

**OKLAHOMA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL
INSTRUCTIONAL
AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES: AN
ANALYSIS**

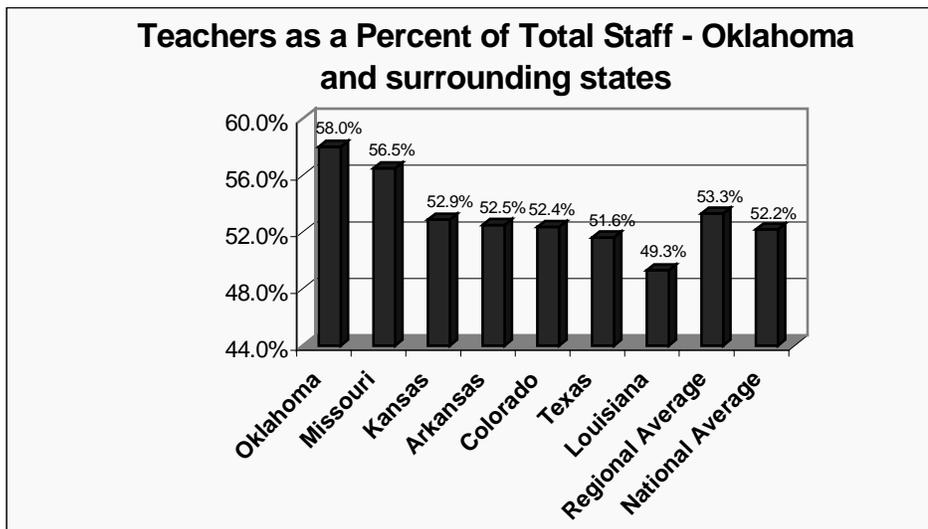
*Oklahoma State Senate Staff
March, 2000*

OKLAHOMA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES: AN ANALYSIS

Oklahoma has the third highest percentage of teachers in the classroom of any state in the nation, putting about 6 percentage points more of its total staff actually into the classroom than the U.S. average. Oklahoma also allocates a higher percentage of its personnel in the classroom than any of our neighboring states, approximately 5 percentage points more than the regional average. The percent of teachers interacting and instructing students is one of the best measures of school efficiency. As the two tables below indicate, Oklahoma fares very well in this measure. A large portion of the remaining 42% of school employees are also directly involved in instruction, such as librarians, guidance counselors, and teachers aides.

Teachers as a Percent of Total Staff – Ten Highest States	
Hawaii	62.2%
Rhode Island	61.6%
Oklahoma	58.0%
Nevada	57.7%
Idaho	57.2%
Missouri	56.5%
Massachusetts	55.3%
Maryland	55.3%
South Dakota	55.1%
Wisconsin	55.1%
National Average	52.2%

Source: "Public School Student, Staff and Graduate Counts by State, School Year 1997-98" National Center for Education Statistics



Source: "Public School Student, Staff and Graduate Counts by State, School Year 1997-98" National Center for Education Statistics

As with any data, problems with reporting and interpretation may occur. The next section of this report explains how some expenditure and other types of data can also present interpretation problems. Policy makers should be made aware of the limitations of financial data and supplement it with other information as necessary to get a complete picture.

Why Financial Percentages Can Be Misleading:

Recently much attention has been given to the percent of school expenditures going to administration or instruction in Oklahoma's public schools. There are a number of problems with relying on this approach exclusively. Those problems include:

- ❑ Oklahoma's low teacher salaries have a direct impact on the higher administrative percentages in the state. For example, if Oklahoma raised its average teachers salary of \$31,149 to the national average of \$45,582, administrative costs would be reduced by 12 percent to 3.13%.
- ❑ Lower administrative costs do not automatically lead to more resources in the classroom. For example, Florida, which boasts having the 6th lowest percentage of (1.1%) administrative costs also has one of the lowest percentages (48.6%) of teachers in the classroom. Indiana also has low administrative costs but is also putting a low percentage of its personnel actually into the classroom. These two examples illustrate how low administrative costs are not necessarily good indicators of resources being allocated into the classroom
- ❑ Certain administrative, transportation, food service, and support expenditures are fixed costs. States with higher fixed costs such as high free and reduced school lunch programs will inevitably have higher administrative/support costs.
- ❑ A one year snapshot of a districts costs could lead to unfair assessments of that district's administrative expenditures. Some districts may face one time legal costs or coding errors which could distort their administrative expenditures to appear higher than in other more typical years.
- ❑ Coding errors or differences in interpretation among districts and states may distort how resources are actually allocated. Questionnaires/surveys are developed by groups, such as NCES, then distributed to literally thousands of school districts across the nation, which are charged with categorizing their personnel. Despite the fact that survey instructions attempt to guide school districts to uniformly categorize costs and employment figures, some inevitable differences in interpretation as well as coding errors occur. For example, in some districts, especially small ones, it is not uncommon for a principal or a superintendent to also drive a school bus, provide grounds maintenance, and other duties that may fall into different personnel categories, in addition to their administrative responsibilities. Such differences can have the results of districts rearranging their cost data in a manner which appears to have reduced or increased their administrative spending or instructional spending.

The information for this report was obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics "Public School Staff and Graduate Counts by State, School Year 1997-98" released in April, 1999. This data is obtained from surveys completed by the State Departments' of Education.

Teachers as a Percentage of Total Staff (1998)

1	Hawaii	62.2%
2	Rhode Island	61.6%
3	Oklahoma	58.0%
4	Nevada	57.7%
5	Idaho	57.2%
6	Missouri	56.5%
7	Maryland	55.3%
8	Massachusetts	55.3%
9	South Dakota	55.1%
10	Wisconsin	55.1%
11	Delaware	54.6%
12	Ohio	54.5%
13	California	54.4%
14	West Virginia	54.4%
15	North Dakota	54.3%
16	Georgia	53.9%
17	Montana	53.9%
18	New Jersey	53.8%
19	South Carolina	53.6%
20	Alabama	53.5%
21	Minnesota	53.4%
22	Utah	53.3%
23	Nebraska	53.2%
24	Washington	53.1%
25	Virginia	53.0%
26	Kansas	52.9%
27	Tennessee	52.9%
28	Arkansas	52.5%
29	Pennsylvania	52.5%
30	Colorado	52.4%
31	New Hampshire	52.2%
32	North Carolina	52.1%
33	Illinois	51.9%
34	Texas	51.6%
35	Maine	51.4%
36	Connecticut	51.2%
37	Alaska	51.0%
38	New York	51.0%
39	Iowa	50.9%
40	Arizona	50.8%
41	Oregon	50.7%
42	Louisiana	49.3%
43	New Mexico	49.2%
44	Wyoming	49.2%
45	Florida	48.6%
46	Vermont	48.3%
47	Mississippi	47.7%
48	Indiana	47.1%
49	Kentucky	45.5%
50	Michigan	44.8%
	National Avg.	52.2%