

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 49th Legislature (2003)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
FOR  
SENATE BILL 452

By: Coffee

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

An Act relating to schools; amending 70 O.S. 2001, Sections 5-117, as amended by Section 2, Chapter 483, O.S.L. 2002, 6-101.13, 6-101.46, 6-101.47, and 24-101.3 (70 O.S. Supp. 2002, Section 5-117) which relate to powers of district boards of education, administrator due process procedures, support personnel due process procedures, and out-of-school suspensions; authorizing leases of property to not-for-profit entities; authorizing district boards of education to delegate certain powers and duties to district superintendent; deleting obsolete language; deleting redundant language; authorizing certain district boards of education to appoint hearing officers to conduct certain hearing and render final decisions; repealing Section 5-117, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 283, O.S.L. 2002 (70 O.S. Supp. 2002, Section 5-117), which is a duplicate section and which relates to powers of district boards of education; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2001, Section 5-117, as amended by Section 2, Chapter 483, O.S.L. 2002 (70 O.S. Supp. 2002, Section 5-117), is amended to read as follows:

Section 5-117. A. The board of education of each school district shall have power to:

1. Elect its own officers; provided that the chair of the board authorized in Section 5-107B of this title shall be elected by the electors of the school district;

2. Make rules, not inconsistent with the law or rules of the State Board of Education, governing the board and the school system of the district;

3. Maintain and operate a complete public school system of such character as the board of education shall deem best suited to the needs of the school district;

4. Designate the schools to be attended by the children of the district;

5. Provide and operate, when deemed advisable, cafeterias or other eating accommodations, thrift banks or other facilities for the teaching and practice of thrift and economy, bookstores, print shops, and vocational and other shops;

6. Provide informational material concerning school bond elections and millage elections, including but not limited to all pertinent financial information relative to the bond issue, a statement of revenue sources necessary to retire proposed bonds, a statement of current bonded indebtedness of the school district, and a statement of proposed use of funds to be generated by the proposed bond issue. The informational material shall not contain the words "vote yes" or "vote no" or any similar words or statement any place on such informational material;

7. Purchase, construct or rent, and operate and maintain, classrooms, libraries, auditoriums, gymnasiums, stadiums, recreation places and playgrounds, teacherages, school bus garages, laboratories, administration buildings, and other schoolhouses and school buildings, and acquire sites and equipment therefor;

8. Have school district property insured;

9. Acquire property by condemnation proceedings in the same manner as land is condemned for railroad purposes. School district funds may be used to erect buildings on leased land on which other buildings have been erected prior to April 3, 1969, or on land which is leased from a governmental entity;

10. Lease real or personal property to the state or any political subdivision ~~thereof~~ or a not-for-profit entity operating pursuant to Section 868 of Title 18 of the Oklahoma Statutes for

nominal cash consideration for so long as the use of the property by the lessee substantially benefits, in whole or in part, the same public served by the school district;

11. Dispose of personal or real property no longer needed by the district by sale, exchange, lease, lease-purchase, sale and partial lease back, or otherwise. Real property shall be conveyed pursuant to a public sale, public bid, or private sale, provided however, unless otherwise prohibited by law, the board of education of a consolidated or annexed school district may convey real property to a local political subdivision without consideration. Prior to the sale of any real property, the board of education shall have the real property appraised. The appraisal shall be confidential until the real property is sold. When the real property is sold the board of education shall make the appraisal available for public inspection. Prior to the conveyance of any real property by private sale, the board of education shall have offered the real property for sale by public sale or public bid. Any conveyance of real property by private sale to a nonprofit organization, association, or corporation to be used for public purposes, unless for exchange, shall contain a reversionary clause which returns the real property to the board of education upon the cessation of the use without profit or for public purposes by the purchaser or the assigns of the purchaser;

12. Purchase necessary property, equipment, furniture, and supplies necessary to maintain and operate an adequate school system;

13. Incur all expenses, within the limitations provided for by law, necessary to perform all powers granted by the provisions of this section;

14. Contract with and fix the duties and compensation of physicians, dentists, optometrists, nurses, attorneys, superintendents, principals, teachers, bus drivers, janitors, and

other necessary employees of the district. The board of education shall establish a written policy for reimbursement of necessary travel expenses of employees and members of the board. The policy may include in-district travel from the site of employment assignment which is necessary in the performance of employment duties. The written policy shall specify procedures, contain documentation requirements, and may include payment of meal expenses during authorized travel on a per diem allowance basis rather than itemized documentation. Per diem meal reimbursement may not exceed the amounts authorized for state employees in Section 500.8 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes, but such reimbursement shall be available for necessary travel that does not require overnight stays. The board shall designate the funds from which reimbursement is to be made. Reimbursement of meal expenses for an employee or a board member shall not be considered compensation;

15. Pay necessary travel expenses and other related expenses of prospective employees for sponsored visits to the school district pursuant to a written policy specifying procedures containing documentation requirements equal to or greater than the requirements specified by law for state employees in the State Travel Reimbursement Act;

16. Provide for employees' leaves of absence without pay;

17. Exercise sole control over all the schools and property of the district, subject to other provisions of the Oklahoma School Code;

18. Allow district-owned school buses to be used for transportation of students from other districts or educational institutions while within the district on educational tours. This shall not restrict the authority of the board to authorize any other use of such buses which may now be permitted by law or rule of the State Board of Education;

19. Enter into contractual agreements with the board of trustees of a multicounty library system, as defined in Section 4-103 of Title 65 of the Oklahoma Statutes, a city-county library commission, as defined in Section 152 of Title 65 of the Oklahoma Statutes, or a rural single county library system, as defined in Section 1-104 of Title 65 of the Oklahoma Statutes, on such terms as may be mutually agreed, except no district board of education may enter into any agreement under which the library services for the school would be provided at any site other than the school site or which would result in library services that do not meet accreditation standards as required by law or rule;

20. Perform all functions necessary to the administration of a school district in Oklahoma as specified in the Oklahoma School Code, and in addition thereto, those powers necessarily implied but not delegated by law to any other agency or official; ~~and~~

21. Prepare and distribute at the expense of the school district any and all material which has the purpose of informing the public about district activities; and

22. Authorize the district superintendent to exercise any powers and perform any duties of the board set forth in this subsection, except those powers set forth in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this subsection; provided, if a board grants authority as provided in this paragraph to the superintendent, the board shall bear responsibility for actions of the superintendent and shall retain the power to exercise final authority at the board's discretion.

B. The board of education of any school district may rent, on a monthly basis, real and personal property, if such items are necessary for the operation of the school, and pay the rental charges for the usage during any fiscal year, or portion thereof, out of appropriations made and approved for current expense purposes during the fiscal year. Any such rental contract extending beyond

June 30 of such fiscal year shall be void unless it contains provisions for mutual ratification of renewal pursuant to the conditions provided for in this subsection. It is the intent of this subsection to authorize boards of education to enter into lease contracts but not to incur any obligation against the school district in excess of the income and revenue provided for such purposes for the fiscal year in which such lease contract is operative. Any lease or lease-purchase agreement entered into by any board of education shall state the purchase price of real or personal property so leased. The lease or lease-purchase shall not be extended so as to cause payment of more than the original purchase price of the real or personal property, plus interest not to exceed the legal rate. When the purchase price plus interest has been paid, the property shall belong to the lessee and the lessor shall deliver a deed or bill of sale to the property to the lessee. When any real or personal property has been leased or rented during any fiscal year pursuant to the provisions of any contract which permits continuance of such rental for the remainder of such fiscal year, the renting or leasing thereof must be continued for the remainder of the fiscal year unless the board of education renting or leasing the same certifies by proper resolution entered in the minutes of the board of education that the continuance of such rental is unnecessary and contrary to the public interest.

C. The boards of education of two or more school districts may enter into cooperative agreements and maintain joint programs including but not limited to, courses of instruction for handicapped children, courses of instruction in music and other subjects, practical instruction for trades and vocations, practical instruction in driver training courses, and health programs including visual care by persons legally licensed for such purpose, without favoritism as to either profession. The revenues necessary to operate a joint program approved in cooperative agreements,

whether from federal, state or local sources, including the individual contributions of participating school districts, shall be deposited into a fund separate from all other appropriated funds. The beginning fund balance each year, combined with all actual revenues, including collected and estimated revenues, must be appropriated before being expended. Purchase orders shall be issued against available appropriations and, once goods or services have been received, either payable or nonpayable warrants shall be issued in payment of all purchase orders. The fund shall be reported as a separate appropriated fund in all the financial reports of the school district which is chosen by the other school districts to keep the accounting records of the joint program.

D. Any school district may operate or maintain a school or schools on any military reservation which is within the boundaries of the school district or which is adjacent to the school district, and provide the instruction in the school or schools to children of personnel on the military reservation and, in doing so, shall conform to all federal laws and requirements.

E. The board of education of each school district shall adopt and maintain on file in the office of the superintendent of schools appropriate personnel policy and sick leave guide. The guide shall be made available to the public.

SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2001, Section 6-101.13, is amended to read as follows:

Section 6-101.13 Whenever the ~~local~~ board of education or the administration of a school district shall determine that the dismissal or nonreemployment of a full-time certified administrator from ~~his~~ an administrative position within the school district should be effected, the administrator shall be entitled to the following due process procedures:

1. A statement shall be submitted to the administrator in writing prior to the dismissal or nonreemployment which states the

proposed action, lists the reasons for effecting the action, and notifies the administrator of ~~his~~ the right to a hearing prior to the action before the ~~local~~ board of education ~~prior to the action~~ or, if applicable pursuant to subsection 3 of this section, a hearing officer appointed by the board; and

2. A hearing ~~before the local board of education~~ shall be granted upon the request of such administrator prior to the dismissal or nonreemployment. A request for a hearing shall be submitted to the administrative office of the board of education not later than ten (10) days after the administrator has been notified of the proposed action; and

3. In districts with an average daily membership of less than thirty thousand (30,000) the hearing shall be conducted by the board of education. In districts with an average daily membership of thirty thousand (30,000) or more the board of education may conduct the hearing and render the final decision or may appoint a hearing officer to conduct the hearing and render the final decision.

Failure of the administrator to request a hearing before the ~~local~~ board of education within ten (10) days after receiving the written statement shall constitute a waiver of the right to a hearing. No decision of the ~~local~~ board of education or the hearing officer, if applicable, concerning the dismissal or nonreemployment of a full-time certified administrator shall be effective until the administrator has been afforded due process as specified in this section. The decision of the ~~local~~ board of education or the hearing officer, if applicable, concerning the dismissal or nonreemployment, following the hearing, shall be final.

SECTION 3. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2001, Section 6-101.46, is amended to read as follows:

Section 6-101.46 A. After any suspension or prior to any demotion, termination or nonreemployment, a support employee shall receive notice of the right to a hearing. The hearing shall be

conducted by the ~~local~~ district board of education or a hearing officer, if applicable, pursuant to Section 6-101.47 of this title.

All notices shall be by certified mail, with the postmark used to determine the timeliness of the notice. Failure of the employee to request a hearing within ten (10) working days of such notice shall be considered a waiver of the employee's right to a hearing.

B. Nonreemployment shall mean nonrenewal of a support employee's contract upon expiration of the contract.

C. If an employee is to be suspended for a period to exceed ten (10) days, the superintendent of the district shall initiate proceedings for termination and shall follow the procedures set forth in subsection A of this section. However, in a case involving a criminal charge or indictment, the suspension may be delayed until the employee's case is adjudicated at the trial. ~~Nothing in this act shall prevent the school board from proceeding; provided, the district may proceed~~ against the employee during or after the suspension for termination as provided ~~in this act~~ by law.

SECTION 4. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2001, Section 6-101.47, is amended to read as follows:

Section 6-101.47 A. If the employee ~~selects~~ requests a hearing before the ~~local~~ district board of education, the hearing shall be conducted at the next, or next succeeding, regularly scheduled meeting of the board, except when a hearing is to be conducted by a hearing officer as provided in subsection B of this section, if the request for the hearing was received by the ~~local~~ board of education at least ten (10) days prior to the next, or next succeeding, regularly scheduled meeting. Provided, however, at the request of the employee or at the discretion of the ~~local~~ district board of education, the ~~local~~ board shall call a special meeting to conduct the requested hearing, which shall be held no sooner than ten (10) days nor later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the employee's

request. The decision of the ~~local~~ district board of education at the hearing shall be final.

B. In districts with an average daily membership of less than thirty thousand (30,000) the hearing shall be conducted by the district board of education. In districts with an average daily membership of thirty thousand (30,000) or more the district board of education may conduct the hearing and render the final decision or may appoint a hearing officer to conduct the hearing and render the final decision.

SECTION 5. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2001, Section 24-101.3, is amended to read as follows:

Section 24-101.3 A. Any student who is guilty of an act described in paragraph 1 of subsection C of this section may be suspended out-of-school in accordance with the provisions of this section. Each school district board of education shall adopt a policy with procedures which provides for out-of-school suspension of students. The policy shall address the term of the out-of-school suspension, provide an appeals process as described in subsection B of this section, and provide that before a student is suspended out-of-school, the school or district administration shall consider and apply, if appropriate, alternative in-school placement options that are not to be considered suspension, such as placement in an alternative school setting, reassignment to another classroom, or in-school detention. The policy shall address education for students subject to the provisions of subsection D of this section and whether participation in extracurricular activities shall be permitted.

B. 1. Students suspended out-of-school for ten (10) or fewer days ~~or less~~ shall have the right to appeal the decision of the administration as provided in the policy required in subsection A of this section. The policy shall specify whether appeals for short-term suspensions as provided in this subsection shall be to a local

committee composed of district administrators or teachers or both, or to the district board of education. Upon full investigation of the matter, the committee or board shall determine the guilt or innocence of the student and the reasonableness of the term of the out-of-school suspension. If the policy requires appeals for short-term suspensions to a committee, the policy adopted by the board may, but is not required to, provide for appeal of the committee's decision to the board.

2. Students suspended out-of-school for more than ten (10) days and students suspended pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 2 of subsection C of this section may request a review of the suspension with the administration of the district. If the administration does not withdraw the suspension, the student shall have the right to appeal the decision of the administration to the district board of education. Except as otherwise provided for in paragraph 2 of subsection C of this section, no out-of-school suspension shall extend beyond the current semester and the succeeding semester. Upon full investigation of the matter, the board shall determine the guilt or innocence of the student and the reasonableness of the term of the out-of-school suspension. A board of education of a school district with an average daily membership of thirty thousand (30,000) or more may conduct the hearing and render the final decision or may appoint a hearing officer to conduct the hearing and render the final decision. The decision of the district board of education or the hearing officer, if applicable, shall be final.

C. 1. Students who are guilty of any of the following acts may be suspended out-of-school by the administration of the school or district:

- a. violation of a school regulation,
- b. immorality,
- c. adjudication as a delinquent for an offense that is not a violent offense. For the purposes of this

section, "violent offense" shall include those offenses listed as the exceptions to the term "nonviolent offense" as specified in Section 571 of Title 57 of the Oklahoma Statutes. "Violent offense" shall include the offense of assault with a dangerous weapon but shall not include the offense of assault,

- d. possession of an intoxicating beverage, low-point beer, as defined by Section 163.2 of Title 37 of the Oklahoma Statutes, or missing or stolen property if the property is reasonably suspected to have been taken from a student, a school employee, or the school during school activities, and
- e. possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled dangerous substance, as defined in the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Act. Possession of a firearm shall result in out-of-school suspension as provided in paragraph 2 of this subsection.

2. Any student found in possession of a firearm while on any public school property or while in any school bus or other vehicle used by a public school for transportation of students or teachers shall be suspended out-of-school for a period of not less than one (1) year, to be determined by the district board of education pursuant to the provisions of this section. The term of the suspension may be modified by the district superintendent on a case-by-case basis. For purposes of this paragraph the term "firearm" shall mean and include all weapons as defined by 18 U.S.C., Section 921.

D. At its discretion a school district may provide an education plan for students suspended out-of-school for five (5) or ~~less~~ fewer days pursuant to the provisions of this subsection. The following provisions shall apply to students who are suspended out-of-school for more than five (5) days and who are guilty of acts listed in

subparagraphs a, b, c and d of paragraph 1 of subsection C of this section. Upon the out-of-school suspension, the parent or guardian of a student suspended out-of-school pursuant to the provisions of this subsection shall be responsible for the provision of a supervised, structured environment in which the parent or guardian shall place the student and bear responsibility for monitoring the student's educational progress until the student is readmitted into school. The school administration shall provide the student with an education plan designed for the eventual reintegration of the student into school which provides only for the core units in which the student is enrolled. A copy of the education plan shall also be provided to the student's parent or guardian. For the purposes of this section, the core units shall consist of the minimum English, mathematics, science, social studies and art units required by the State Board of Education for grade completion in grades kindergarten through eight and for high school graduation in grades nine through twelve. The plan shall set out the procedure for education and shall address academic credit for work satisfactorily completed.

E. A student who has been suspended out-of-school from a public or private school in the State of Oklahoma or another state for a violent act or an act showing deliberate or reckless disregard for the health or safety of faculty or other students shall not be entitled to enroll in a public school of this state, and no public school shall be required to enroll the student, until the terms of the suspension have been met or the time of suspension has expired.

F. No public school of this state shall be required to provide education services in the regular school setting to any student who has been adjudicated as a delinquent for an offense defined in Section 571 of Title 57 of the Oklahoma Statutes as an exception to a nonviolent offense or convicted as an adult of an offense defined in Section 571 of Title 57 of the Oklahoma Statutes as an exception to a nonviolent offense or who has been removed from a public or

private school in the State of Oklahoma or another state by administrative or judicial process for a violent act or an act showing deliberate or reckless disregard for the health or safety of faculty or other students until the school in which the student is subsequently enrolled determines that the student no longer poses a threat to self, other students or faculty. Until the school in which such student subsequently enrolls or re-enrolls determines that the student no longer poses a threat to self, other students or faculty, the school may provide education services through an alternative school setting, home-based instruction, or other appropriate setting.

G. Students suspended out-of-school who are on an individualized education plan pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, P.L. No. 101-476, or who are subject to the provisions of subsection F of this section and who are on an individualized education plan shall be provided the education and related services in accordance with the student's individualized education plan.

H. A student who has been suspended for a violent offense which is directed towards a classroom teacher shall not be allowed to return to that teacher's classroom without the approval of that teacher.

I. No school board, administrator or teacher may be held civilly liable for any action taken in good faith which is authorized by this section.

SECTION 6. REPEALER 70 O.S. 2001, Section 5-117, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 283, O.S.L. 2002 (70 O.S. Supp. 2002, Section 5-117), is hereby repealed.

SECTION 7. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby

declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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