

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2811

As Reported By House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to notification of nonrenewal of educational employees' contracts.

Brief Description: Changing the notification date for nonrenewal of educational employees' contracts.

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, Cole, Talcott, Keiser and Quall.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/3/98, 2/6/98 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Johnson, Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Smith; Sterk; Sump and Talcott.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Linville; Quall and Veloria.

Staff: Charlie Gavigan (786-7340).

Background: Certificated employees, including teachers, principals, and superintendents, are employed by the school district board under a written contract for up to one year. Except for provisional employees, contracts for certificated employees are renewed for the following year unless the employee is given notice that probable cause exists not to renew the contract. This notice must be given by May 15, or June 1, if the Appropriations Act has not passed the Legislature by May. The employee has the right to appeal the determination of probable cause not to renew the contract.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Notice that probable cause exists not to renew the contract of a certificated employee for the next school year must be given by June 15, or 30 days after the Governor signs the Appropriations Act, whichever is later.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The date notice must be given is changed from June 30 to June 15. An emergency clause is added making the bill take effect immediately.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This bill will reduce the number of reduction in force (RIF) notices that unnecessarily have to be made because the statutory notice period comes too early in the budgeting process. Being able to provide notice later when there is more certainty about the budget will result in better planning and unnecessary RIFs. Also, having a later notification date allows better linkage between the assessment of how well the students are learning and teacher performance; the student assessment test results are not available under the current early notification date. This helps school boards make better staff decisions.

Testimony Against: The bill applies to all notices of nonrenewal; it should only apply to nonrenewals based on the budget or a reduction in enrollment; performance-based decisions should still be made by May 15. The bill allows the notice to be sent by June 30 even if the budget is finalized in March; if the budget is finished early, the notification date should be earlier.

Testified: Joe Daniels and Tom Weeks, Seattle Public Schools (pro); Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association (pro); and Bob Maier, Washington Education Association (con).