



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 351

Resolution calling upon the Department of Education to calculate salaries of teachers in the New York City public school system based on the Department's central budget rather than an individual school's budget.

By Council Members Crowley, Mendez and Rodriguez

Whereas, The Department of Education (the "Department") provides primary and secondary education to approximately 1.1 million students across more than 1,800 schools throughout New York City, and employs approximately 75,000 teachers; and

Whereas, The Department prepares students to meet grade level standards in English language arts and math, and prepares high school students to meet graduation requirements and pass Regents examinations; and

Whereas, The Department also operates a school food service program, maintains public school buildings and offices, and provides transportation services to students; and

Whereas, Additionally, the Department provides special education instructional services and related services to students enrolled in both public and private school settings; and

Whereas, The Department distributes categorical supports to non-public schools and service providers; and

Whereas, The Department's Fiscal Year 2015 \$20.6 billion Operating Budget (the total budget less pension and debt service costs) includes funding for principals, teachers, textbooks and supplies, transportation, food, safety, universal pre-kindergarten, and after-school programs; and

Whereas, The Department also pays for central administration and field support offices, which work with schools to provide support and help improve student achievement; and

Whereas, The City's more than 1,800 public schools each have an individual school budget that is

funded by the Department through a variety of allocation formulas and pass-through entities; and

Whereas, The Department's total budget is divided into 27 units of appropriation ("UAs"), each of which contains funding to support either personal services (wages and salaries) or other than personal services spending related to a particular service area or function; and

Whereas, All of the funding allocated to schools to support their operations is budgeted centrally within UAs 401, 402, 403, 404, 481, and 482 (although not all of the money budgeted in these UAs funds schools' budgets); and

Whereas, The City's budget does not include information on how much money any individual school receives, and it does not show how many employees are assigned to any particular school, or which specific courses of study are available at any particular school; and

Whereas, Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, the Department began using the Fair Student Funding ("FSF") formula to distribute most of the city and unrestricted state funds needed to operate the schools; and

Whereas, The per-pupil FSF allocation, which totals approximately \$5 billion for the 2014-2015 school year, is the core of a school's total budget; and

Whereas, The FSF allocation covers basic instructional needs, including teachers' salaries, and is allocated to each school based on the number and need-level of students enrolled at that school and is spent at the principal's discretion; and

Whereas, Currently, most teachers' salaries within a school building are calculated against an individual school's budget, over which the school's principal has control, rather than the Department's central administrative budget; and

Whereas, Accordingly, funding for school-based resources, such as textbooks, after-school programs, technology, staff development, and specialty programs, must compete with funding for resources needed for wages and salaries within an individual school; and

Whereas, Teachers' salaries, reflected in a salary schedule, are determined by the collective bargaining agreement entered into between the United Federation of Teachers and the City; and

Whereas, The salary schedule provides for proportional increases in salary when there is an increase in seniority and education level; and

Whereas, As a result, principals often must make the tough decision of hiring and retaining newly hired, and therefore, less expensive teachers, rather than hiring and retaining more experienced, and therefore, more expensive, teachers, to ensure that the individual school has sufficient resources to allow students to get a sound education; and

Whereas, Prior to the FSF, the amount of money allocated to an individual school was determined mostly by student enrollment and the salaries of the teachers at the school, rather than student need; and

Whereas, In preparation for the transition to the FSF, it was assumed that many teachers would be adversely affected in terms of obtaining or maintaining employment so, in April 2007, the Department began providing a Legacy Teacher Supplement ("LTS") to schools as a separate allocation for the difference in teachers' salaries resulting from seniority and higher education levels; and

Whereas, The LTS is provided only for teachers who were on a school's budget prior to the implementation of the FSF; and

Whereas, While LTS is a tremendous resource in preserving existing teachers, it does not safeguard against the reluctance to hire more experienced teachers whose salary would be counted against an individual school's budget; and

Whereas, Schools opened after April 2007 are most significantly disadvantaged because they are ineligible to receive any LTS funding, and therefore, such schools are likely staffed with new, inexperienced teachers; and

Whereas, By allowing the salaries of teachers to be calculated against the Department's Operating Budget as a whole, rather than an individual school's budget, the competition felt by principals to sacrifice

experienced teachers for less expensive inexperienced teachers would be diminished; now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the Department of Education to calculate salaries of teachers in the New York City public school system based on the Department's central budget rather than an individual school's budget.

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