March 20, 2009

Dear Chairs Shapiro and Eissler,

We appreciate the opportunity to share our recommendations with you on school sanctions in SB 3/HB 3.

During public testimony on Tuesday March 17th in the House Public Education Committee, there was robust testimony regarding the difficulty in attracting quality teachers to low-performing campuses when there is a threat of being automatically fired if the school doesn't improve.

This discussion has led us to rethink how state policy might empower school officials to attract quality teachers to high-needs schools. We recommend the following options be given to school leaders to help them improve a low-performing school once a school is rated "*Academically Unacceptable*":

- Empower the superintendent with maximum flexibility to change the leadership, if needed, by declaring the principal's contract for the upcoming year null and void.
- Empower the principal to make the necessary personnel decisions to remove ineffective teachers and hire/attract quality teachers by declaring all staff and teacher contracts null and void for the upcoming year and allowing the principal and executive staff to make a decision on whether to retain each individual teacher.
- Empower the principal with maximum flexibility in their budgets by removing the requirement that the campus abide by the state minimum salary schedule and/or any district adopted salary schedule for the upcoming year giving the principal the flexibility and local control to best decide how to pay teachers.
- Encourage principals and school officials to use large stipends to attract quality teachers to high-needs schools with state DATE funds. Prioritize low-performing schools in future DATE grant cycles.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Brooke Terry
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