PRINCIPAL AUTONOMY IS NECESSARY FOR STUDENT-FOCUSED DECISION MAKING AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

For too long, personnel decisions in school districts have been subject to the whim of local school boards and their politics. Allowing local school boards—whose job is to develop school district policy—to make school level management decisions has limited principal authority around personnel decision making, even though principals are the individuals who know the needs of their students best.

What are the benefits of principal autonomy in personnel hiring and firing?

- When principals have staffing autonomy, personnel decisions are removed from the politics of the local school board to allow those who know their schools best—the principals—to make hiring and firing decisions in the best interest of their students.
- Over 80% of teachers eligible for transfer or rehire agree that it is important for the principal of a new school where they seek to work to want them to work there.\(^1\)
- Over 80% of teachers are more satisfied with positions where the teacher and principal mutually agree to a hire, rather than forced placement. In contrast, only half of teachers who are assigned to their position by the district are satisfied enough to consider staying in that position.\(^2\)

WHY HB 596?

As the state awaits the Louisiana Supreme Court’s ruling on Act 1 of the 2012 legislative session, HB 596 would re-pass §81, §229, and §414.1 of Act 1. In addition to those original sections of Act 1, this bill clarifies that the district superintendent is in charge of hiring and firing school and school system personnel, including principals. The re-filed bill also strengthens the language that principals must consent to teachers placed in their school.

This bill ensures that those closest to their students—the principals—have the autonomy and authority to make student-focused decisions.

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2. Ibid.