

## Factors to Consider In Educational Workplace Decisions



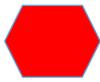
**Setting & Context:** Your first three years teaching in a suburban high school near where you grew up have been challenging and full of life-changing lessons. While your undergrad program provided ample school-based engagement through internships and student teaching, nothing could have prepared you for the reality presented by your students and their unique challenges. Your mentoring and advising role with your homeroom students has been especially demanding and eye-opening. In that capacity, you were often called upon to conference with students who were beginning to explore post-graduation options. As you learned more about your students' personal circumstances, you realized some similarities in their situations to yours; like you, many of your students are the first in their family to attend college. And just as you had experienced, these students would be dependent on student loans to cover much of the expenses of higher education.

Despite the similarities, you've come to recognize that there are stark differences in the life circumstances of many of your students. There are those who spent formative years in refugee camps. A shifting number of your students reside in homeless shelters. In team meetings, you've been exposed to contrasting assumptions held by different colleagues about the innate capacity of groups of students to learn the content based on their home contexts. Your graduate studies have exposed you to research about the subtle and not so subtle ways that groups of students experience discrimination - inequities surrounding the supports and opportunities afforded them because of their native language, poverty level, or special needs status. Together these factors are propelling you to rethink some of your own life's goals and where you want to be to pursue them.

When you began your studies, you received some financial aid but not enough to cover all of your college expenses. As a consequence, when you graduated, you were facing nearly \$35,000 in student loans. Your Master's Degree has added to that total. Paying off your student loans is a primary goal and you've learned that some portion of your student loans can be "forgiven" if you are able to secure a teaching position in a school designated as "low-income" and commit to teaching there for a minimum of five years continuously. Toward that goal, you are beginning to research potential teaching positions for the next school year in another part of the country where eliminating student loan debt might occur on a faster timeline than your current circumstances will afford.

You are open to moving just about anywhere in the country but there are some factors that you consider as non-negotiable. The factors will inform the research you conduct to identify states and communities with a strong commitment to education and to reducing inequities of opportunity for all students as well as those where student loan forgiveness is possible. These factors include:

- Evidence of student growth as measured by the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), especially as it relates to the growth in achievement of low-income, African American, and Hispanic students;
- High school graduation rates;
- Eligibility for student loan forgiveness; and
- Teacher salary ranges.



**Analyze the Data:** You intend to analyze publicly available data sets that may help you narrow the field in terms of pursuing a job in a different state and school district with a strong student-centered philosophy of education. The resources you will examine include sites with specific information relevant to this search while other sites may offer additional helpful information given your priorities:

### **I. The Education Trust: [edtrust.org](http://edtrust.org)**

At [edtrust.org](http://edtrust.org), use the [State Academic Performance and Improvement Tool](#) to compare state-level results across states ([edtrust.org](http://edtrust.org) → Our Resources → Data Tools → and scroll down the page to select any state as your focus state). Using the selection tools, begin by inputting Grade 8 Reading: Low-Income Students. Using the scatter plot displaying 2003-2015 NAEP Improvement scores, identify the following:

1. Which state was designated the Highest Performing, Highest Improving state?
2. What was the scale score for Grade 8 reading in that state? What was the change between 2003 and 2015?
3. What were the three states with the highest improvement between 2003 and 2015?
4. What was the Lowest Performing, Lowest Improving state? What was the change in scale score between 2003 and 2015?
5. Picking any state, which group(s) of students had the highest growth between 2003 and 2015?

Are the comparisons the same when you select Grade 8 Math: Low-Income Students?

1. Which state was the Highest Performing, Highest Improving state?
2. What was the scale score for Grade 8 Math in that state? What was the change between 2003 and 2015?
3. What were the three states with the highest improvement between 2003 and 2015?
4. What was the Lowest Performing, Lowest Improving state? What was the change in scale score for Math between 2003 and 2015?
5. Picking any state, which group(s) of students had the highest growth between the two periods above?
6. Summarize the changes you observed when basing your search on Math.

### **II. Kids Count Data Center: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>**

Visit the [Kids Count Data Center website](#) and select one state in the High Improving, High Growth results that you found at [edtrust.org](http://edtrust.org) ([datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org) → By Topic → Education → School Age). Find the following information:

1. The graduation rate. How much has the graduation rate in that state changed in the past 5 years?
2. What other topics under Education and School Age (or other Topics or

category) would you think could be relevant to your search?

III. **ABODO:** <https://www.abodo.com/blog/annual-rent-report/>

Annual rent report data can assist you in combining information from states with high growth and improvement, higher graduation rates, etc.

IV. **Teacher Salaries in America Niche.com:** <https://articles.niche.com/teacher-salaries-in-america/>

Salary ranges compared across states.

V. **Teacher Cancellation Low-Income Directory:**  
<https://www.tcli.ed.gov/CBSWebApp/tcli/TCLIPubSchoolSearch.jsp>

Ability to search states and schools to determine which ones qualify as low-income for the purpose of eligibility for student loan forgiveness.

VI. **Investments in Education:** <http://www.governing.com/topics/education/gov-education-funding-states.html>

An article to provide context to what some of the differences between state expenditures in education.

VII. **Education Spending Per Student by State:** <http://www.governing.com/gov-data/education-data/state-education-spending-per-pupil-data.html>

VIII. **General Questions**

1. Based on the research above, where are you planning to seek employment as a teacher? Which of the above factors were the most important to you? Explain your thinking.
2. Based on the factors you found most relevant and informative to your search, which data points support your thinking?
3. Are there data that these URLs do not cover that would help in your decision making process?