



Sample Board Resolution on Changes to Teacher and Administrator Contract Renewal Timelines

WHEREAS, language inserted into the proposed state budget by the Legislature’s Joint Finance Committee (JFC) without a public hearing or other opportunity for public input would modify the dates by which a school board must give a teacher or administrator written notice of renewal /nonrenewal of his or her contract in odd-numbered years in which the biennial state budget is adopted and would modify the date for administrators in all years; and

WHEREAS, over the past decade or so, the date by which the state budget has been adopted has varied from as early as June 29 and as late as October 26, with a typical enactment date in mid- to late-July, introducing considerable uncertainty into the contract renewal process; and

WHEREAS, it is unclear what problem the modifications to the contract renewal timelines were intended to fix; however, it is very clear that these provisions will cause significant problems for school boards and school districts and could adversely affect Wisconsin’s labor market for recent college graduates; and

WHEREAS, the present teacher contract law timeline is well-aligned to the college graduation cycle of students with education degrees and it allows school boards to offer positions to new college graduates as they are coming out of teacher preparation programs; and

WHEREAS, if the provisions adopted by the Joint Finance Committee become law and teaching position openings cannot be confirmed and boards can’t offer positions to new graduates while awaiting passage of the state budget, we may lose them to neighboring states (e.g., Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, etc.) that are in a position to offer the recent graduate the job earlier; and

WHEREAS, these provisions could exacerbate the flight to other states of highly qualified teachers who desire more certainty with respect to their job status at an earlier time; and

WHEREAS, these changes could also harm smaller and rural districts, which typically pay less than suburban and urban districts. Pushing the hiring timeline back could create a “feeding frenzy” competition among districts for available candidates, in which smaller districts will be less able to compete for teaching candidates in this narrow window, and the same situation will apply for administrators; and

WHEREAS, pushing the contract renewal timeline back into the summer during odd-numbered years in which the biennial state budget is adopted will likely make it harder for schools to reach many teachers to provide them with written notifications, because they are no longer at school each day. It may also make it harder for school boards to convene private conferences to which teachers are entitled during the summer months; and

WHEREAS, it is unclear why school administrators are lumped together with teachers in this provision given their vital role, their lower numbers and the reality that school districts nonrenew administrators for budgetary reasons on a far less frequent basis than teachers; and

WHEREAS, current law provides a separate timeline for administrator contract renewals because administrators implement district personnel decisions. This change will affect the contracts of school principals, who typically play a key role in hiring teachers. This could put school districts into the dilemma whether during a budget year it should wait until the principal is hired to begin hiring teachers or it should hire teachers and the principal simultaneously in order to get everyone in place in time for the start of school; and

WHEREAS, school district administrators play a major role in assembling school district budgets, which is often a more difficult and complicated task during a year in which a biennial state budget is enacted, the modified timeline in the provisions adopted by the JFC could make it difficult to get a new superintendent in place with enough time before the school district's annual meeting and /or budget hearing;

Therefore, the _____ School Board urges that the changes to teacher and administrator contract renewal timelines adopted by the Joint Finance Committee be removed from the state budget and be approached in a more thoughtful manner that includes a public hearing and an opportunity for input by the public and by school boards.