PRELIMINARY FISCAL NOTE
SR 25/HR 14

Appropriations Committee Meeting

April 30, 2013

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SR 25 and HR 14 – Resolutions Proposing Approval of a Reopener Agreement to the 2011-2016 Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the Connecticut State Board of Education, Connecticut Technical High Schools and the State Vocational Federation of Teachers, Local 4200A, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

Fiscal Impact

This resolution is anticipated to result in an overall savings to the State Department of Education of approximately $484,546 in FY 14 and $365,421 in FY 15. These overall savings are made by altering various substitute instructor rates. The supplemental agreement makes the following changes:

I. Reduces the daily substitute rate for substitutes that are not clinical instructors during the 2013 – 2015 school years from $155 pursuant to the schedule below:

2012 – 2013 school year - $155
2013 – 2014 school year - $135
2014 – 2015 school year - $140
2015 – 2016 school year - $155

During the 2011 – 2012 school year, there were 446 individual substitute instructors paid a total of $3,692,821 in the state vocational schools. Assuming the same number of substitute days, 23,825, there would be an estimated savings of $476,446 in FY 14 and $357,321 in FY 15.

II. Increases the rate of pay employees on preparation time receive from 1/5th of the daily substitute rate to $31 until the daily rate increases beyond $155. This provision would result in potential minimal costs as the daily substitute rate under the supplemental agreement is reduced in FY 14 and FY 15. During the 2011 – 2012 school year, there were 1,631 hours spent on class coverage for a total of $50,695. Any potential costs would offset the projected savings from section I.

Requires the Board to use individuals on the regular substitute list for clinical coverage before using Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Department Heads. This is estimated to result in minimal savings as the daily LPN rate is reduced and the substitute rate under the supplemental agreement is reduced in FY 14 and FY 15. In FY 12, there were six LPN Department Heads paid a total of $25,500 for clinical coverage.

III. Reduces the daily substitute rate for clinical instructors in the LPN program from $300 to $200 per day. During the 2011-2012 school year, there were five individuals paid a total of $24,300 for 81 days of substitute clinical coverage. Assuming the same 81 days of substitute clinical coverage, a savings of $8,100 would be realized from the reduced substitute rate for clinical instructors.

The daily substitute rates for both individual substitute instructors and clinical instructors may be increased as deemed necessary by the Board of Education. To the extent that rates are increased, projected savings would be reduced.

IV. Increases the payment amount for unused personal days from the daily substitute rate to $155 or a prorated portion thereof. It is estimated that this provision would result in potential minimal costs in FY 14 and FY 15 as the daily substitute rate under the supplemental agreement is reduced in FY 14 and FY 15.

Summary

The supplemental agreement allows for the expansion of tuition reimbursement for vocational technical education (VTE) courses required for trade certification. The supplemental agreement also clarifies the definition of "tuition" to include "part-time fees" and "tuition/required fees" charged by the Connecticut State University System. The changes related to tuition reimbursement do not change the total annual allocation of $500,000 for the tuition reimbursement program.

Under the current agreement, an employee is allowed Union representation for certain meetings. If a Union representative is not available, the Principal can request the employee to be present at the meeting without Union representation if postponement would result in an unreasonable delay. The supplemental agreement instead clarifies that if a Union representative is not available at the time the meeting is scheduled, the meeting can be postponed by the employee or Union to the next workday morning except in certain circumstances which require having the meeting at its scheduled time.

The supplemental agreement also clarifies how vacancies are handled from FY 14 – FY 16. Under the current agreement, any vacancies occurring between March 15th and May 15th will be filled by lateral transfers and take effect at the start of the new school year. The supplemental agreement changes the May 15th date to the Friday before Memorial Day holiday. In addition, any vacancies between May 15th and October 31st must be posted except that internal candidates will have preference for filling the vacancies based on seniority or bargaining unit status. The supplemental agreement changes the October 31st date to October 15th and May 15th to the Friday before the Memorial Day holiday.

The supplemental agreement:

- Requires that any instructor who voluntarily transfers to a position with a new subject must remain in that position for two years before eligible to transfer;

- Clarifies that regularly scheduled part-time employees who are scheduled to work 32 hours per week for 24 calendar months have entitlement over outside hires but not over full-time instructors;

- Requires that an employee must be certified, licensed and meet certain standards or requirements to transfer, bump or be recalled to a position that calls for a particular certification, license or other standard or requirement;

- Requires notice of administrative transfers be given to employees and the Union at least 15 days prior to the effective date of the transfer rather than the current 30 days; and

- Requires any administrative transfer of an instructor to not have a commute of more than 40 miles one-way.

The supplemental agreement also makes changes that were previously agreed upon and omitted from the current agreement.

Background

The 2011-2016 collective bargaining agreement between State Board of Education and the State Vocational Federation of Teachers allowed for reopener negotiations for limited purpose negotiations up to eight non-economic issues for each side. This is the first time in which reopener negotiations have occurred.