

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE BILL NO. 651

BY REPRESENTATIVE NANCY LANDRY

SCHOOLS/BOARDS: Provides relative to the powers and duties of local public school boards and superintendents

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:54(B)(1)(b)(i) and (iii), 81(A) and (P)(1), 81.4, 229, and
3 414.1, relative to administration and management of elementary and secondary
4 education; to provide with respect to local school superintendents, their employment,
5 and their duties and responsibilities; to provide relative to local school boards and
6 their functions and powers; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 17:54(B)(1)(b)(i) and (iii), 81(A) and (P)(1), 81.4, 229, and 414.1
9 are hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

10 §54. Officers of boards, election; superintendents, qualifications, appointment and
11 removal

12 * * *

13 B.(1)

14 * * *

15 (b)(i)(aa) The superintendent of schools shall be employed by a city, parish,
16 or other local public school board pursuant to a written contract. Such contract shall
17 contain but need not be limited to specific performance objectives. However, for the
18 board of a local public school system that received any variation of a school
19 performance letter grade of "C", "D", or "F", such contract shall establish
20 performance targets at the school and district level as follows: (1) student

1 §81. General powers of ~~city, parish, and other~~ local public school boards

2 A.(1) Each local public school board shall serve in a policymaking capacity
3 that is in the best interests of all students enrolled in schools under the board's
4 jurisdiction. When establishing board policies, each board shall prioritize student
5 achievement, financial efficiency, and workforce development on a local, regional,
6 and statewide basis. When choosing a local superintendent of schools, each board
7 shall select a leader who shall prioritize student achievement and act in the best
8 interests of all students enrolled in schools under the board's jurisdiction.

9 (2) ~~Each city and parish~~ local public school board shall determine the
10 number of schools to be opened, the location of school houses, and the number of
11 teachers and other school personnel to be employed, ~~and select teachers and all other~~
12 ~~certified personnel from recommendations made by the city or parish superintendent~~
13 ~~as required by this Subsection.~~ The ~~boards~~ local school superintendent shall have
14 authority to employ teachers by the month or by the year, and to fix their salaries;
15 provided that there shall be no discrimination as to sex in the fixing thereof and
16 provided further, that it is not the purpose of this Section to require or direct the
17 reduction of any salary, or salary schedule, presently in force. The ~~boards~~ local
18 school superintendent shall see that the provisions of the state school law are
19 complied with.

20 (2) (3) ~~Each city and parish~~ local public school board shall ~~select teachers~~
21 ~~and all other certified personnel from recommendations made by the city or parish~~
22 ~~superintendent regarding~~ delegate authority for the hiring and placement of all school
23 personnel, including those for which state certification is required, to the local school
24 superintendent. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to ensure that all
25 persons ~~recommended~~ have proper certification, as applicable, and are qualified for
26 the position. ~~Nothing shall prevent a school board from rejecting the~~
27 ~~recommendations made by the superintendent and requiring the superintendent to~~
28 ~~submit additional recommendations.~~

1 P.(1) No board member shall act in an individual capacity to use the
 2 authority of his office or position as a member of the school board in a manner
 3 intended to interfere with, compel, or coerce any personnel decision made by the
 4 superintendent or a school principal, including the hiring, promotion, discipline,
 5 demotion, transfer, discharge, or assignment of work to any school employee. The
 6 superintendent, as the instructional leader of the district and its chief executive
 7 officer, shall have primary responsibility for personnel actions in the district. Each
 8 ~~school board shall approve or disapprove employment of teachers and all other~~
 9 ~~certified personnel from recommendations made by the superintendent regarding the~~
 10 ~~hiring and placement of all personnel for which state certification is required. The~~
 11 ~~superintendent shall make recommendations to the board in open public session at~~
 12 ~~a meeting which has been properly noticed. Prior to the board voting in open session~~
 13 ~~on the superintendent's recommendations, the board shall provide opportunity for~~
 14 ~~public comment.~~

15 * * *

16 §81.4. Reductions in force; dismissal of teachers and other school employees
 17 A. Not later than ~~January 1st, 1984~~ September 1, 2014, each city and parish
 18 local public school board shall develop and adopt rules and policies that delegate
 19 reduction in force decisions to the superintendent which ~~it~~ he shall use in dismissing
 20 teachers and other employees at any time a reduction in force is instituted ~~by such~~
 21 ~~school board~~. Such rules and policies shall be made available for inspection by
 22 teachers, other school employees, and the general public within ten days after final
 23 adoption.

24 ~~B. Not later than January 1st, 1986, each city and parish school board shall~~
 25 ~~develop and adopt rules and policies which it shall use in dismissing any full-time~~
 26 ~~secretary, teacher's aide, school clerk, or custodian at any time a reduction in force~~
 27 ~~is instituted by that school board. These rules and policies shall be made available~~
 28 ~~for inspection, by any full-time secretary, teacher's aide, school clerk, or custodian,~~
 29 ~~and the general public within ten days after their final adoption.~~

1 ~~C. Not later than January 1, 1987, each city and parish school board shall~~
2 ~~develop and adopt rules and policies which it shall use in dismissing school~~
3 ~~employees other than those for which provision is made in Subsections (A) and (B);~~
4 ~~at any time a reduction in force is instituted by the school board. Such rules and~~
5 ~~policies shall be made available for inspection by any such school employee and the~~
6 ~~general public within ten days after their final adoption.~~

7 B. All reduction in force policies adopted for use in dismissing teachers and
8 administrators shall be based solely upon demand, performance, and effectiveness,
9 as determined by the performance evaluation program as provided in R.S. 17:3881
10 through 3905. Any reduction in force by a superintendent shall be instituted by
11 dismissing the least effective teacher within each targeted subject area or area of
12 certification first, and then proceeding by effectiveness rating until the reduction in
13 force has been accomplished.

14 C. All reduction in force policies adopted by a local school board for use by
15 the superintendent in dismissing school employees who are not evaluated pursuant
16 to R.S. 17:3881 through 3905 shall be based upon the following criteria:

17 (1) Performance and effectiveness as determined by school board policy.

18 (2) Certification or academic preparation, if applicable.

19 ~~D. Not later than January 1, 1996, all~~ All reduction in force policies of ~~the~~
20 ~~city and parish~~ local public school boards and special schools as provided in this
21 Section shall include ~~but not be limited to the following minimum standards:~~

22 ~~(1) Certification, if applicable.~~

23 ~~(2) Seniority in the system.~~

24 ~~(3) Tenure of employees.~~

25 ~~(4) Academic preparation, if applicable, within the employee's field.~~

26 ~~(5)~~ (a) (1) The right of an employee notified of an action which results from
27 implementation of a reduction in force policy to request in writing a review of such
28 action and to receive notice of the results of such review.

1 supervision of the personnel and activities and the administration of the affairs of
2 that school.

3 Section 2. This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2014; if vetoed by the governor
4 and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become effective on July 1,
5 2014, or on the day following such approval by the legislature, whichever is later.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

Nancy Landry

HB No. 651

Abstract: Reenacts those provisions of Acts 2012, No. 1 relative to local school boards and superintendents.

Proposed law reenacts those provisions of Acts 2012, No. 1 relative to local school boards and superintendents, except changes effective date from July 1, 2012 to July 1, 2014. (Note: Acts 2012, No. 1 has been declared unconstitutional by the 19th JDC as violative of the single object requirements of the constitution. Media reports indicate that the decision will be appealed to the supreme court. In general, changes made by an unconstitutional Act of the legislature are ineffective and, therefore, the law prior to the unconstitutional Act remains effective. Coding in bill shows changes in the law as it existed prior to Acts 2012, No. 1. This digest treats the law prior to Acts 2012, No. 1 as present law and the reenacted changes of this Act as proposed law.)

Present law grants local school boards certain authority with respect to personnel decisions. Proposed law instead requires local school boards to delegate authority for personnel decisions to the local superintendent, including policies related to reductions in force.

Present law requires the local superintendent to consult with principals relative to hiring and placement decisions and provides that recommendations made by the principal are not binding upon the superintendent. Proposed law instead requires the superintendent to delegate such decisions to the principals, subject to the superintendent's approval.

Present law requires a school board to approve or disapprove employment of teachers and certified personnel from recommendations made by the superintendent. Requires the superintendent to make recommendations to the board in open public session. Requires the board to provide opportunity for public comment. Proposed law deletes present law.

Proposed law requires that all school personnel employment decisions be based upon performance, effectiveness, and qualifications. Provides for effectiveness as the primary criterion when making personnel decisions and prohibits the use of seniority or tenure as such.

Present law requires school boards to have rules and policies for the dismissal of school employees when there is a reduction in force. Requires reduction in force policies to include the following minimum standards: certification, if applicable; seniority in the system; tenure of employees; and academic preparation, if applicable, within the employee's field.

Proposed law deletes present law and instead provides the following relative to reduction in force policies:

- (1) Policies for teachers and administrators shall be based solely on demand, performance, and effectiveness. The least effective teachers within each targeted subject area or area of certification shall be dismissed first according to effectiveness ratings.
- (2) Policies for noncertified school personnel shall be based on performance and effectiveness as determined by local board policy and certification or academic preparation if applicable.
- (3) No reduction in force policy shall include seniority or tenure as the primary criterion.

Present law provides for appointment of principals by the local school board. Proposed law instead provides for principals' appointments by the local superintendent.

Present law requires local school boards to include specified performance objectives in employment contracts with the local superintendent. Proposed law specifies performance targets that must be included in the contract if the school system has been rated "C", "D", or "F". Requires all school boards to submit copies of such contracts to the state superintendent of education. Provides that any employment contract executed, negotiated, or renegotiated after July 1, 2014, between a board and superintendent that does not meet requirements of present law and proposed law is null and void.

Present law requires a local school board to notify a local superintendent not less than 90 days prior to termination of a contract. Proposed law changes this to not less than 30 days prior to termination. Also requires the board to notify the state superintendent when it terminates or fails to renew its employment contract with the local superintendent giving reasons therefor.

Present law provides that a local superintendent may be removed from office upon being found incompetent, unworthy, or inefficient or to have failed to fulfill the terms and performance objectives of his contract or to comply with school board policy. Proposed law provides instead that he shall be removed from office under these circumstances.

Effective July 1, 2014.

(Amends R.S. 17:54(B)(1)(b)(i) and (iii), 81(A) and (P)(1), 81.4, 229, and 414.1)