

16 V.S.A. § 243 is amended to read:

Appointment; renewal; dismissal

(a) Appointment and supervision. The school board of each school district operating a school, after recommendation by the superintendent, may designate a person as principal for each public school within the district, except that a principal may be selected to serve more than one school. In the case of a technical center, only the school board which operates the center may designate a person as director. For purposes of this section the word "principal" shall include a principal and the director of technical education, and the term "public school" shall include a technical center. The superintendent of schools shall be the supervisor of the principal and shall be responsible for supporting him or her in the performance of duties and in school improvement initiatives.

(b) Length of contract. The principal shall be employed by written contract for a term of not less than one year nor more than three years. Following the initial employment contract of the principal, the superintendent shall be responsible for recommending to the school board the renewal or nonrenewal of any subsequent contract.

(c) Renewal and nonrenewal. A principal who is in his or her first two years of employment in the same position has the right to either have his or her contract renewed or to receive written notice of nonrenewal on or before April 1st. A principal who has been continuously employed for more than two years in the same position has the right either to have his or her contract renewed, or to receive written notice of nonrenewal ~~at least 90 days before the existing contract expires~~ on or before February 1st. Nonrenewal may be based upon elimination of the position, unresolved performance deficiencies or other reasons affecting the educational mission of the school. The written notice shall recite the grounds for nonrenewal. If nonrenewal is based on unresolved performance deficiencies, the written notice shall be accompanied by an evaluation performed by the superintendent. At its discretion, the school board may allow a period of remediation of performance deficiencies prior to issuance of the written notice. After receiving such a notice, the principal may request in writing, and shall be granted, a meeting with the school board. Such request shall be delivered within 15 days of delivery of notice of nonrenewal, and the meeting shall be held within 15 days of delivery of the request for a meeting. At the meeting the school board shall explain its position, and the principal shall be allowed to respond. The principal and any member of the board may present written information or oral information through statements of others, and the principal and the board may be represented by counsel. The meeting shall be in executive session unless both parties agree in writing that it be open to the public. After the meeting, the school board shall decide whether or not to offer the principal an opportunity to renew his or her contract. The school board shall issue its decision in writing within five days. The decision of the school board shall be final.