



What is CWIFT?

The [Comparable Wage Index for Teachers \(CWIFT\)](#) is a tool developed by the National Center for Education Statistics, at the U.S. Department of Education. CWIFT annually measures how teacher salaries compare with wages college graduates could earn in other, non-teaching occupations in their local labor market. Because the cost of living and the competitiveness of local labor markets vary by location, CWIFT adjusts teacher salaries to reflect these regional differences. This helps provide a **fairer comparison** of teacher pay across different areas.

How Does CWIFT Work?

CWIFT compares wages and salaries of teachers in different areas of the country to wages and salaries for college graduates in other local non-teaching occupations. Wage information is based off data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The national average pay is given a score of 1.0, and then each school district gets a CWIFT score higher or lower than 1.0, indicating if teacher pay needs to be higher or lower than the national average to account for local costs of living and job market trends. The CWIFT index is used to estimate and compare wage differences more accurately across regions.

- A CWIFT score above 1.0 means it costs more to hire teachers in that area—due to higher costs of living and tighter local job markets—compared to the national average.
- A CWIFT score below 1.0 means it costs less to hire workers in that area—due to lower cost of living and weaker local job markets—compared to the national average.

Why is IBO Using CWIFT?

A simple comparison of teacher salaries across school districts does not tell the whole story—some areas have **higher costs of living and more competitive job markets** than others. For example, New York City's CWIFT value was **1.146 in 2021-2022**, meaning that **New York City teaching jobs need to pay 14.6% more than the national average to be competitive** after accounting for the local cost of living and labor market. If City teacher salaries do not keep pace with this difference, City teaching jobs may be less attractive to college graduates.

By incorporating CWIFT in the analysis, IBO can better understand how teacher pay stacks up against other local job opportunities and other regions of New York and New Jersey. Additionally, the Rockefeller Institute of Government has proposed **adjusting the regional cost index measure** in the current Foundation Aid Formula from using a Regional Cost Index from 2006 to using CWIFT. Using CWIFT would allow for **better differentiation** between school districts, while the current Regional Cost Index groups New York State into only nine regions. IBO found in [Impact of Foundation Aid Proposals to New York City Revenue](#) that the implementation of this proposal would increase State funding to the City by \$306 million, phased in over five years.