

ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 294

Introduced by Adams, 24.

PURPOSE: To study alternative salary compensation and funding systems for teachers in Nebraska public schools.

Salaries for Nebraska teachers rank forty-fifth nationally and next-to-last among the states bordering Nebraska. Beginning teacher salaries ranked forty-eighth for the most recent year for which national data is available. Nebraska schools, which rank high on national assessments such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the ACT, are in danger of losing their ability to recruit and retain high-quality teachers. Recently, significant numbers of beginning and experienced Nebraska teachers have left the state to achieve a greater level of economic security for themselves and their families.

Traditionally, teacher salary compensation has been based on what is known as the single index salary schedule with vertical increments for years of experience and horizontal increments for graduate postsecondary education. These locally negotiated salary schedules have resulted in starting and career teacher salaries with disparities of thirty-five to forty percent across the state.

Many states have developed alternative compensation systems which recognize the additional salary schedule compensation indices such as specialized knowledge, advanced teaching skills,

and extra teaching assignments, as well as educational and socioeconomic challenges of teaching in low-income schools with at-risk students. Some states have examined and developed additional salary incentives for positive movement of students on assessments of student achievement.

Teacher salaries are funded by local school boards through school district general fund budgets which are derived primarily through property taxes, approximately fifty-two percent, and secondarily through general, unrestricted state aid, approximately thirty-two percent. Both school district property tax levies and school budgets are capped under state law, restricting local school districts' abilities to address teacher salary compensation issues.

A number of states have addressed the issue of how to achieve or maintain competitive teacher salaries through specific state funding for teacher salaries and dedicated state revenue used to fund enhancement in teacher salaries, known as the trust fund concept.

This study shall examine alternative salary schedule systems and alternative funding systems for the enhancement of teacher salary compensation in Nebraska.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Education Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its

recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.