

# Appendix I.

## Methodology

**Improving Islamic Schools:**  
Attracting and Retaining Qualified  
Teachers in U.S. Full-Time Islamic  
Schools

## Appendix I. Methodology

This report utilized data collected by the Islamic Schools League of America (ISLA) through their 2023 U.S. Full-Time Islamic School Profile Survey. The survey was distributed to full-time Islamic schools across 39 states and the District of Columbia, and remained open for responses between November 23rd, 2022, and June 6th, 2023.

A total of 104 schools from 30 states completed the questionnaire. Survey participants were school administrators with access to and knowledge of enrollment data, salary information, and demographic details.

This report presents an analysis of 17 questions from the 2023 U.S. Full-Time Islamic School Profile Survey, focusing specifically on teacher compensation, benefits, recruitment, and retention. The salaries were benchmarked using the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) tables of the employment and average annual wage of teachers.

The report explores four key outcomes:

1. **Teacher Salaries:** The report measures the average annual compensation for full-time Islamic school teachers in elementary, middle, and high school grades, analyzed separately. Salaries were measured at both the grade band level and the school average, depending on the analysis. A numerical scale for teacher salaries was created using the top salary range from the original survey, as well as a categorical variable to indicate high, mid-range, and low salaries for some analyses. Islamic school teacher salaries were benchmarked against the 2022 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data on the employment and average annual wages of elementary, middle, and high school teachers across the country (a blend of public and private schools) by state. The report provided a blended average annual wage by calculating the average of teacher salaries across grade bands.
2. **Teacher Benefits:** The survey measured teacher benefits by presenting participants with a list of eight potential benefits (health insurance, employee tuition discount, retirement plan, paid sick leave, paid vacation, paid family leave, professional development, and continuing education reimbursement) and asking them to select the ones provided by their school. The analysis captured both the raw number of benefits offered by each school and a categorical variable indicating whether the school provided a high, mid-range, or low number of benefits. Additionally, a dichotomous variable (yes/no) was created for each of the eight benefit types.
3. **Teacher Recruitment:** The ease or difficulty (easy, difficult, or very difficult) of filling teacher vacancies for the 2022-2023 academic year was measured for various positions, including Elementary Lead, Math, English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Islamic Studies, Quran, and Arabic teachers.
4. **Teacher Retention:** The survey measured teacher retention on a categorical scale between the past academic year (2021 - 2022) and the current one (2022 - 2023).

The report also examined how the key outcomes were related to various aspects of schools' financial resources and characteristics:

- **School Financial Resources** included operating budget and annual revenue (tuition, fundraising, and grants).
- **School Characteristics** encompassed the school's accreditation status, enrollment, teacher-to-student ratio, number of principals in the past 10 years, number of full-time and part-time teachers, and teacher qualifications (percentage with state certification, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and additional credentials).

Statistical analyses were conducted in STATA to identify relationships between these factors and the key outcomes.

## Limitations

This report has three key limitations: the timeframe of the data collection, the design of the questionnaire, and the scope of the analysis conducted.

The timeframe of data collection (November 23, 2022-June 6, 2023) is a snapshot of the landscape of Islamic schools and may have been impacted by unique post-Covid transitions and other longitudinal trends. Although we lack longitudinal data to demonstrate salary's impact on teacher recruitment and retention over time, recent research around teacher burnout and turnover appear to support the argument that compensation is an essential component to attracting and retaining qualified teachers<sup>1</sup>. However, there are likely other factors related to teacher recruitment and retention in Islamic schools

that our data does not address. Additionally, the impacts of pandemic conditions that we could not account for may have influenced the findings. We encourage future research on this topic to further explore these complexities.

The questionnaire design presented a few limitations for our research. First, technical glitches may have resulted in some missing responses. This resulted in some surveys being partially complete and some gaps in our data. Secondly, a few questions included inconsistent ranges in the options provided to participants; these ranges were adjusted in the analysis and the data was able to be used. Thirdly, due to some questions offering ranges rather than allowing participants to provide specific financial data, we used the top and middle ranges in our analysis. The transformation of categorical salary scales to integers by using the maximum number for each scale may have inflated the salary of teachers at those schools. However, we believe that the schools that participated directionally represent the gaps in pay experienced by Islamic school teachers compared to other teachers across the country, as well the differences in pay by grade band.

Finally, while we have collected a sizable sample, it is not nationally representative of American Islamic schools. We benchmark the reported salaries by grade band and state, and acknowledge that survey design limits the ability to accurately assess the state of compensation among all American Islamic schools. Future research efforts should consider incorporating weighting efforts to make findings more representative of Islamic Schools in the U.S.

<sup>1</sup> Jake Bryant, Samvitha Ram, Doug Scott, and Claire Williams, "K-12 teachers are quitting. What would make them stay?" McKinsey & Company, March 2, 2023. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/k-12-teachers-are-quitting-what-would-make-them-stay/>.