



October 15, 2025

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We at Defending Education recommend that the Institute of Education Sciences discontinue the longstanding practice of using estimated teacher salary data collected and published in the annual National Education Association (NEA) publication, *Rankings of the States and Estimates of School Statistics*.

Rankings of the States and Estimates of School Statistics contains only a single page of technical notes (p. 7) and less than two pages of state notes (p. 67-68) that describe data variations across states. These passages offer hilariously inadequate details of estimating and data collection methodologies used by NEA research staff to derive their annual estimates. Shockingly, there is no evidence that the Institute of Education Sciences has ever taken steps to independently verify NEA data or evaluate its methodology before the inclusion of teacher salary data in official U.S. Department of Education publications.

More importantly, the National Education Association makes no effort to disguise its partisan motivations, even in its research products. The most recent edition of *Rankings of the States and Estimates of School Statistics*, published in April 2025, opined that the Trump administration's actions at the United States Department of Education were “destructive” and “reckless” (p. 1).

In fact, the NEA is not a neutral entity seeking to publish teacher compensation data in good faith for informational or policymaking purposes. Instead, it is a highly partisan advocacy organization that invests tens of millions of dollars in programs and political activities to support Democratic candidates and elected officials, who, in turn, promise to bolster teacher unions and their members at the expense of children and families. The NEA’s research program is simply another extension of the union’s blatantly partisan mission.

As such, we strongly recommend that the Institute of Education Sciences undertake efforts to revise all current and historical teacher salary data sourced from the National Education Association. Until those revisions are completed, we recommend that the Institute of Education Sciences remove all current and historical data derived from NEA research from United States Department of Education websites.

Sincerely,

Nicole Neily

President
Defending Education