**Comparable Wage Index for Teachers (CWIFT)**

- Developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in collaboration with the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Uses data from the 2013-2015 American Community Survey to produce a regression model of variation in wages attributable to the local labor market. The index is the predicted wage level for that location divided by the national average predicted wage.
- Measures labor costs that are beyond the control of school district administrators.
- Based on systematic differences in wages for laborers other than educators and reflects differences in amenities and cost of living.
- Provides labor cost estimates for 1,570 local labor market areas. Labor market estimates are used to calculate school district estimates. Standard errors are produced for each geography to account for sampling error.
- Assumes that workers are mobile and that the preferences of educators are similar to those of non-educators.

**Data used in the Study**

- School District Finance Survey (F-33), fiscal year (FY) 2016, which includes detailed financial data on revenues and expenditures for all public local education agencies (LEAs) serving Prekindergarten through 12th grade students in the United States.
- Universe and teacher data from the Local Education Agency Universe Survey for 2015-16, Provisional Version 1a.
- Urbanicity from the EDGE Geocodes for Public Schools and Local Education Agencies.
- Data set includes all operating LEAs in the United States and District of Columbia and excludes “non-regular” LEAs (e.g., independent charter agencies, federal- and state-operated agencies, service agencies, and supervisory unions). LEAs with missing membership or fiscal data are also excluded.

**Instructional Salary Expenditures Per Pupil, CWIFT-Adjusted, FY 2016**

**CWIFT affects the disparity between high-spending and low-spending LEAs within each state**

- **Spending disparity decreases in Virginia.**
  - Virginia has 130 LEAs which spend, nominally, an average of $9,162 per pupil on instructional salaries, ranging from $3,785 to $9,163. After applying the CWIFT, the average instructional salaries per pupil increased to $5,223, with LEA amounts ranging from $3,623 to $9,363.

- **Spending disparity increases in Nebraska.**
  - Nebraska has 243 LEAs which spend, nominally, an average of $5,122 per pupil on instructional salaries, ranging from $1,468 to $11,848. After applying the CWIFT, the average instructional salaries per pupil increased to $6,059, with LEA amounts ranging from $4,493 to $16,521.

- **Spending disparity remains the same in California.**
  - California has 916 LEAs which spend, nominally, an average of $4,505 per pupil on instructional salaries, ranging from $90 to $16,667. After applying the CWIFT, the average instructional salaries per pupil decreased to $4,166, with LEA amounts ranging from $101 to $14,318.

**CWIFT may account for variation in analysis of class size and spending**

- **In Missouri, adjusting instructional salary expenditures per pupil for the CWIFT strengthens the correlation to student to teacher ratio.**
- **LEAs in Missouri with a higher labor cost tend to have a larger student body and larger class size.**

**Relationship of student to teacher ratio to instructional salary per pupil for Missouri LEAs, nominal and CWIFT-adjusted. FY 2016**

**References**