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CONTACT: Shelley Meadowcroft
Shelley.Meadowcroft@dsea.org
(302) 922-7554

DSEA Supports Legislation to Create Public Education Compensation Committee *Increasing Delaware's ability to better compensate its educators and recruit and retain quality educators in the future*

DOVER, DE – On Tuesday, the Delaware State Education Association announced its support of Senate Bill 100, filed by Senator Bryan Townsend, which addresses teacher compensation in the state of Delaware.

This legislation would amend Title 14 to convene a Public Education Compensation Committee, consisting of 13 members, which will review Delaware's educator compensation structure. The Committee would also explore the state's ability to compete with regional school districts, the private business sector, and other governmental agencies while recruiting and retaining qualified and diverse educators.

"We are so pleased to see this legislation filed and thank Senator Townsend for his unwavering support of educators. This is something we have been asking for, and we are thankful for all the legislators that stepped up to sponsor this legislation" said **DSEA President Stephanie Ingram**. "We have lost great educators, even former Teachers of the Year, to neighboring states who will pay them more for the excellent work they are doing. The convening of this committee will allow us to take a concentrated look at Delaware's compensation structure and make ourselves more competitive for the most qualified educators in the region."

"Education is a calling. No one becomes an educator to get rich or to earn an easy paycheck," said **Sen. Bryan Townsend**. "We cannot afford the consequences of allowing educator salaries to remain stagnant while workloads rise. We must reassess educator compensation so that we can retain and strengthen our education workforce and be competitive in recruiting the next generation of educators. Our students' futures hinge on us solving this issue."

This committee will work with educators, administrators, school boards, and many other school and community stakeholders, including the Delaware State Education Association, to look at multiple options to help with this issue and make appropriate recommendations with a fiscal note by November, 2023.

"I look forward to serving on the Education Compensation Committee. The work we will undertake will strengthen our ability to recruit and retain qualified and diverse educators. We can no longer turn a blind eye to the fact that for years, we haven't treated our educators like the professional they are" said House Education Chair **Rep. Kim Williams**. "SB 100 contemplates raising base salaries and opportunities for additional compensation for what we know to be rigorous degrees and certifications that enhance an educator's ability to reach students. As well as opportunities that fairly compensates educators that perform responsibilities that fall outside of instruction but mandated by the state or improve the quality of each of our schools."

Over the last 13 years, Delaware has seen a 20% loss in educational staffing, specifically a 1.9% loss in 2019-2021 as reported by the Economic Policy Institute. And, according to JoinDelawareSchools.org, there are 634 vacant educational staffing positions statewide as of April, 2022. The Economic Policy Institute's research also identified three primary factors driving the teacher shortage; they are challenging work environments, inadequate or uneven professional resources for teachers, and low pay relative to peers in other professions with similar credentials and experience. They found that public school teachers are paid 19% less than similar workers in other occupations.

“We know the most important factor in a child’s education is having a good teacher at the front of the classroom,” said **Governor John Carney**. “That’s why we need to make sure we are doing everything we can to recruit dedicated educators into Delaware classrooms and to keep them there.”

“It’s been too long since the state deeply engaged in this kind of study, and I look forward to working alongside educators, union leaders and other partners to make sure we are fairly compensating our educators and offering them the professional career growth opportunities they desire and deserve” said **Delaware Secretary of Education Dr. Mark Holodick**.

Nationally, as last reported in 2019, 41% of teachers held more than one job, 27% held two jobs, about 10% held three jobs, and 5% held four or more jobs. Among teachers with two or more jobs, well over half (62%) worked on weekdays during the academic year after classes ended for the day.

“As a former public school teacher, I look forward to serving on the Public Education Compensation Committee,” said Senate Education Committee Chair **Sen. Laura Sturgeon**. “I have seen many colleagues over the years leave the profession, leave the state or retire early because of Delaware’s outdated public educator compensation structure. Teachers also need pathways for advancement that don't take them out of the classroom, something I look forward to exploring. We must properly compensate and support our teachers or risk losing them.”

“And just because someone says they didn’t become an educator for the money doesn’t mean that they don’t deserve to be fairly compensated for the work they are doing. Let’s stop telling teachers we can’t pay them more, because that doesn’t stop them from being asked to do more and more each year” **DSEA President Stephanie Ingram** concluded.

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