentoring support from the alternative program and the school district. When all requirements have been satisfied, the candidate can apply for initial certification and begin to work on the requirements for professional certification.

TRANSITIONAL C CERTIFICATION is for candidates with master's or professional graduate degrees. The certification allows candidates to begin teaching after completing a two-hour workshop on school violence and a two-hour workshop on child abuse and passing required New York State Teacher certification examinations. After receiving certification, the candidate must complete three years of teaching and satisfy pedagogical core course work requirements before receiving professional certification.

A professional who wants to become a teacher in New York City can take advantage of several alternative programs for certification offered by the New York City Department of Education, including NYC Teaching Residency, NYC Teaching Fellows, I-START Urban Teacher Residency and Math for America Fellowship. For more information, visit the **Alternative Routes to Certification page** on the New York City Department of Education website.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION RECIPROCITY

Through **interstate reciprocity**, the New York State Education Department issues a conditional certificate for some certificates from the following states:





Reciprocity encourages teacher mobility, allowing teachers to move across state lines to areas where there is high need for qualified teachers. It does not allow a teacher to transfer certification from one state to another state, but it does create a pathway for earning short-term certification that allows a teacher to work while completing additional requirements for full certification in their new state.

The New York State Education Department allows interstate reciprocity both for teachers who are certified to teach in another state and for graduates of **teacher education programs** that satisfy the requirements for certification in another state. In both cases, the certification candidate must have earned a bachelor's degree at minimum.

These are the requirements for the two reciprocity options for teaching in New York:

CERTIFICATION RECIPROCITY: Applies to teachers who are certified in a different state, having completed a teacher education program and three years of teaching within the past seven years. A conditional initial certificate is awarded that expires after two years. Before the expiration date, the teacher is expected to complete the exam requirements for a regular initial certificate.

EDUCATION PROGRAM RECIPROCITY: Applies to graduates of teacher preparation programs that are equivalent to teacher preparation programs in New York and have been approved for New York reciprocity. The program must lead to certification in the state where it was completed. For this option, an initial certificate is awarded.

For more information about interstate reciprocity for **New York teachers, visit the New York State Education Department website.** Applications for reciprocity can be submitted through the **TEACH online system.** When the application is complete, a fingerprinting process must be completed and official transcripts must be sent by mail. Teachers who are certified in other countries will be considered for reciprocity on a case-by-case basis.

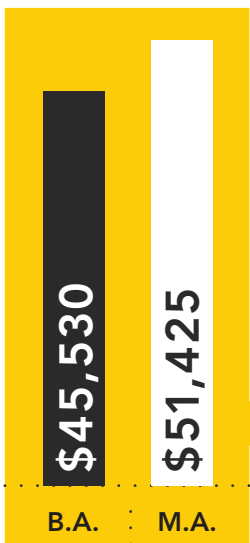
For more information about interstate reciprocity, visit the Teach.com Reciprocity page.



2 THE BENEFITS OF A MASTER OF EDUCATION IN NEW YORK

New York teachers are required to earn a master's in order to attain professional certification. The master's degree must be completed within five years of being awarded initial certification. Because of this requirement, about 78 percent of teachers in New York State hold a master's degree that is related to the grade level or subject that they teach.

To satisfy **New York State certification requirements**, the master's degree can be earned as part of a teacher preparation program. It may focus on the subject area of the initial certificate or in a subject area that is closely related. For "generalist" certifications, such as childhood education, any type of liberal arts and science master's degree is acceptable, including a **Master of Education (M.Ed.)** or a **Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)**.



Pursuing an advanced degree in education provides a definite advantage if you want to become a teacher in New York. **Both M.Ed. and MAT degrees** provide a solid foundation in educational theory and classroom skills. In addition, an **MAT program** often includes the opportunity to gain mentored student teaching experience. The **Master of Education** degree, on the other hand, focuses on educational theory, curriculum development and teacher leadership. Some teachers use skills learned from earning an M.Ed. degree to move into roles as principals and higher-level school administrators.

Besides satisfying the academic **requirements for professional certification**, earning a master's degree means a **higher salary** in school districts throughout the state. In New York City, **a teacher starting with a bachelor's degree can typically expect to earn \$45,530, while a teacher with a master's degree will start at \$51,425.**

Find out more about master's degree requirements for teaching in New York on the New York State Education Department [Office of Teaching Initiatives website](#).

New York State offers a wide range of **scholarships for teachers** who wish to seek employment opportunities in the state. Here are 10 resources to help you find teacher scholarships available to New York teachers:



NYS MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHING INCENTIVE SCHOLARSHIPS

New York offers incentive scholarships to promote careers as science and math teachers in secondary schools. Students who sign a service contract committing to five years of full-time employment as a science or math teacher are eligible to receive an award for four years of full-time undergraduate study and one year of full-time graduate study. The maximum annual award is equal to the annual tuition at a college in the State University of New York (SUNY) system (equal to \$5,595 in 2012–13).

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NEW YORK STATE TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)

Eligible New York State residents who are attending approved schools in the state can apply to receive a TAP grant. The amount of the award is based in part on family income and the number of family members enrolled in college. The maximum award is \$5,000 per academic year.

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NYC TEACHERS OF TOMORROW

The Teachers of Tomorrow program offers financial incentives to teachers who take on challenges in some of New York City's highest need schools. Teachers in these schools who are working toward their first master's degree may be eligible for reimbursement of up to \$700 per course, with a maximum award for three courses.

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TEACH NYC GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

To address teacher shortages in the New York City public school system, the NYC Department of Education provides full graduate school tuition to students who agree to serve in certain specialty areas following their teacher certification. The specialty areas include Speech Language Pathology, Visually Impaired and Bilingual Special Education. The length of service must be twice as long as the period for which tuition was provided (i.e., if tuition was provided for one year, the service obligation is two years).

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TEACH NYC LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

In addition to its graduate scholarship program, Teach NYC offers teachers who serve in specified shortage areas loan forgiveness for a certain amount of their total debt. Teachers who serve for at least one academic year in a shortage area are eligible to receive reimbursement for Perkins, Stafford and a variety of other approved types of student loans.



UFT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The United Federation of Teachers offers nearly \$1 million in scholarships annually to students from New York City public schools from the Albert Shanker College Scholarship Fund. In order to be eligible for a graduate school scholarship, students must have received a UFT undergraduate scholarship. Students must also meet maximum family income requirements in order to qualify.

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TEACH GRANTS

The U.S. Department of Education offers Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) grants to graduate students who make a commitment to work as classroom teachers in high-needs subject areas such as math and in low-income communities. In exchange for signing a TEACH agreement that includes a service obligation of four complete years within eight years of graduation, teachers receive up to \$4,000 in grants.

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APLEGATE-JACKSON-PARKS FUTURE TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP

The National Institute for Labor Relations Research (NIRR) awards the Future Teacher Scholarship to honor three public school teachers who lost their jobs for refusing to pay union dues. Each year, \$1,000 is given to one student majoring in education who demonstrates dedication to NIRR principles and an understanding of the issues related to compulsory unionism in education. Graduates and undergraduates at U.S. colleges and universities are eligible to apply for the scholarship.

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MATH FOR AMERICA FELLOWSHIPS

Math for America (MFA), a nonprofit organization founded in New York City, offers full-tuition scholarships (up to \$100,000) to complete a master's degree or teacher credential program in secondary school mathematics. MFA has seven sites in the U.S. and each site offers its own fellowship options.

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ACS-HACH SECOND CAREER TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP

To encourage chemistry professionals to earn a Master of Education degree, the American Chemical Society awards up to \$6,000 to full-time students and \$3,000 to part-time students for up to three academic years. In addition to tuition, the scholarship can be used for books, room and board, and other education-related expenses.

New York State also awards **teacher financial aid** to the survivors of veterans, firefighters, peace officers and emergency medical services employees who have died in the line of duty. For more information, visit the website of New York State Higher Education Services Corporation. For more information on financing your education, check out Teach.com's page on **scholarships for teachers**.



3 NEW YORK TEACHING JOBS

The New York State Department of Labor predicts a positive employment outlook for new teachers throughout the state for the years 2010 through 2020. According to the department's official projections, employment prospects for elementary

and secondary school teachers are categorized as very favorable, with an average of 4,040 projected annual job openings. The prospects for secondary school teachers are categorized as favorable, with an average of 2,010 annual openings.



Nearly half of the projected New York teaching jobs will be in the New York City area. Other regions that are projected to have more than 1,000 job openings per year are Long Island and the Hudson Valley. In other parts of the state, **teaching jobs** are expected to increase at a rate of five to six percent annually.

In New York City, 5,000 new teachers were hired in 2012, surpassing the Department of Labor's prediction of 3,820. With more than one million students in almost 1,600 schools, the city has an ongoing need for motivated and dedicated teachers. There is an especially strong **demand for teachers in high-need schools** that serve students with learning issues, including special education and English language learners. The New York City Department of Education offers financial incentives in the form of performance bonuses and grants to teachers who take on the challenge of working in such high-need schools.

The average salary for New York teachers was \$55,000 in 2012, according to data collected by the nonprofit Empire Center for New York State Policy. Salaries for individual teachers vary widely by region, with teachers in Long Island schools earning an average of \$73,949 compared to those in the Mohawk Valley earning \$36,394.



Some of the most competitive teacher salaries in the state are found in **New York City**. Compensation for newly hired New York City **public school teacher** has increased by more than 40 percent since 2002. As of 2012, starting teacher salaries range from about \$45,530 for teachers who hold a bachelor's degree and have no previous teaching experience to over \$70,000 for teachers who hold a master's degree and have several years teaching experience. Earning an advanced degree can also begin to pay off immediately since teachers with a **master's degree** and no prior teaching experience can expect to earn a starting salary of \$51,425.

Increases to a New York City teacher's base salary are provided through salary steps and differentials. A salary step is an increase based on professional experience; a salary differential is an increase based on additional course work, academic credit and degrees earned. With incremental increases from steps and differentials, the salary for teaching in New York City has the potential to increase over time to \$100,049 per year.

In addition to competitive salaries, New York City teachers can earn additional income from incentives and bonuses. For example, a teacher in a high-needs school who raises student achievement can earn a performance bonus of up to \$3,000. Teachers in New York City can also earn extra income by taking on additional after-school, weekend and summer duties. Payment for extra duties is typically \$41.98 per hour.

New York teachers are eligible for a variety of benefits. Depending on where you teach, these may include medical, vision, dental and prescription drug coverage; life insurance and disability insurance; and retirement, disability and death benefits.



According to the New York State Education Department, there are currently 698 school districts within the state. Each of these districts determines teacher benefits independently. In **New York City**, teachers have the same benefits as other city employees. Medical benefits include the choice of a health insurance plan from a variety of options. Coverage is provided for the employee and the employee's family, which includes registered domestic partners.

In addition to medical benefits, New York City teachers receive vision, dental and prescription drug benefits through the **United Federation of Teachers (UFT)** Welfare Fund. The UFT is the professional union that represents teachers and retirees in the New York City public school system. Teachers throughout the state belong to smaller unions that are members of the **New York State Union of Teachers (NYSUT)**, a federation of more than 1,200 local unions (including New York City's UFT). These unions lobby on behalf of New York teachers for fair pay, improved working conditions and enhanced professionalism.

Teaching in New York State (with the exception of New York City) includes membership in the **New York State Teachers Retirement System (NYSTRS)**. This organization provides retirement benefits as well as disability and death benefits. New York City teachers become members of the **Teachers Retirement System of the City of New York (TRS NYC)**, which is one of the nation's largest pension systems. TRS NYC provides retirement, disability and death benefit services. New York City teachers may also become members of the **Board of Education System (BERS)**, a large pension plan that serves the Department of Education, Police Department, Transit Authority and other city agencies. New York City teachers are covered by life insurance and disability through the TRS NYC and can obtain additional insurance from the UFT Welfare Fund ■

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