

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 523

Introduced by Juarez, 5.

Read first time January 21, 2025

Committee: Education

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to education; to adopt the Student Teacher
- 2 Compensation Act; to state intent relating to funding; to provide an
- 3 operative date; and to declare an emergency.
- 4 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 **Section 1.** Sections 1 to 7 of this act shall be known and may be
2 cited as the Student Teacher Compensation Act.

3 **Sec. 2.** The Legislature finds and declares:

4 (1) Student teaching is a critical component of teacher preparation
5 and requires significant time and effort;

6 (2) Many student teachers face financial hardships due to the unpaid
7 nature of the teaching practicum, which limits the ability for student
8 teachers to work additional jobs;

9 (3) Nebraska faces a teacher shortage, particularly in high-need
10 subject areas and rural parts of the state; and

11 (4) Providing financial compensation to student teachers will
12 support the academic and professional success of such students while
13 encouraging more individuals to enter and complete a teacher education
14 program.

15 **Sec. 3.** For purposes of the Student Teacher Compensation Act:

16 (1) Accredited teacher education program means a program at a
17 college or university accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by
18 the United States Department of Education and determined to be acceptable
19 by the State Board of Education that prepares individuals for teacher
20 certification;

21 (2) Participating school means any public, private, denominational,
22 or parochial school in Nebraska hosting a student teacher; and

23 (3) Student teacher means an individual enrolled in an accredited
24 teacher education program who is completing a supervised teaching
25 practicum in a participating school as part of the requirements for
26 teacher certification.

27 **Sec. 4.** (1) The State Department of Education shall develop a
28 stipend program to provide financial compensation to student teachers as
29 provided in this section. The department shall provide a stipend of four
30 thousand dollars per student-teaching semester to any student teacher
31 that applies for such stipend and is eligible pursuant to subsection (3)

1 of this section.

2 (2) A student teacher may apply to the department in a manner
3 prescribed by the Commissioner of Education for a stipend under the
4 Student Teacher Compensation Act. Such application shall include:

5 (a) The name of the student-teacher;

6 (b) The name of the accredited teacher education program in which
7 the student teacher is enrolled;

8 (c) The participating school in which the student teacher is
9 completing a supervised teaching practicum;

10 (d) A demonstration of financial hardship in a manner determined by
11 the department; and

12 (e) Any other information the department may require.

13 (3) A student teacher shall be eligible for a stipend if the student
14 teacher:

15 (a) Is enrolled in an accredited teacher education program in
16 Nebraska;

17 (b) Is in the process of completing or signed a contract to complete
18 a supervised teaching practicum at a participating school; and

19 (c) Demonstrates a financial need in a manner determined by the
20 department.

21 **Sec. 5.** (1) The State Department of Education shall electronically
22 submit an annual report to the Clerk of the Legislature and the Governor
23 detailing the implementation of the Student Teacher Compensation Act. The
24 report shall be available to the public and posted on the department's
25 website.

26 (2)(a) The report shall include:

27 (i) The number of student teachers receiving a stipend;

28 (ii) The distribution by geographic area and subject matter area of
29 student teachers receiving a stipend; and

30 (iii) Feedback from participants and schools regarding the
31 effectiveness of the Student Teacher Compensation Act.

1 (b) The report shall not identify any individual person or school
2 providing feedback.

3 **Sec. 6.** It is the intent of the Legislature to appropriate funds
4 annually to the State Department of Education to provide stipends to
5 student teachers pursuant to the Student Teacher Compensation Act. The
6 department may also seek additional funding through grants, private
7 donations, or federal programs.

8 **Sec. 7.** The State Board of Education may adopt and promulgate rules
9 and regulations to carry out the Student Teacher Compensation Act.

10 **Sec. 8.** This act becomes operative on July 1, 2025.

11 **Sec. 9.** Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when
12 passed and approved according to law.