

2/15/2022 Testimony for SB 1521

I am a former school board member, and I witnessed the pressure and long working hours experienced by school superintendents, especially during the past two years. Many are retiring but potential applicants are hesitant to apply to replace them. These are challenging times for superintendents and school boards.

As a school board member, we had these protections in place for our superintendent, however it was after much consideration and deliberation. It's only in certain circumstances that a board should consider the proposed clauses in a contract between the superintendent and the elected school board. Legislating contractual mandates takes away the ability of a local school board to govern their school district.

Secondly, as elected officials, we swear to uphold the law. The board is in alignment with the superintendent in being required to uphold the law. However, state and federal laws are sometimes unclear, broad, unfunded or even contrary to other laws. Board directors, superintendents and even lawyers may disagree with each other. However, the solution is to debate these grey areas publicly and make the community aware of these challenges and not hide them from scrutiny. The process is messy but it's necessary for the good of our students.

In my opinion, this bill undermines local control. If passed, SB1521 will continue to erode the local control of school boards. This legislation is requiring that which can currently be implemented by any school board. It should be up to the local school board whether they want to protect their superintendent.

Think about it; if voters decide they don't like the direction of their local school district and vote in new school board members, those same school board members should have the ability to oversee their Superintendent's performance. This is a fundamental function of the local school board, not of our state government.

Please vote no on SB1521.

Respectfully submitted.