File #: Res 1294-2012, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1294

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, James, Rose, Wills and Halloran

Whereas, The Department of Education (the "Department") provides primary and secondary education to over 1 million prekindergarten to grade 12 students throughout 1,700 schools in 32 school districts, and employs approximately 75,000 teachers; and

Whereas, The Department prepares students to meet grade level standards in reading, writing and math, and prepares high school students to pass Regents exams and to meet graduation requirements; and

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

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

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

Whereas, The Department's $19.2 billion Operating Budget (the total budget less pension and debt service costs) includes funding for principals, teachers, textbooks and supplies; and

Whereas, It also pays for central administration and field support offices, which work with schools to

provide support and help improve student achievement; and

Whereas, Each public school has 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 budget is divided into 26 units of appropriation ("UA"), 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, nor does it show how many employees any particular school has or what specific courses of study are available; 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 FSF allocation, which totals $4.8 billion this school year, is the core of a school's 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, instructional staff, and school operating overhead; and

Whereas, In times when an individual school's budget is decreased, it is possible that the amount of money spent per pupil can remain the same, or even increase; and

Whereas, Accordingly, funding for resources, such as standardized tests, after-school programs, school buses, heating and cooling for school buildings, safety, and school lunches, must compete with funding for resources needed for wages and salaries within an individual school; and

Whereas, All money allocated through FSF can be used at the principals' discretion; and

Whereas, Teachers' salaries, reflected in a salary schedule, are determined by the contract 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 experience level (based on years), and education level; and

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

Whereas, Prior to the FSF, money allocated to an individual school was determined by the experience and education level of a school's teachers, which determined the teachers' salaries and the school's staffing needs, rather than student achievement needs; and

Whereas, In preparation for the transition to the FSF, where it was assumed that many teachers would be adversely affected in terms of obtaining or maintaining employment, in April 2007, the Department provided a Legacy Teacher Supplement ("LTS"), which is given to schools as a separate allocation for teachers to fund the increases in salaries due to increases in education and longevity; and

Whereas, The LTS is only provided for teachers who were on the school's budget prior to the implementation of 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 in that these schools are ineligible to receive any LTS funding, and therefore, such schools are most often staffed with only new, inexperienced teachers; and

Whereas, Allowing the salary for teachers to be calculated against the Department's Operating Budget as a whole, rather than an individual school's budget, would diminish the competition felt by principals to sacrifice teacher quality; 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.

TE
3-29-12
2493