

The tolls of teaching

Educators deal with heavy cost and pressure in classroom

No one does more with less than teachers. Teachers are underpaid, overworked and have never been under more pressure to perform. Perform for their students, who need their grades in order to keep going with their lives and move onto bigger and better things. Perform for the student's parents. Pressure from the rest of their peers to keep up with the several curriculums they are assigned. Teachers are under all this pressure to perform, and that's common knowledge. What isn't is how underappreciated their efforts truly are.

In 2023, over 1,000 teaching positions went unfilled in South Carolina.

In response, the state has begun to increase the wages of teachers, attempting to raise the starting yearly sal-

starting

yearly sal-



ary for

all teach-

ers to

\$50,000

by 2026.

This is all

good news,

but the prob-

lem is that it

took the loss

of so many teach-

ers in order for

the state to realize

there was a prob-

lem. Passion is what

drives many educa-

tors to the pro-

fession. However, with wages rising so slowly and the price of living increasing, passion just isn't enough to consider the field.

Anyone would be hard-pressed to find someone who doesn't know teachers do not make a wage compensatory to the work they do. Yet, you would also be hard-pressed to find someone not in the profession who thinks it is anything more than a fact of life. That's a problem. Teachers are essential to society as a whole, in ways that go unnoticed. They educate the future workforce, contributing to the overall economy in a way that goes overlooked. These integral figures are disappearing, and that isn't slowing down anytime soon.

The number of students interested in becoming teachers has plummeted according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics since 1970, and has declined rapidly since 2010. The high price of college needed to become a teacher combined with the stagnant wages of the position lead to no one wanting to be a teacher. Frankly, who could blame them? People entering the workforce have no incentive to work in a school given the current state of the profession. It is too stressful for too little benefit, and that fact alone has led to a massive drop in the number of people interested in education.

With the attempted abolishment of the U.S. Department of Education, many factors are changing in the industry. The control of schooling is being given completely over to individual states, giving them more access to changes and fund allocation. This also moves teachers into the

department of labor and removes the resources they provide to teachers on a federal level. All of these things



could lead to slight changes in the education system, however it is yet to be seen how much change these bring.

When it comes to problems involving government funds, the policy among the taxpayers has always seemed to be "if it ain't broke, don't spend money on it." Public school teachers are not one of those issues, and hopefully people realize before we run out of them.

The average starting teacher salary is around \$46,000 per year. The national average salary was approximately \$72,030.

Teachers have been dealing with poor pay even since the early 19th century, and only recently have been recognized, yet it's still an on-going issue. The teaching profession has been experiencing its lowest levels of employment in 50 years.

The average salary for teachers grew by 4.4% in the 2023-2024 school year, which was the largest growth since the founding of the National Education Association (NEA).

