

HB 628 -- Teacher Continuing Contract Act

Sponsor: Dieckhaus

This bill changes the laws regarding teacher contracts and establishes the Teacher Continuing Contract Act which will apply to teachers in all school districts, including St. Louis City, beginning July 1, 2012. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Bases 50% of a teacher's evaluation on teaching standards under the professional continuum developed by the State Board of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education;

(2) Eliminates the minimum teacher salary for holders of a master's degree;

(3) Specifies that the current Teacher Tenure Act and the St. Louis City Tenure Act will remain in effect until June 30, 2012;

(4) Requires an annual evaluation of each school administrator and bases 50% of his or her score on the professional continuum for administrators developed by the state board and adds a component, also to be weighted at 50%, that evaluates an administrator on his or her instructional leadership by assessing the performance of the instructional personnel for whom he or she has supervisory capacity;

(5) Specifies that a contract between a school district and a teacher will be known as a continuing contract and will continue in effect for up to two or more years, while probationary contracts last one year;

(6) Establishes transition provisions for the interim placement of teachers on probationary contracts until salary schedules are developed based on student performance data and data is available;

(7) Allows for novice and transfer probationary teachers' contract lengths in specified situations;

(8) Establishes contract lengths in accordance with scores on teacher evaluations in four tiers;

(9) Allows elements other than years of service and highest degree held to be added to salary schedules including, but not limited to, additional certification areas, certification in high-need subjects, mentoring, and demonstrated ability to improve student performance;

(10) Establishes a salary schedule effective July 1, 2013, based on performance, with teachers above the thirty-third to sixty-sixth percentile receiving a performance pay increment of no less than 10% over the base pay of the bottom 33% of teachers; the next 17% will receive a pay increment that is no less than 25% over the base of the third tier of teachers; and the top tier will receive an increment no less than 60% of the second tier;

(11) Adds unsatisfactory performance to the list of reasons for which a permanent teacher may be terminated and requires teacher evaluations to be considered in determining professional competence; and

(12) Requires a teacher to be evaluated at least annually and twice in the final year of a continuing contract, places equal weight on student performance and achievement of teaching standards, and limits teaching standard scores in the top 33% to no more than 40% of a building's teachers.

Several current provisions regarding teacher tenure will remain unchanged including, but not limited to:

(1) Modifications of continuing contracts;

(2) Leaves of absence, except that a leave of absence due to teacher reduction may be granted for two years rather than three years and seniority is removed from consideration when rehiring after a reduction in force;

(3) Board member civil liability for charges against teachers; and

(4) Prohibition on teacher participation in school board election campaigns.