

MEMORANDUM

TO: Joey Donovan, Chair, House Education Committee

FROM: Joel D. Cook, Executive Director, Vermont-NEA

DATE: January 30, 2014

SUBJECT: Teacher relicensing – the basics regarding the "why" and the "what"

The basics: The process through which licensed teachers are required to pass just to retain their professional license is much, much more cumbersome than what faces other professionals in Vermont and teachers in other states. Vermont-NEA's 7500+ teacher members have directed the Association to seek elimination of the "excess." We have never seen such uniformity of opinion among our members on an issue about their profession and student learning.

Despite efforts dating back almost a full decade, rather than becoming more consistent with professions generally and useful for professional educators and their students, the process became even more cumbersome in 2009.

What should be eliminated: the obligations to produce "individual professional learning plans" and "portfolios." (That is, there is NO objection whatever to requiring significant continuing education as a condition of retaining a professional license.)

Rationale: IPLPs and portfolios are redundant of other tasks in which teachers engage in their jobs: the licensing function has taken on aspects of actual evaluation of job performance. Evaluation is the responsibility of the teacher's public employer, not the state licensing agency. And, eliminating these mandates would free up literally many 1000s of professional hours each year to dedicate to activity useful to both teachers and their students.

What is needed

- a. A real commitment by the standards board to remove the IPLP and portfolio components of the process as of July 1 this year. We hope to obtain that through meetings with the standards board but...
- b. It would help if the Education Committees added their voices to the chorus.
- c. **Legislation.** Because changing the process requires changing rules, which takes no less than 8 months, and we need an end to these state mandates effective for the coming school year, there are 2 options:
 1. An official commitment by the standards board that, as of July 1, it will not require relicensing teachers to do "IPLPs" or portfolios while it pursues a rules change to that effect; OR
 2. Legislation that simply says that, as of July 1, the standards board shall not require teachers up for relicensing to submit either IPLPs or portfolios.