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POWERS AND DUTIES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

House Bill 4721
Sponsor: Rep. Bruce Caswell
Committee: Education

Complete to 5-29-03

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4721 AS INTRODUCED 5-22-03

House Bill 4721 would amend the Revised School Code to specify certain rights and responsibilities for public school principals.

Under the bill, the board of a school district that hired the principal would be required to prescribe his or her duties and offer an employment contract for no less than two years and no more than three years. In addition, the bill specifies that if a written non-renewal notice was not given at least 90 days before the contract's termination date, then the contract would be renewed for an additional year. Currently under the law, administrators hired by a school board work with an employment contract fixed by the board, not to exceed three years, and if written notice of non-renewal is not given at least 60 days before the termination date, then the contract is renewed for an additional year. The bill would retain these provisions, and apply them to all administrators except school principals, who in contrast would have contracts at least two years in length, and be given at least 90 days notice before termination.

Also under the bill, the board of a school district or public school academy that employs a school principal would be required to ensure that he or she had at least all of the following powers and duties:

- to hire and assign duties to all staff employed at or assigned to the school. This would include, but would not be limited to, the right to refuse to have a particular staff member assigned to that school. However it would not apply to staff assigned on a regular basis to more than one school);
- to meet and work with the local superintendent and the board, or board of directors, to develop a proposed budget for the school;
- to review and modify a school improvement plan developed for the school under the Revised School Code or any other law; and,
- to receive compensation according to his or her job performance, and to earn incentives for high student achievement.

The bill also specifies that with the approval of the board or board of directors, a principal could establish at the school a method of compensation based upon job performance and job accomplishment—using objective criteria for evaluating job performance—and establish other incentives to reward staff at the school for high student achievement. However, the bill specifies that until the expiration of a collective bargaining agreement in effect for a school district or

House Bill 4721 (5-29-03)

public school academy, the applicability of this section would be subject to that collective bargaining agreement.

Also under the bill, a school improvement plan would have to be submitted to the school principal for his or her review before it was finalized, and the principal could modify the plan.

Finally, the bill specifies that an intermediate school district school improvement plan would have to include methods to assist both school districts and public school academies in improving students' academic learning, assure that all students within the intermediate school district had reasonable access to all programs, and include methods to assist school districts and public school academies in integrating applied academics and career and employability skills into all curricular areas. Currently under the law these provisions apply to all districts, and public school academies are not explicitly included. (However, under the code, the definition of school district includes public school academies).

MCL 380.1229 and 380.1277

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.