

Action from 2023 Delegate Assembly

NBI 2023-1

NSEA will work with members, other relevant groups, and advocacy organizations to study the feasibility of developing and proposing state and/or federal action that would provide school districts the necessary additional funding to raise the starting teacher pay in Nebraska and to raise veteran compensation by similar amounts.

Action:

In an effort to kickstart efforts to address educator compensation at the state level, this legislative session NSEA partnered with Senator George Dungan to introduce LB1121, which would provide a grant of \$1500 to teachers that have completed six or more years of teaching in the state. Unfortunately, this bill did not progress past its public hearing and remains stuck in the Legislature's Education Committee.

The study committee discussed possible proposals we should recommend that would continue to work on addressing educator compensation. Concerns were raised about focusing exclusively on establishing minimum salary benchmarks for educators – e.g., if districts were told that salaries must reach certain thresholds, that may compromise strong benefits packages that were negotiated at the local level to free up the funding to meet those salary targets. We expanded our scope to investigate all possible options through which we could improve educators' net income - from tax exemptions to providing paid parental leave for the birth of a child.

The committee decided the best course of action was to avoid rushing out a recommendation, and instead opted to introduce a NBI to extend the committee's authority for another year. The plan is to build two surveys: one to members, and one specifically to local association Chief Negotiators. The member survey will ask questions about compensation and actions that might strengthen the odds that they'll continue in our profession. The survey to negotiators will be to see if there are successful initiatives at the local level that we should consider advocating to be implemented statewide. We also wanted to extend the authority of the committee to build time to work with partner organizations and lawmakers to have action ready in the fall for when the Legislature convenes for a new session in January.