



KEY FACTS ON EDUCATION FUNDING & TEACHER PAY



• State funding has been cut deeply in recent years. **Over the past decade (FY 2009 to FY 2018), the budget appropriated by lawmakers has shrunk 16 percent, adjusted for inflation.** Over half of all state agencies have seen their state funding cut by over 20 percent since 2009, even before accounting for inflation.



• **Per pupil state aid funding to public schools has been cut 28.2 percent below 2008 levels, adjusted for inflation.** This cut is the largest in the U.S. — no other state even tops 20 percent on this same measure.



• **Cuts are hitting all aspects of public education.** The impacts include growing class sizes, fewer course offerings (especially in the arts, technology, and foreign languages), districts going to four-day school weeks, scarce school supplies, and the elimination of support staff like librarians and school counselors.



• **Oklahoma teachers' average take home pay has shrunk 11 percent since FY 2006.** Even in years when per capita personal income in Oklahoma was showing strong growth, teacher salaries did not improve. Compared to West Virginia, which recently went through a teacher strike, Oklahoma teachers receive similarly low pay and much worse overall education funding.



• Funding problems are not limited to teachers or education. **Most state employees have gone more than a decade without a pay increase,** and turnover of state workers has spiked as their salaries fall further behind the private sector.

SOLUTIONS THAT OKLAHOMA LAWMAKERS CAN PASS TO RESOLVE THE WALKOUT



The Oklahoma Legislature last week passed a set of bills to provide pay raises to teachers, school support staff, and public employees funded primarily by a tax increase on tobacco, motor fuels, and gross production. These bills mark a crucial step in tackling some of the state's most urgent problems. **But the new revenues fall short of fully funding new spending commitments.** The state will also need additional revenue to balance this year's budget and make greater investments in education and other needs in the future.



Lawmakers have many good options for increasing revenues to resolve the teacher walkout. While OEA has made a funding request for teacher raises, improved general education and health care funding, and state employee raises that will cost \$812 million in the first year, lawmakers have practical revenues options that could bring in as much as \$1.4 billion annually.



Together these options would ask all Oklahoma households and businesses to contribute their fair share without putting too much of the cost on any one group, and they would be a huge step towards solving the crisis Oklahoma faces as a result of years of budget cuts and underfunding.



Increasing focus is on repealing the capital gains tax break as a solution to fully fund school needs. The capital gains deduction costs more than \$100 million a year, and in 2014 nearly two-thirds of the benefit went to just 824 households with incomes of more than \$1 million. It's wasteful and expensive, and a repeal bill has already passed the Senate with a bipartisan majority.