

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5175

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Early Learning & K-12 Education, January 19, 2023

**Title:** An act relating to written contracts between school boards and principals.

**Brief Description:** Concerning written contracts between school boards and principals.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wellman, Mullet, Hunt and Wilson, C..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/12/23, 1/19/23 [DP, DNP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Allows employment contracts between a school board and principal to be up to three years in length, as opposed to limited to a term of not more than one year.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hunt, Mullet and Pedersen.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hawkins, Ranking Member; Dozier and McCune.

**Staff:** Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

**Background:** Certificated Educator Employee Contracts. Teachers, principals, superintendents, and other certificated employees of school districts and educational service districts are employed under written contracts that may be no more than one year in length. Contracts of certificated employees may be non-renewed when it is determined there is

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

probable cause, including enrollment decline and revenue loss. Principals, directors, or other individuals employed in a supervisory or administrative position may be transferred to a subordinate administrative position, defined as any certificated position for which the annual compensation is less than that of the position currently held, in certain cases.

If the employing district determines the employment contract should not be renewed for the following year, the district must notify the employee in writing on or before May 15 preceding the beginning of the next school year. The employing school district has until June 15 to provide the required notice of contract nonrenewal if the general operating budget has not passed the Legislature by the end of the legislative session.

**Summary of Bill:** A written contract between a school district board of directors and a principal shall be limited to a term of not more than three years, as opposed to limited to a term of not more than one year.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Principals need time to initiate any kind of change. It is currently difficult to invest in students with only one-year contracts. Leadership takes time. More potential time in the role will help entice individuals to take these types of roles. The current structure only allows a short time to build a bond with students, learn the role, and learn about the community. Continuity in leadership will lead to better bonds between principals and the school community. Greater principal retention will lead to better teacher retention.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals; Dr. Scott Seaman, Association of Washington School Principals; Heidi Maurer, Kentlake High School; Jason Smith, Rogers High School; Dr. Robert Gary, Madison Middle School; Carlos Gonzalez, McFarland Middle School; Justin Hendrickson, South Shore K-8 School; Gerrit Kischner, Thornton Creek Elementary; Brent Osborn, Lakeside High School.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.