

# TEACHER ENHANCEMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

## Study Assignment

The Teacher Enhancement Review Committee was a special committee created by the Executive Board. The Board asked the chairs of the Senate and House Education Committees to appoint up to three members from each of those committees to discuss and develop a plan to reward outstanding teachers. The Board also asked that the group of legislators formulate the plan in collaboration with representatives of the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, the School Administrators of South Dakota, the South Dakota Education Association, and the Associated School Boards of South Dakota.

## Summary of Interim

The committee began the process at its first meeting with an open discussion on teachers in South Dakota and on performance pay plans in general. Participants shared their views on what they hoped the committee would accomplish. They reviewed House Bill 1085. The bill, introduced by Representative Matt McCaulley in 2002, proposed a “master teacher” program funded through block grants from the state. It received considerable discussion during the session, but a consensus on what exactly the bill should contain was never reached. The committee decided to use House Bill 1085 as a starting point in crafting a performance pay program. The group also agreed to limit their discussions to only the policy issues involved and to leave the funding questions for later.

At the second meeting, in Sioux Falls, the committee heard two presentations. Dr. John McLaughlin, a well-known consultant to the education industry, shared his thoughts on teacher pay and other timely education issues. Dr. McLaughlin stressed how difficult it was to develop a successful performance pay plan and how most attempts at it have failed, but he also said that such plans have merit and are worth trying. He noted that in his view, excellent teachers should not be held down to stay level with their peers on a flat career track.

The second presentation was by Jim Shekleton, General Counsel to the South Dakota Board of Regents. Mr. Shekleton discussed the performance pay component of the Board of Regents Compensation Program and how it works. He explained that the performance pay money is distributed to faculty members based on institutional priorities, market comparisons, and individual performance. He noted that the Board was able to maintain the performance pay component by decreasing staff. In his view, performance pay works for the Board of Regents because the faculty knows exactly what is expected of them, and they are evaluated both formally and informally on a regular basis.

The committee concluded its work at the third meeting in Pierre. Committee members further refined the draft legislation and took public testimony on it. They voted to introduce the legislation during the upcoming legislative session. The co-chairs of the committee, Senator Ed Olson and Representative Matt McCaulley, will serve as prime sponsors of the bill, and the other members will sign on as co-sponsors.

Ultimately, the committee was able to develop legislation that met the approval of all the participants in the process. The bill allows a school district to develop its own plan for rewarding teachers within certain parameters. Teachers must meet certain criteria to be eligible for the

reward, but the selection of the teachers who will be rewarded also takes place at the school district level. A selected teacher will receive a reward that is at least one thousand dollars per year, but not more than six thousand dollars per year.

Members of the committee achieved their goal of finding a way to reward teachers based not on their length of service or their level of education, but on how well they do their jobs. The proposed legislation puts money from outside the state aid formula into the hands of teachers who are demonstrating excellence in the classroom.

### **Listing of Legislation Adopted**

An act to reward certain eligible teachers for performance.

### **Summary of Meeting Dates & Places and Listing of Task Force Members**

The Teacher Enhancement Review Committee held meetings on July 18 in Pierre; on August 6 in Sioux Falls; and on August 22 in Pierre.

Committee members were Senate Ed Olson, Co-Chair; Representative Matt McCaulley, Co-Chair; Senator Jim Hutmacher; Representative Burt Elliott; and Representative Cooper Garnos.

Staff members were Clare Cholik, Senior Research Analyst, and Rhonda Purkapile, Senior Legislative Secretary.