

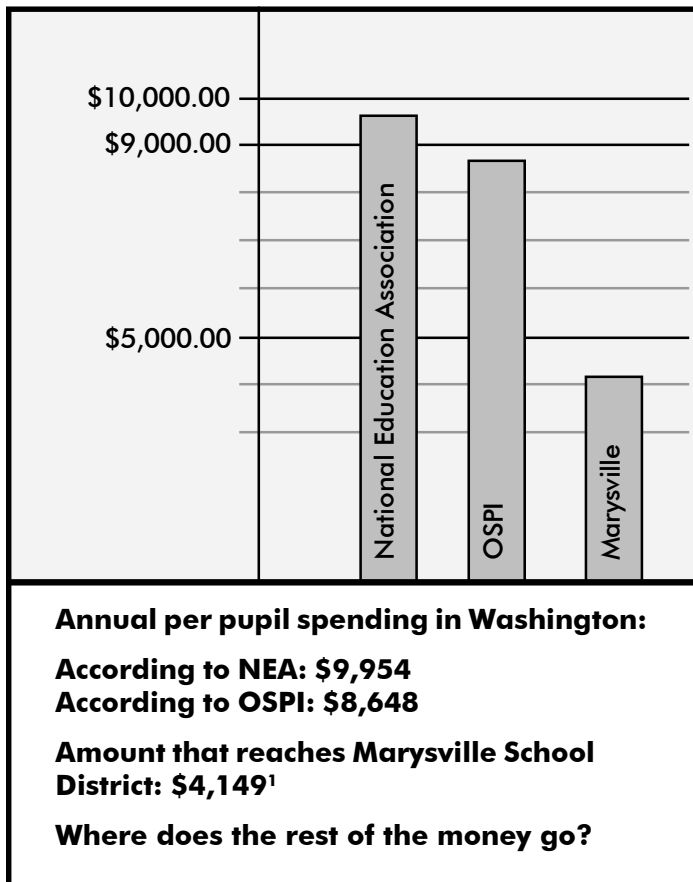
Facts about the Marysville teachers' strike

Question: How much money does the state provide for each student who attends a Washington state public school?

Answer: Nobody knows for sure. The National Education Association says it was \$9,594 last year for each student. Washington's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction says it was \$8,648.

Question: That's a lot of money, so how come it's not enough to meet everybody's needs?

Answer: Because, with the exception of capital costs and a few other things, the school district only gets \$4,149 of that amount. (See the bar graph below.)



Question: How is the rest of the money spent if it doesn't make it to the school?

Answer: Nobody knows that for sure either—at least not precisely. But wherever it goes, someone should be asking whether or not it would be better spent in the classroom.

Question: How much do Marysville teachers make each year? What about administrators?

Answer: The average teacher in Marysville will make \$54,169 in 2003², the second highest salary paid to teachers in the state. Adding in benefits that average 22% of salaries statewide, teachers in Marysville earn average total compensation of more than \$66,000. Statewide, the average teacher will earn \$49,297 in 2003 (not including benefits).³ Regardless of what happens with current negotiations, no teacher will suffer a pay cut, and most teachers in Marysville will receive an annual "step increase" of approximately three percent, which is awarded for an additional year of service.

The Marysville Superintendent will make \$130,877 in 2003 (ranking 22nd out of the top 25 schools in the state).⁴ The average Superintendent in the state's 25 largest districts will make \$144,348 this year.

Question: How do teacher salaries compare to the average wage in Marysville and the rest of Snohomish County?

Answer: Per capita income in Snohomish County was \$29,460 in 2001. This is the last year information is available.⁵

Question: Isn't \$54,196 enough money for a teacher to make in a year?

Answer: If the value brought to a classroom were the measure of worth, \$54,196 isn't enough for some teachers and it's far too much for others. Education is one of the few professions in which the amount of money a person is paid has little to do with the value they bring to their job and more to do with how many years they have been doing it.

Question: Are teacher strikes illegal?

Answer: Yes. At least 23 court injunctions have ordered teachers to stop striking, and no rulings have declared strikes legal. In 1973, teacher union leaders were jailed for 45 days for refusing to obey court orders to end an illegal strike.

Quotes from the recent Issaquah strike decision:

Based upon the common law of this state, strikes by public employees are illegal. There is no express or explicit statutory right for teachers to strike.

– Superior Court Judge Joan Dubuque, 2002

The state has a compelling interest that one of its most precious assets, its youth, have the opportunity to drink at the font of knowledge so they may be nurtured and develop into responsible citizens tomorrow. No one has the right to turn off the fountain's spigot and keep it in a closed position.

– Superior Court Judge Joan Dubuque's citation of another case, 2002

Under our state constitution, Article IX, Section 1, it is clear that the state has indicated and said expressly that the paramount duty of this state is to provide a public education. There is statutory authority implementing that paramount interest of the state, and that is the mandatory education provisions that we have for all children. As I have indicated, our Supreme Court, in decisions ranging from 1958 forward has affirmed, has reiterated, and has expressly stated the fundamental precept that there shall be no public employee strikes, and there has been no legislative action by the legislature to overrule this common law.

– Superior Court Judge Joan Dubuque, 2002

Footnotes:

¹ Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

² Marysville School District.

³ Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

⁴ Washington Association of School Administrators.

⁵ Bureau of Economic Analysis.

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