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Vermont Principals' Association

*Supporting Learners and Leaders*

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To: Members of the Senate Education Committee  
From Ken Page, Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association  
Re: Teacher Relicensing  
Date: February 3, 2014

I am aware that you are taking testimony this week on this topic. I wanted to share my perspective as a teacher and administrator and now executive director for over 40 years. I hope you will consider this when you are taking testimony on this important issue.

First, I have the utmost respect to those professionals who serve on the Standard Boards for Professional Educators throughout Vermont. I had the privilege of serving on the Central Vermont Administrative Relicensing Board with our now Director of Educator Quality for the Agency of Education, Marta Cambra in the 90's. It was an honor to work with such dedicated professionals.

However, times have changed greatly since the early 90's and principals and others in the field now regard the process for preparing for and completing their license renewal as onerous and outdated. When I was a principal at Crossett Brook Middle School, I thought that the goals that teachers wrote yearly for their evaluation should be connected to their Individual Professional Development Plan (now referred to as the IPLP). However, many administrators and teachers thought that the IPDP goals they developed had to do with relicensing, and that the school goals are for the work you do everyday as part of your teaching job. I thought that the goals should be used primarily for what you did on the job with students and colleagues to improve your professional practice.

Also, to me the development of my portfolio was a very interesting exercise for me to do--- but it did not have a deep connection to the work that I did on a daily basis with students and teachers.

I still hold these beliefs about the IPLP and the portfolio---that they need to be connected to the work one does everyday in our schools.

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Specifically, I believe the following:

- The seven year process for relicensing (and setting educator goals), is not in line with how fast changes are happening in education;
- The portfolio development process seems more about “show” and less about collecting evidence that one has made a measurable difference with students;
- In general, teachers and principals do after-the-fact reflection about how the activity connects to their IPLP goals. We know we should take the time immediately after we have completed the activity, but this is simply not possible;
- The teacher and principal relicensing boards are staffed with very busy teachers and principals who realistically don't have a context for understanding the individual goals and don't really have adequate time to do their work on the board;
- That seeking an advanced degree (such as a Masters Degree) is not a reason for more professional learning according to most Professional Standards Boards. However gaining mastery in a certain subject is a very appropriate goal. But, let's face it, people will get more training and will seek more compensation for it. This seems logical to me.
- Principals, who are charged with developing professional learning activities for their staffs do not do well in their own professional learning;
- In general, my largest concern is still this: There does not seem to be a clear connection between a teacher or administrator staff evaluation and his/her IPLP

Again, this is not to demean the work done by the Professional Standards Board. *However, in these days when we demand so much from our professionals to be doing relevant, cutting edge, 21<sup>st</sup> century work on the job, it seems that we also need a 21<sup>st</sup> century relicensing process to reflect the new normal.* I would suggest that the answer should be found in connecting their job evaluations with their professional goals and entrusting teachers and principals to work collaboratively to monitor progress toward those goals.