

Testimony from Ken Page, VPA Executive Director regarding the Miscellaneous Education Bill, February 21, 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Miscellaneous Education bill. When I heard Senator Baruth on January 18, 2017 say it was likely that there would be miscellaneous education bill this session, I contacted the Agency of Education to find out if their recommendation from their report on Section 47 of Act 46 was still being considered. I had been previously assured from Secretary Holcombe that it was still their recommendation, but somehow, in their recent recommendation to this committee, this small change from their 2015 report was missed.

Therefore, I am renewing this and I ask that you consider adding the Agency's 2015 recommendation to this miscellaneous education bill.

The report entitled *Report on Act 46 of 2015: An act related to making amendments to education funding, education spending and education governance: Section 47 Principals and Superintendents Study and Proposal*, was issued in November of 2015. In 2016, there was no miscellaneous education bill. So, this is the first opportunity to act on this AOE recommendation.

On the bottom of page 2 and top of page 3 of the report, there is Summary of Results, which states:

The Agency is making only one statutory change recommendation. Currently V.S.A. 16 §243 requires notice of non-renewal of principal's contract at least 90 days before the existing contract expires (for a principal who has been continuously employed for more than two years in the same position). **The education partners and Agency recommend, "on or before February 1" be inserted in place of "at least 90 days before the existing contract expires."**

Accelerating the notice of non-renewal of a principal's contract to February 1 will provide both the principal and the school district an additional 60 days' time to pursue options for the next school year. Presently, the 90-day window prior to contract expiration (on or about April 1) leaves little time for principals in this situation, and school districts, to engage a thorough search for another employment opportunity (for the departing principal) and a replacement principal (for the school district). This proposed change in law to earlier notice (no later than February 1) would help to ensure a fairer process for the departing principal, a better search process for the employer school district, and would solidify school leadership before offering contracts to teachers and support staff. Therefore, the recommendation is that V.S.A. 16 §243 be amended as follows:

“§ 243. Appointment; renewal; dismissal
(c) Renewal and nonrenewal. 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 on or before February 1 of the year in which the existing contract expires.”

Although it seems like a small recommendation, the reality is that it is an important change for school leadership that benefits both the school leader and the district as well. I strongly urge you to consider this addition to the Miscellaneous Education Bill.

