

February 24, 2017

Senator Eichelberger
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173 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

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* Alternative Funding Chairs

Dr. Melissa D. Patschke, NAESP Zone 2 Dir.
Spring- Ford Area SD

Dear Senator,

Senate Bill 229 aims to repeal Section 1154 of the Public School Code in reference to days granted for sick leave, bereavement leave, and sabbatical leaves for professional employees. It is our understanding that the reasoning behind this movement is to grant school boards the right to negotiate these issues through collective bargaining.

The PA Principals Association is strongly opposed to Senate Bill 229 for the following reasons:

- If the minimum requirements as specified in the Public School Code for these leaves are taken away and left to collective bargaining, we feel that school leaders will be left out due to the fact that our members do not have collective bargaining and thus we do not have negotiating power as the teachers do under Act 195. School leaders follow Act 93 which just allows them to meet and discuss but in the end the board can do whatever they want with this group.
- Under the current situation, the Public School Code provides for a minimum of 10 days for sick leave, etc. and most contracts in school districts allow for the minimum only and thus there is no need to change the situation.
- If these issues are left open to negotiations, then it is possible that teacher contracts can be held up over issues that are already clearly specified for in the code.
- In a time where we face both looming teacher and school leader shortages, now is not the time to start eroding benefits for professional employees. We should be finding ways to actively recruit and retain both teachers and principals and not making it less attractive to enter the profession or to leave the profession.

For these reasons, we implore you to vote **no** on Senate Bill 229. There is currently no cause to change the Public School Code for issues that are not a problem in our schools. Instead, we should be tackling real issues that face our public schools such as; fair funding, pension reform, charter school payments, and school construction.

The PA Principals Association is available to provide any needed clarifications on this issue. Please don't hesitate to contact our office (717) 732-4999.

Sincerely,

Paul M. Healey, Ph.D.

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Executive Director, PA Principals Association

Our mission is to ensure a quality education for every child by comprehensively supporting the educational leaders of our schools.

PENNSYLVANIA PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION

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Affiliate of the National Association of Elementary and Secondary Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals
Serving and Supporting Principals, Assistant Principals and Other Educational Leaders