NEPC Review: Spending Smarter on Teacher Pay: National Overview and Findings (National Council on Teacher Quality, September 2026)



Reviewed by:

Eunice S. Han
University of Utah

December 2026

National Education Policy Center

School of Education
University of Colorado Boulder
nepc.colorado.edu

Acknowledgements

NEPC Staff

Faith Boninger
Publications Manager

Patricia Hinchey
Academic Editor

Elaine Duggan
Production Design

Alex Molnar
NEPC Director

Kevin Welner
NEPC Director

Suggested Citation: Han, E.S. (2026). *NEPC Review: Spending smarter on teacher pay: National overview and findings*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Retrieved [date], from https://nepc.colorado.edu/review/teacher-pay

Funding: This review was made possible in part by funding from the Great Lakes Center for Educational Research and Practice.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

This publication is provided free of cost to NEPC's readers, who may make non-commercial use of it as long as NEPC and its author(s) are credited as the source. For inquiries about commercial use, please contact NEPC at nepc@colorado.edu.

The National Education Policy Center (NEPC), a university research center housed at the University of Colorado Boulder School of Education, sponsors research, produces policy briefs, and publishes expert third-party reviews of think tank reports. NEPC publications are written in accessible language and are intended for a broad audience that includes academic experts, policymakers, the media, and the general public. Our mission is to provide high-quality information in support of democratic deliberation about education policy. We are guided by the belief that the democratic governance of public education is strengthened when policies are based on sound evidence and support a multiracial society that is inclusive, kind, and just. Visit us at: http://nepc.colorado.edu

NEPC Review: Spending Smarter on Teacher Pay: National Overview and Findings (National Council on Teacher Quality, September 2026)

Reviewed by:

Eunice S. Han
University of Utah

December 2026

Summary

A recent report from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) examines how states can improve teacher recruitment, retention, and student achievement amid budget pressures. It cites earlier research and state-level data, concluding that traditional salary schedules based on experience and credentials inadequately reflect teacher effectiveness and staffing needs. Instead, NCTQ recommends annual supplements of at least 7.5%, or approximately $5,000, for hard-to-staff assignments; performance-based pay tied to teacher evaluations; and redirecting spending on advanced-degree premiums toward targeted incentives. However, four limitations weaken the report's conclusions. First, some cited studies evaluate comprehensive reforms, making it difficult to isolate the effects of performance pay. Second, the report highlights selected state policies without adequately accounting for preexisting labor-market conditions or demonstrating improvements in educational outcomes. Third, it gives too little weight to evidence on the value of teaching experience. Finally, it overlooks the distinct purposes of public-sector compensation systems—ensuring transparency and consistency while preventing favoritism. Consequently, its recommendations offer limited guidance for addressing broader teacher shortages and improving educational quality.

NEPC
NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY CENTER

NEPC Review: Spending Smarter on Teacher Pay: National Overview and Findings (National Council on Teacher Quality, September 2026)

Reviewed by:

Eunice S. Han
University of Utah

December 2026

I. Introduction

Teacher shortages vary considerably across schools, subjects, and labor markets. Some schools struggle to recruit qualified teachers, while others face difficulties retaining them. Pay is an important factor in these situations, but working conditions, school leadership, professional autonomy, and career opportunities also influence whether teachers enter and remain in the profession. For example, recruiting a mathematics teacher may require higher compensation in areas where alternative employment opportunities are plentiful or living costs are high. School funding arrangements and district financial resources also vary, affecting their ability to offer competitive salaries and sustain financial incentives. In some areas, the challenge may be less about the overall supply of qualified teachers than about their distribution across schools. These differences matter when considering whether broad salary increases or targeted incentives are likely to improve staffing.

Weighing in on discussions around school staffing concerns, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) recently published a report in its *State of the State* series that recommends using teacher compensation strategies to address teacher recruitment and retention challenges. Authored by Michael Sheehy and published in September 2026, *Spending Smarter on Teacher Pay: National Overview and Findings*[1] examines state policies concerning differentiated pay, performance-based compensation, and advanced-degree premiums. The report recommends redirecting existing resources toward financial incentives that reflect staffing needs and teacher effectiveness.

This review examines the report's recommendations, the research used to support them, and the methods used to assess state compensation policies. It also considers whether the evidence provides a sound basis for its proposed policy changes.

II. Findings and Conclusions of the Report

The report evaluates state teacher-compensation policies using six indicators organized around three areas: differentiated pay, performance-based compensation, and advanced-degree premiums. The indicators examine whether states encourage additional compensation for teachers in hard-to-staff schools and subjects, require or incentivize districts to link pay to teacher effectiveness, and mandate salary increases for advanced degrees. The report finds that few states have adopted substantial incentives for hard-to-staff assignments and that states also differ in employing performance-based compensation and financially rewarding advanced degrees.

The report offers three principal recommendations that relatively few states have already implemented. First, states should offer annual salary supplements of at least 7.5%, or approximately $5,000, for teachers in hard-to-staff schools and subjects. Second, states should require or financially encourage districts to link compensation to teacher effectiveness, using evaluation systems that include measures of student learning. Third, states should reduce or eliminate automatic salary premiums for advanced degrees, particularly master's degrees, and redirect those funds toward targeted incentives and performance-based compensation.

III. The Report's Rationale for Its Findings and Conclusions

Underlying these recommendations is the argument that states can improve teacher recruitment, teacher retention, and student achievement by making better use of existing compensation resources, rather than relying primarily on increases in overall education spending. Essentially, the report recommends using teacher compensation as a tool to move greater resources toward hard-to-fill positions and more effective teachers. Rather than conventional step-and-lane salary schedules, which typically base pay increases on experience and credentials, the report suggests adopting private-sector compensation strategies that link pay more directly to performance or labor market supply and demand.

The report assumes several benefits will ensue. Targeted salary supplements would encourage teachers to accept or remain in hard-to-staff assignments. Performance-related compensation based on evaluation systems would reward instructional effectiveness and encourage improvements in practice. And, to help fund these improvements, the report recommends discontinuing advanced degree awards, which it

contends do not consistently correspond to measured teacher effectiveness.

IV. The Report's Use of Research Literature

While the report cites a variety of studies, some of those studies provide less definitive support for performance-based compensation than they initially appear to. For example, the report cites research on comprehensive teacher compensation reforms, including the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) in South Carolina and the District of Columbia's IMPACT system. TAP combines performance incentives with professional development, career advancement, classroom observations, and test-score-based accountability. IMPACT similarly links evaluations and financial incentives with feedback and personnel decisions. Although studies of these programs provide useful evidence, they cannot isolate the effects of performance pay from other components of the reforms. For example, improvements in student achievement may also reflect professional support or changes in instructional practices, while the effects of IMPACT may partly reflect changes in teacher workforce composition.[2] Thus, they provide insufficient evidence for the direct link between performance incentives and student learning that the report assumes.

Likewise, a meta-analysis of 37 merit-pay studies indicates a positive average effect on student test scores in the United States (0.043 standard deviations), although results vary by program design and setting.[3] While these findings support the potential value of performance-based compensation, they do not establish that the recommended policies would outperform alternative approaches across different labor markets.

Additionally, the report overemphasizes the significance of opinion data, which, while perhaps informative, does not demonstrate the effectiveness of performance pay in improving teacher recruitment, retention, or student achievement. For example, the report cites a finding that highly effective teachers express stronger preferences for performance pay than their less effective peers—but no evidence is included to support the assumed link to staffing goals.[4] And the report asserts that voters prefer a system in which "better teachers earn more, and worse teachers can be easily fired or paid less" to one in which it is "difficult to fire teachers, and pay…depend[s] primarily on years of experience."[5] But again, even if voters support performance-based compensation, public support for any particular teacher compensation policy is very different from empirical evidence of that policy's actual effectiveness.

Importantly, the report ignores much research that challenges its central argument, leading it to relatively simplistic treatment of several significant factors related to compensation policy:

Issues around achievement measures. A notable omission in the report's argu-

ment is an acknowledgement that teaching produces outcomes beyond test scores, including positive improvements in student behavior and longer-term educational attainment. Research shows that teachers' contributions to these outcomes are only weakly correlated with their effects on test scores,[6] which are commonly used as the primary measure of teacher effectiveness. Moreover, many widely used tests are limited to certain grades and subjects, and their accuracy may be affected by factors beyond teacher control: student composition, sample size, and how students are assigned to teachers or classrooms. When tied to high-stakes incentives, these measures may result in over emphasis on tested subjects (frequently reading and math) and neglect of other, equally important subjects (science, for example).[7] In addition, they may move teachers toward such undesirable strategies as inappropriately moving low-performing students into special education so their test scores would not count toward the school's performance rating.[8]

The importance of incentive design: The effects of performance-based compensation also depend on how incentives are structured. A study of a New York City program that awarded teachers bonuses based on school-wide rather than individual performance found little overall effect on student achievement.[9] Other experimental research shows that student outcomes can vary depending on how performance is measured and financial rewards are structured. Research also emphasizes that poorly designed incentives can encourage teachers to focus on raising scores on rewarded tests rather than improving broader student learning.[10] These studies demonstrate why the specific design of performance-pay programs matters, a consideration that receives limited attention in the report

Wide-ranging implications of teacher experience. The report draws on peer-reviewed research to question salary increases based on teaching experience and advanced degrees, but gives limited attention to evidence that teachers continue to become more effective as they gain experience. Although improvements in teacher effectiveness are often greatest during the early years, research documents continued gains later in teachers' careers, including improvements in student achievement and behavior.[11] Experienced teachers also contribute to schools in ways that extend beyond their own students' test scores, such as mentoring less-experienced colleagues, taking on leadership responsibilities, and supporting students' broader development.[12] Experience-based salary progression can recognize these contributions and the skills teachers accumulate over time, even if years of service do not perfectly measure individual effectiveness. Greater reliance on performance-based compensation also raises concerns because estimates of teachers' contributions to student test scores can vary considerably from year to year.[13]

The report has stronger empirical grounds for questioning automatic salary premiums for master's degrees, although it acknowledges that degrees directly related to teachers' instructional subjects may offer benefits (see the report's endnote 17). The

evidence concerning teaching experience should therefore be distinguished from the evidence concerning graduate credentials.

Benefits of salary schedules. The report cites research suggesting that traditional salary schedules, which base teacher pay largely on experience and educational credentials, do not consistently reward teacher effectiveness. However, it gives insufficient attention to research examining why these schedules exist and what benefits they provide. By establishing clear rules for determining salaries, standardized pay schedules can help protect teachers against unequal treatment based on gender, favoritism, or arbitrary pay decisions. The report does not adequately examine how expanding performance-based compensation might affect these protections or whether its expected benefits would outweigh potential risks.

The report's comparison with private-sector performance pay overlooks the distinct purposes of public-sector compensation systems. Standardized salary schedules promote transparency and predictability by linking pay to observable criteria rather than discretionary assessments and by limiting opportunities for favoritism and arbitrary pay decisions. Research on public-sector salary transparency and gender differences in teachers' earnings outside salary schedules underscores the importance of considering these institutional features.[14] These considerations should be weighed against the potential benefits of performance-based incentives.

V. Review of the Report's Methods

The report's six indicators assess whether states promote differentiated pay, require or subsidize performance-based compensation, reward highly rated teachers, or mandate salary premiums for advanced degrees. These indicators measure the adoption of NCTQ's preferred policies, rather than assessing whether those policies reliably improve teacher recruitment, retention, or student achievement across widely varying educational and labor market contexts.

State-level classifications overlook important differences in implementation. A state mandate linking compensation to teacher effectiveness may have little practical effect without adequate funding, while districts may offer substantial local incentives even without a statewide requirement. States also differ in labor-market wages, living costs, school funding arrangements, fiscal capacity, and student demographics. Comparisons across states at a single point in time cannot distinguish the effects of compensation policies from these other factors. These differences are particularly relevant to the proposed annual supplement of $5,000 or 7.5%, which lacks a clear empirical justification. An incentive sufficient to influence teachers' decisions in one labor market may be inadequate in another. Without accounting for these differences, the report's recommendations are overly prescriptive and may not be equally

effective or financially feasible across states and districts.

A more informative analysis would examine actual vacancy rates, the availability of fully certified teachers, turnover, and student achievement before and after policy implementation, using appropriate comparison groups. It would also document how many districts and teachers participate, the size and duration of incentives, and how the programs are funded. A narrowly funded pilot and a statewide program may both count as policy adoption, even though their reach and potential effects differ substantially. Similarly, the absence of a state mandate for advanced-degree premiums does not mean that districts have eliminated them. Without examining these differences and their effects on outcomes, the report remains primarily a descriptive account of state compensation policies rather than evidence of their effectiveness.

Finally, assessing whether these reforms make better use of education resources requires consideration of their costs and trade-offs. Redirecting funds toward targeted incentives may come at the expense of general salary increases, professional development, or other workforce investments. The report does not establish whether its proposed reallocations would produce greater benefits than these alternatives.

VI. Review of the Validity of the Findings and Conclusions

The report's general conclusions extend beyond what its state-level indicators and selected examples can establish. Profiles published by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) document substantial differences in teacher pay competitiveness, working conditions, and turnover across states.[15] However, these profiles draw on data from different years, and some compensation policies were already in place when the data were collected. They therefore provide useful context about teacher labor markets but cannot establish whether particular compensation reforms improved workforce outcomes.

A central limitation of the report's recommendations is the distinction between attracting teachers to particular schools and expanding the overall supply of qualified teachers. Targeted supplements may help fill vacancies in hard-to-staff schools, but they may also attract experienced teachers away from other public schools without increasing the total number entering the profession. Similarly, replacing teachers with low evaluation ratings may improve workforce quality if reliable evaluations identify less effective teachers and qualified replacements are available. However, teacher replacement is costly. Estimates from the Learning Policy Institute suggest that replacing a teacher costs approximately $12,000 in small districts and $25,000 in large districts, including recruitment, hiring, and training expenses.[16] These costs, along with potential staffing instability and losses to schools from which teachers are recruited, should be considered when assessing whether the proposed reforms

improve outcomes across the education system.

Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Connecticut offer alternative examples in which relatively high teacher salaries and strong student achievement coexist with traditional salary schedules based on experience and credentials.[17] These associations do not establish that conventional pay structures produce better educational outcomes. However, they illustrate why evaluating compensation policies requires attention to overall salary competitiveness, workforce stability, and school conditions alongside targeted incentives. The report's indicators do not demonstrate that its preferred compensation practices produce better outcomes than these alternatives.

The report also gives limited attention to the declining attractiveness of teaching as a profession. Research documents long-term declines in the profession's prestige, interest among prospective entrants, teacher preparation, and job satisfaction.[18] These trends raise questions about whether reallocating existing teachers or rewarding a subset of incumbents can adequately address shortages when the pipeline of qualified new teachers is weakening. Improving teacher recruitment and retention may therefore require broader investments in competitive salaries, working conditions, preparation, and career development, rather than relying primarily on targeted compensation reforms.

VII. Usefulness of the Report for Guidance of Policy and Practice

The report draws useful attention to staffing difficulties in particular schools and subjects and to evidence that well-designed financial incentives can improve recruitment and retention. However, its broader recommendations for restructuring teacher compensation are not adequately supported by the state-level evidence presented. Teacher shortages arise from different combinations of low salaries, unfavorable working conditions, and limited preparation pipelines, requiring responses tailored to local circumstances. Moreover, redirecting existing compensation resources toward targeted incentives involves trade-offs with broader salary increases, mentoring, professional development, and improvements in working conditions. Without evidence that these reallocations outperform alternative investments, the report offers limited guidance for addressing teacher shortages and improving educational quality.

Notes and References

1 Sheehy, M. (2026, September). *Spending smarter on teacher pay: National overview and findings*. NCTQ. Retrieved October 20, 2026, from https://www.nctq.org/research-insights/state-of-the-states-spending-smarter-on-teacher-pay/national-overview-spending-smarter-on-teacher-pay/

2 Cohodes, S., Eren, O., & Ozturk, O. (2023). *The long-run effects of a comprehensive teacher performance pay program on student outcomes* (NBER Working Paper No. 31056). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Adnot, M., Dee, T., Katz, V., & Wyckoff, J. (2017). Teacher turnover, teacher quality, and student achievement in DCPS. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 39*(1), 54–76.

3 Pham, L.D., Nguyen, T.D., & Springer, M.G. (2021). Teacher merit pay: A meta-analysis. *American Educational Research Journal, 58*(3), 527–566

Johnston, A.C. (2025). Preferences, selection, and the structure of teacher pay. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 17*(3), 310–346. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20210763

4 The report's endnote 14 cites:

Johnston, A.C. (2024). *Preferences, selection, and the structure of teacher pay* (Working Paper 33088). National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved November 4, 2026, from https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w33088/w33088.pdf

This paper estimated teacher effectiveness via value-added models using student achievement data and Danielson observation scores.

5 The report's endnote 15 cites "Broockman, D., & Kalla, J. (2026)," but provides no title, publication information, or link. We were unable to locate or independently verify this source.

Because the report's citation to the referenced survey was incomplete, it is impossible to validate the evidence behind its claim. The report's description of the survey provides few details about its methodology. However, it does quote the response options for the question about teacher compensation. These are worded in a "double-barreled" way that make respondents' choices impossible to interpret. Someone who chose "Teaching should be like any other job—better teachers earn more, and worse teachers can be easily fired or paid less," out of three possible response options, might have done so because they prefer performance-based compensation or because they have concerns that poor teachers cannot be fired—or both. The wording also fails to clarify what "better" means.

Sheehy, M. (2026, September). *Spending smarter on teacher pay: National overview and findings*. NCTQ. Retrieved October 20, 2026, from https://www.nctq.org/research-insights/state-of-the-states-spending-smarter-on-teacher-pay/national-overview-spending-smarter-on-teacher-pay/

6 Jackson, C.K. (2018). What do test scores miss? The importance of teacher effects on non–test score outcomes. *Journal of Political Economy, 126*(5), 2072–2107. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1086/699018

7 Jacob, B.A. (2005). Accountability, incentives and behavior: The impact of high-stakes testing in the Chicago Public Schools. *Journal of Public Economics, 89*(5–6), 761–796. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2004.08.004

Au, W. (2007). High-stakes testing and curricular control: A qualitative metasynthesis. *Educational Researcher, 36*(5), 258–267. Retrieved November 6, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X07306523

8 Jones, M.D. (2013). Teacher behavior under performance pay incentives. *Economics of Education Review, 37,* 148–164. Retrieved October 20, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2013.09.005

9 Goodman, S.F. & Turner, L.J. (2013). The design of teacher incentive pay and educational outcomes: Evidence from the New York City bonus program. *Journal of Labor Economics, 31*(2), 409–420. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1086/668676

10 Loyalka, P., Sylvia, S., Liu, C., Chu, J., & Shi, Y. (2019). Pay by design: Teacher performance pay design and the distribution of student achievement. *Journal of Labor Economics, 37*(3), 621–662. Retrieved November 13, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1086/702625

Fryer, R.G., Jr., Levitt, S.D., List, J.A., & Sadoff, S. (2022). Enhancing the efficacy of teacher incentives through framing: A field experiment. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 14*(4), 269–299. Retrieved November 13, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20190287

Neal, D. (2011). The design of performance pay in education. In E.A. Hanushek, S. Machin, & L. Woessmann (Eds.), *Handbook of the Economics of Education* (Vol. 4, pp. 495–550). Elsevier. Retrieved November 13, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-444-53444-6.00006-7

11 Papay, J.P. & Kraft, M.A. (2015). Productivity returns to experience in the teacher labor market: Methodological challenges and new evidence on long-term career improvement. *Journal of Public Economics, 130*, 105–119. Retrieved November 13, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2015.02.008

Ladd, H.F. & Sorensen, L.C. (2017). Returns to teacher experience: Student achievement and motivation in middle school. *Education Finance and Policy, 12*(2), 241–279. Retrieved November 13, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1162/EDFP_a_00194

Podolsky, A., Kini, T., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2019). Does teaching experience increase teacher effectiveness? A review of US research. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community, 4(*4), 286–308. Retrieved November 13, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-12-2018-0032

12 Wenner, J.A. & Campbell, T. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(1), 134–171. Retrieved November 13, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316653478

LoCasale-Crouch, J., Davis, E., Wiens, P., & Pianta, R. (2012). The role of the mentor in supporting new teachers: Associations with self-efficacy, reflection, and quality. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 20*(3), 303–323. Retrieved November 13, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2012.701959

Kraft, M.A., Bolves, A.J., & Hurd, N.M. (2023). How informal mentoring by teachers, counselors, and coaches supports students' long-run academic success. *Economics of Education Review, 95*,

102411. Retrieved November 13, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2023.102411

13 Schochet, P.Z. & Chiang, H.S. (2013). What are error rates for classifying teacher and school performance using value-added models? *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics, 38*(2), 142–171. Retrieved November 13, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.3102/1076998611432174

14 Mas, A. (2017). Does transparency lead to pay compression? *Journal of Political Economy, 125*(5), 1683–1721. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1086/693137

Quintero, D., Hansen, M., & Zerbino, N. (2024). Uncovering the sources of gender earnings gaps among teachers: The role of compensation off the salary schedule. *Economics of Education Review, 103*, 102602. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2024.102602

15 Learning Policy Institute. (2024). *The state of the teacher workforce: A state-by-state analysis of the factors influencing teacher shortages, supply, demand, and equity* [Interactive map]. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/state-of-teacher-workforce-interactive

16 Learning Policy Institute. (2024, September 17). *2024 update: What's the cost of teacher turnover?* [Interactive tool]. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/2024-whats-cost-teacher-turnover; Tan, T.S. & Patrick, S.K. (2024). *2024 update: What's the cost of teacher turnover?* [Technical supplement]. Learning Policy Institute. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/2024-whats-cost-teacher-turnover-technical-supplement

17 National Education Association. (2026). *Rankings of the states 2025 and estimates of school statistics 2026*. Retrieved October 19, 2026, from https://www.nea.org/research-publications

National Center for Education Statistics. (2025). *The Nation's Report Card: 2024 reading assessment*. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/

For salary structure in Massachusetts:

Framingham Public Schools. (2026). *Unit A collective bargaining contract: Salary schedule, 2026–2027 school year*. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://www.framingham.k12.ma.us/educators

For New Jersey, New Jersey School Boards Association. (2025). *Trends in teacher contract negotiations*. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://www.njsba.org/news-information/school-leader/trends-in-teacher-contract-negotiations/

For Connecticut, Meriden Public Schools. (n.d.). *Teachers: 2025–2026 teachers wage schedule*. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://www.meridenk12.org/departments/personnel-and-talent-development/salary-schedules-and-contracts/teachers/

18 Kraft, M.A. & Lyon, M.A. (2024). The rise and fall of the teaching profession: Prestige, interest, preparation, and satisfaction over the last half century. *American Educational Research Journal, 61*(6), 1192–1236. Retrieved October 18, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312241276856