

South Dakota

# Survey: Low Pay Hurts Teacher Retention

BY CHET BROKAW  
Associated Press

PIERRE — Nearly three-quarters of South Dakota school superintendents responding to a survey believe low pay is an important reason they are having trouble hiring and keeping teachers, according to a survey released Monday by groups representing school districts.

Superintendents from 130 of 154 districts responded to the survey sponsored by the Associated School Boards of South Dakota and the School Administrators of South Dakota. The two organizations plan to use the survey results in their effort to persuade the Legislature to boost state aid to school districts.

Nearly 92 percent of the superintendents said they believe it has become more difficult to find qualified applicants for teaching jobs in the past three years, with about 79 percent saying the pool of applicants has been inadequate because of the number or quality of those applying.

Schools have had particular problems in finding adequate teaching applicants in math, science, foreign language, English, special education and career and technical education programs.

While 73 percent of the superintendents said low pay is an important reason people do not apply for teaching position, 70 percent said pay is also an important factor in why teachers leave their district.

South Dakota had the nation's lowest average teacher salary in the

2012-2013 school year at \$39,580, far below the national average of \$56,383 and substantially below average paychecks in neighboring states, according to the U.S. Education Department.

About half the South Dakota superintendents said increasing pay would enhance the number and quality of people applying for teaching jobs.

Rob Monson, executive director of the school administrators organization, said South Dakota teachers are leaving because they can earn more money teaching in nearby states or in non-teaching jobs.

"You've got great teachers in front of these students, and they're leaving the profession to go into private industry because they can double or triple their income," Monson said.

Joel Jorgenson, superintendent of the Hamlin School District, said he got about 50 applicants for any elementary teaching job a decade ago, but only got nine last year. For middle school and high school openings, he got about four applicants 10 years ago, but got a total of four applicants for three positions in special education, English and art last year.

Low pay is big factor in the drop in college graduates in teaching fields, Jorgenson said.

"We've been very fortunate. We have a great staff, but it's getting to the point where I'm afraid at some point I'm not going to be able to say that just because of the lack of applicants we have out there right now," Jorgenson said.

School officials are joining with

statewide education groups to ask the Legislature to boost state aid to schools by more than Gov. Dennis Daugaard has recommended.

The Republican governor's budget would boost state aid to schools by nearly 3 percent next year, nearly double the inflationary increase required by law. But the education groups are asking lawmakers to instead provide a 3.8 percent increase, which would put spending per student back where it was before budget cuts were made in 2011.

State aid was frozen in 2010 and cut in 2011 as part of Daugaard's plan to slash most state spending by 10 percent. Because of some changes made by the Legislature, the effective cut to school districts in 2011 was 6.6 percent.

## Survey: Midwest Economy Growing

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A new survey of business leaders suggests the economy will continue growing in nine Midwestern and Plains states in the months ahead.

The monthly Mid-America Business Conditions Index rose to 57.7 last month, compared with 53.2 in December.

Looking six months ahead, the business confidence index dropped to a still strong 62.2 from 66.5 in December.

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth, while a score below that suggests decline.

The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

## 6 Students Injured In School Bus Crash

CANTON (AP) — Six students have been injured when a school bus ran into the back of a garbage truck in Canton.

KELO television reports that the crash happened about 7:45 a.m. when the bus was driving into town on Highway 18.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says the driver of the bus was looking in the rear-view mirror to check on students and when he looked down, the garbage truck stopped to pick up trash. The bus driver couldn't stop and ran into the back of the garbage truck.

Five students were taken to an area hospital, and a parent had a sixth student checked out by a physician. The Highway Patrol says some students needed stitches and others suffered dental injuries.

The bus driver was cited for careless driving.

## Neb. Minimum Wage Bills Introduced

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Proposals to raise the minimum wage in Nebraska are drawing support from advocates who say they would help the working poor, and opposition from business groups that say it would do just the opposite.

Sen. Jeremy Nordquist of Omaha presented a legislative committee Monday with a bill to raise the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$9.00 by 2017. He says the bill would ensure that hard work pays in Nebraska.

Lawmakers also heard a bill by Sen. Steve Lathrop that would increase the minimum wage for tipped workers from the current \$2.13 an hour up to 70 percent of minimum wage.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics says 32,000 Nebraskans earned the minimum wage in 2012.

## Experts: Listeria Strain Is Not Harmful

PIERRE (AP) — Experts say the listeria strain found in a sample of raw milk sold in South Dakota is not the one that often makes people sick.

The state Agriculture Department on Jan. 21 announced that a sampling of bottled raw milk from Brookings-based Jerseydale Farms tested positive for listeria. The agency cautioned the public that unpasteurized milk bought from the operation might contain harmful bacteria.

Scientists told the *Capital Journal* that the listeria strain found in the milk isn't the one that poses health threats. State public health veterinarian Russ Daly says a different strain is responsible for most listeria infections in people.

The Agriculture Department says it was obligated to inform the public, even though tests of the listeria strain hadn't been completed at the time of the announcement.

## Minnesota

# Joan Mondale Passes Away At 83

BY BRIAN BAKST  
Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Joan Mondale, who burnished a reputation as "Joan of Art" for her passionate advocacy for the arts while her husband was vice president and a U.S. ambassador, died Monday. She was 83.

Mondale's husband, sons Ted and William and other family members were by her side when she died, the family said in a statement released by their church. The family had announced Sunday that she had gone into hospice care, but declined to discuss her illness.

An arts lover and an avid potter, Joan Mondale was given a grand platform to promote the arts when her husband, then-Democratic U.S. Sen. Walter Mondale, was elected Jimmy Carter's vice president in 1976.

Carter named her honorary chairwoman of the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities, and in that role she frequently traveled to museums, theaters and artist studios on the administration's behalf. She lobbied Congress and states to boost public arts programs and funding.

She also showcased the work of prominent artists in the vice presidential residence, including photographer Ansel Adams, sculptor David Smith and painter Georgia O'Keeffe.

Her enthusiasm for the cause earned widespread praise in the arts community, including from Jim Melchert, director of the visual arts program for the National Endowment for the Arts during Carter's administration.

"Your rare fire has brightened many a day for more people than you may imagine," Melchert wrote to her after the 1980 Carter-Mondale re-election defeat. "What you've done with style and seeming ease will continue illuminating our world for a long time to come."



BRIAN PETERSON/MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE/MCT  
Joan Mondale, the wife of former vice president Walter Mondale, is seen at her home in Minneapolis in this 2002 file photo. Joan died Monday afternoon surrounded by her husband, sons and family members.

As Carter's No. 2, Walter Mondale was seen as a trusted adviser and credited with making the office of the vice president more relevant. It was natural that his wife would do the same for her role. Vice presidential aide Al Eisele once said of his boss:

"It was important to him that Joan not just be the vice president's wife, but his partner."

Joan Mondale would later take her cultural zeal overseas when her husband was named U.S. ambassador to Japan during President Bill Clinton's administration. She relished the chance to study Japanese art and give dignitaries clay pots she made as gifts.

In her 1972 book, "Politics in Art," she framed a connection between the two.

"Sometimes we do not real-

## Nebraska

# The Governor's Race Sees Another Big Shakeup

BY GRANT SCHULTE  
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska governor's race is seeing yet another shake-up with the departure of Republican state Sen. Charlie Janssen and the likely entry of Attorney General Jon Bruning.

Janssen said Monday that he was withdrawing because he didn't see a clear path to victory in the GOP primary, which includes five other candidates. His announcement came days after he reported \$74,000 in campaign cash on hand — the lowest in the field — and \$317,000 that was raised last year. Omaha businessman Pete Ricketts led the pack with \$932,000 in cash-on-hand and nearly \$1.4 million raised for his campaign.

Janssen, of Fremont, said he had no immediate future plans but didn't rule out a run for state auditor. The job is up for grabs this year because Republican state Auditor Mike Foley, of Lincoln, is running for governor.

"I'm not saying goodbye; I'm saying I'll see people around," Janssen said. "I plan to stay very involved. I have three years left as a state senator, and I still have a lot of work left to do."

Bruning confirmed last week that he was considering a last-minute run for governor. He said he began looking at the race after undergoing surgery for colon cancer and receiving dozens of calls and text-messages from well-wishers who urged him to consider running.

An announcement could come as early as Tuesday. If he runs, Bruning would enter the

race with immediate statewide name recognition. He has twice run unsuccessfully for U.S. Senate, most recently in the 2012 race won by Republican U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer. Bruning has served as attorney general since 2003, and was previously a Nebraska state senator.

Bruning has an \$850,000 campaign fund available if he were to run for governor. The other Republican candidates are Ricketts, Foley, Omaha tax attorney Bryan Slone, and Nebraska state Sens. Tom Carlson and Beau McCoy.

Former University of Nebraska Regent Chuck Hasselbrook is unopposed in the Democratic primary.

If Bruning decides to run, it would open a race for Nebraska attorney general. Republican prospects for the job include Lincoln attorney Mike Hilgers, Omaha attorney Brian Buescher and Nebraska state Sen. Pete Pirsch. Pirsch, an Omaha attorney, has announced plans to run for state auditor.

Democrat Janet Stewart, a former candidate for Congress and Nebraska secretary of state, has said she plans to

enter the race for attorney general.

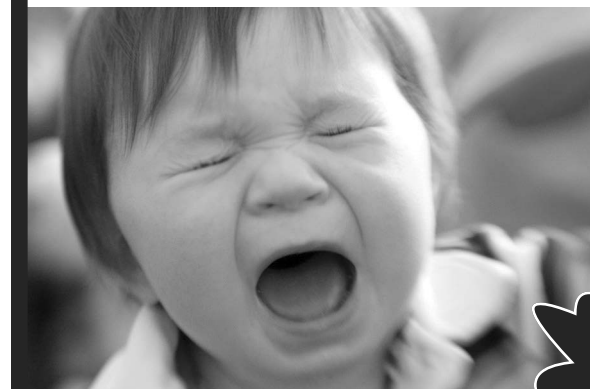
Another prospect mentioned for attorney general was State Treasurer Don Stenberg, who held the job from 1991 to 2003. But Stenberg ruled out the possibility in an interview Monday, saying he had already filed paperwork for his re-election campaign.

The Nebraska governor's race has already taken several surprising turns, including the loss of three Republican hopefuls and one Democratic contender.

Nebraska Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy withdrew from the GOP race after resigning from office in a scandal involving calls to women on his state-issued cell phone, and former Speaker Mike Flood pulled himself out after his wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. Falls City businessman Charles Herbster opted out of the race before formally announcing.

On the Democratic side, state Sen. Annette Dubas announced that she would drop out because of family pressures.

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