



## Danville School

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Noah D. Noyes, Principal

**January 27, 2014**

**To: Members of the Vermont Senate Education Committee**  
**From: Noah D. Noyes, Principal, Danville School**  
**Re: S.304 Bill**

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to provide my perspective on the proposed changes to the statutory language regarding the employment of school principals, currently addressed in 16 V.S.A. § 243. I feel strongly that the proposed changes of Bill S. 304 will accomplish several outcomes that will benefit schools and ultimately increase student achievement across our state.

We have a shortage of *willing* administrators in Vermont. This is not, however, a function of lacking qualified personnel as there are a surplus of educators licensed as principals that are not currently serving in such capacity. Current statutory provisions dissuade qualified educators from pursuing and filling principal positions. I believe that this situation is largely due to the substantial lack of job security that is inherent to the principalship. 16 V.S.A. § 243(c)(2) allows principal contracts to be non-renewed for unspecified “*other reasons*”, which essentially allows for “*any reason*” to serve as the basis for non-renewal of a principal contract.

In my opinion, the above fact is a significant deterrant to encouraging qualified and motivated educators to leave the teaching ranks and enter administration. In doing so, an educator must choose to waive substantial statutory employment protection under 16 V.S.A. § 1752 and accept the minimal/non-existent protections of 16 V.S.A. § 243(c)(2). In addition, it creates a culture in which acting principals must spend significant time campaigning to ensure their continued employment as opposed to focusing their full energies on teaching and learning outcomes.

These conditions help contribute to a shallow pool of willing and qualified principal candidates and a high rate of administrator turnover in public schools across Vermont. Frequent changes in leadership result in discontinuity of vision, programming, and expectations and thwart increases in student achievement.

To be clear, I am an ardent supporter of rigorous, substantive, and evidence-based evaluation mechanisms for principals. School leaders are charged with an important duty and should rightfully be held to high standards of professional performance. We should also, however, be afforded a thorough process of evaluation and have the opportunity to correct and improve our performance when needed in the same manner that we provide for teachers and students.

I urge you to consider the changes that this bill proposes in order to better support the dedicated and hard-working principals of Vermont. By helping to increase the length of principal tenure, you will be supporting stability of leadership that produces focused and productive school environments which foster excellence in teaching and learning.

Thank you for considering this position and please do not hesitate to contact me if additional input is desired.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Noah D. Moyes".

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