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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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RE: House Bill 2322

House Bill 2322 is intended to be a companion to HB 2096, which makes changes to the Fair Dismissal Appeals Board composition that will improve the ability of FDAB to empanel teachers for this due-process activity. Under current law, school districts whose employees are appointed to serve on FDAB must bear sole responsibility for hiring substitutes during the period of time their education employee is serving. This averages three to five days per case.

Substitute teachers cost \$161 per day, and there are on the order of a dozen cases per year requiring the services of a FDAB-appointed teacher. Additionally, all FDAB appointees attend a one-day orientation and annual meeting. This appropriation bill would allow the Department of Education to reimburse the handful of school districts who must hire substitutes during these absences, and that is the intent of this appropriation. When combined with the other changes contemplated by HB 2322, which will also allow some service by retirees, the total costs for this important work will be kept to a minimum.

Without this bill, school districts will have to fund this expense or else refuse to release their teacher appointee. Because school funding remains at a critically low level, this has been happening with increasing frequency in recent years. That is why the Department of Education and education stakeholders from the school districts, administrator, and teacher ranks have come together to support both bills as a common-sense approach to ensuring that when dismissal cases are appealed, qualified panels may be formed to resolve these cases.

I urge a do-pass. Thank you.

PB