AN ACT Relating to school employee workforce reductions; amending RCW 28A.405.210 and 28A.405.300; adding new sections to chapter 28A.405 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature finds that in order for Washington schools to be great places to teach and learn — where all students and educators succeed — schools must build cultures where all students thrive. The legislature intends to respect teachers and principals first by empowering them to create that culture together, and then by helping them retain the teachers who are crucial to that culture. In particular, these policies support practices with a track record of closing the achievement gap. This is done by ensuring that teachers who do the best work are the ones who keep their jobs when budgets need to be cut, by basing reduction in force policies on the evaluations the legislature has outlined for measuring teacher performance. Since the loss of teachers through layoffs already impacts student learning, there is an urgent need to conduct layoffs in a way that retains the most effective teachers. Educators deserve to be recognized for their ability to help students learn and students deserve the very best and brightest teachers.
NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 28A.405 RCW to read as follows:

(1) When reductions in the workforce occur due to enrollment decline or revenue loss, the employment contracts of any certificated classroom teacher and educational staff associate must be nonrenewed in the following manner within each particular certification or endorsement area. Certificated classroom teachers and educational staff associates who received the lowest evaluation rating, as described in RCW 28A.405.100, when averaging their two most recent evaluations in accordance with the method in subsection (2) of this section, must have their contracts nonrenewed first, with nonrenewals continuing to proceed upward through the two-year average ratings in such a manner. Any determination that must be made between teachers who received the same averaged rating must provide a preference for teachers who have the greatest number of years teaching in the school district and any additional criteria established in the policy of the board or locally bargained agreement; except that any such additional criteria may be established only if the contract or policy is in the best interest of the students.

(2) For the purposes of calculating two-year averages as provided in subsection (1) of this section, the average must weigh the teacher's most recent evaluation by sixty percent and his or her prior year's rating by forty percent. The numbers to be used in calculating these averages are as follows, the lowest evaluation rating is worth zero points, and the highest evaluation rating is worth 4.25 points. If a four-tiered evaluation system is being used, then the second highest evaluation rating is worth 2.75 points and the third highest evaluation rating is worth four points. The weighted two-year average shall be multiplied by a factor of 1.05 to ensure that the averaging of ratings for teachers with reasonable variation in their evaluations does not result in lowering their rating below teachers with similar ratings based on only one year's evaluation rating. The final two-year weighted average shall be rounded to the hundredth place before being used for the decisions made under subsection (1) of this section. Teachers with only one year of evaluation ratings must use this evaluation rating in place of a two-year average.

(3) For the purposes in subsection (1) of this section, any certificated classroom teacher or educational staff associate for whom no evaluation data is available must have his or her employment
contract nonrenewed before any other certificated classroom teacher or educational staff associate within his or her certification or endorsement area. If data collection allows, school leaders should make an effort to complete evaluations before the district is required to make contract renewal decisions.

(4) Any school district whose board policies or locally bargained agreement outlines recall rights for certificated classroom teachers and educational staff associates must recall staff in the reverse order contracts were nonrenewed as provided for in subsection (1) of this section. No school district policy may offer recall rights for more than three years.

(5) All collective bargaining agreements and other contracts entered into between a school district and an employee bargaining unit or an employee after the effective date of this section must be consistent with this section.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 28A.405 RCW to read as follows:

(1) In the event that the determination that the employment contract of a certificated classroom teacher or educational staff associate will not be renewed by the district in accordance with section 2 of this act, the employee must be notified in writing on or before May 15th or if the omnibus appropriations act has not passed the legislature by May 15th, then notification must be no later than June 15th. The notification must state the reason or reasons for the determination. The notice must be served upon the employee personally, or by certified or registered mail, or by leaving a copy of the notice at the place of his or her usual abode with some person of suitable age and discretion then resident therein.

(2) Every employee who receives notification under this section, at his or her request made in writing and filed with the superintendent of the district within ten days after receiving the notice, must be given the opportunity to meet informally with the superintendent for the purpose of requesting the superintendent to reconsider the decision. The meeting must be held no later than ten days following the receipt of the request, and the employee must be given written notice of the date, time, and place of meeting at least three days prior thereto. At the meeting, the employee must be given the opportunity to refute any facts upon which the superintendent's
determination was based and to make any argument in support of his or her request for reconsideration.

(3) Within ten days following the meeting with the employee, the superintendent must either reinstate the employee or submit to the school district board of directors for consideration at its next regular meeting a written report recommending that the employment contract of the employee be nonrenewed and stating the reason or reasons for nonrenewal. A copy of the report must be delivered to the employee at least three days before the scheduled meeting of the board of directors. In taking action upon the recommendation of the superintendent, the board of directors must consider any written communication that the employee files with the secretary of the board at any time before that meeting.

(4) The board of directors must notify the employee in writing of its final decision within ten days following the meeting at which the recommendation for nonrenewal was considered. The decision of the board of directors to not renew the contract of an employee may be appealed in accordance with RCW 28A.405.320 through 28A.405.360 to the superior court in the county in which the school district is located.

(5) This section applies to any person employed by a school district in a certificated classroom teaching or education staff associate position after the effective date of this section. This section provides the exclusive means for nonrenewing the employment contract due to enrollment decline or revenue loss of any such employee and no other provision of law is applicable, including RCW 28A.405.210, 28A.405.300, and 28A.405.310.

Sec. 4. RCW 28A.405.210 and 2010 c 235 s 303 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) No teacher, principal, supervisor, superintendent, or other certificated employee, holding a position as such with a school district, hereinafter referred to as "employee", shall be employed except by written order of a majority of the directors of the district at a regular or special meeting thereof, nor unless he or she is the holder of an effective teacher's certificate or other certificate required by law or the Washington professional educator standards board for the position for which the employee is employed.

(2) The board shall make with each employee employed by it a written contract, which shall be in conformity with the laws of this
state, and except as otherwise provided by law, limited to a term of
not more than one year. Every such contract shall be made in
duplicate, one copy to be retained by the school district
superintendent or secretary and one copy to be delivered to the
employee. No contract shall be offered by any board for the
employment of any employee who has previously signed an employment
contract for that same term in another school district of the state
of Washington unless such employee shall have been released from his
or her obligations under such previous contract by the board of
directors of the school district to which he or she was obligated.
Any contract signed in violation of this provision shall be void.

(3)(a) In the event it is determined that there is probable cause
or causes that the employment contract of an employee should not be
renewed by the district for the next ensuing term such employee shall
be notified in writing on or before May 15th preceding the
commencement of such term of that determination, or if the omnibus
appropriations act has not passed the legislature by May 15th, then
notification shall be no later than June 15th, which notification
shall specify the cause or causes for nonrenewal of contract.

(b) The determination of probable cause for certificated
employees, other than the superintendent, shall be made by the
superintendent. (Such)

(c) Notice shall be served upon the employee personally, or by
certified or registered mail, or by leaving a copy of the notice at
the house of his or her usual abode with some person of suitable age
and discretion then resident therein.

(d) Every (such) employee (so) notified in accordance with
this section, at his or her request made in writing and filed with
the president, chair, or secretary of the board of directors of the
district within ten days after receiving such notice, shall be
granted opportunity for hearing pursuant to RCW 28A.405.310 to
determine whether there is sufficient cause or causes for nonrenewal
of contract (PROVIDED, That any employee receiving notice of
nonrenewal of contract due to an enrollment decline or loss of
revenue may, in his or her request for a hearing, stipulate that
initiation of the arrangements for a hearing officer as provided for
by RCW 28A.405.310(4) shall occur within ten days following July 15
rather than the day that the employee submits the request for a
hearing)).
(e) If any ((such)) notification or opportunity for hearing is not timely given under this section, then the employee entitled thereto shall be conclusively presumed to have been reemployed by the district for the next ensuing term upon contractual terms identical with those which would have prevailed if his or her employment had actually been renewed by the board of directors for such ensuing term.

(f) This section shall not be applicable to "provisional employees" as so designated in RCW 28A.405.220((1)) or to reductions in workforce due to enrollment decline or revenue loss in accordance with sections 2 and 3 of this act.

(g) Transfer to a subordinate certificated position as that procedure is set forth in RCW 28A.405.230 or 28A.405.245 shall not be construed as a nonrenewal of contract for the purposes of this section.

Sec. 5. RCW 28A.405.300 and 2010 c 235 s 305 are each amended to read as follows:

Except as provided in sections 2 and 3 of this act, in the event it is determined that there is probable cause or causes for a teacher, principal, supervisor, superintendent, or other certificated employee, holding a position as such with the school district, hereinafter referred to as "employee", to be discharged or otherwise adversely affected in his or her contract status, such employee shall be notified in writing of that decision, which notification shall specify the probable cause or causes for such action. Such determinations of probable cause for certificated employees, other than the superintendent, shall be made by the superintendent. Such notices shall be served upon that employee personally, or by certified or registered mail, or by leaving a copy of the notice at the house of his or her usual abode with some person of suitable age and discretion then resident therein. Every such employee so notified, at his or her request made in writing and filed with the president, chair of the board or secretary of the board of directors of the district within ten days after receiving such notice, shall be granted opportunity for a hearing pursuant to RCW 28A.405.310 to determine whether or not there is sufficient cause or causes for his or her discharge or other adverse action against his or her contract status.
In the event any such notice or opportunity for hearing is not timely given, or in the event cause for discharge or other adverse action is not established by a preponderance of the evidence at the hearing, such employee shall not be discharged or otherwise adversely affected in his or her contract status for the causes stated in the original notice for the duration of his or her contract.

If such employee does not request a hearing as provided herein, such employee may be discharged or otherwise adversely affected as provided in the notice served upon the employee.

Transfer to a subordinate certificated position as that procedure is set forth in RCW 28A.405.230 or 28A.405.245 shall not be construed as a discharge or other adverse action against contract status for the purposes of this section.

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