

SUPPORT

BOCES Superintendent Compensation Equity A.5536 (Nolan)

THE COUNCIL SUPPORTS revising the earning limitations for District Superintendent.

This proposed legislation would authorize Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) to offer competitive salary to District Superintendents to hire and retain the most qualified leaders.

Currently, salaries of BOCES District Superintendents are statutorily capped at 98 percent of the salary of the Commissioner of Education as of baseline year 2003-2004. The cap is now only 78 percent of the Commissioner's *current* salary. This fact limits the pool of qualified candidates, and cripples the ability of BOCES to retain highly capable leaders.

This bill would set the cap at 98 percent of the Education Commissioner's 2018-19 salary and maintain limits on maximum salary increases of six percent per year. It is important to note that an increase of any amount, let alone the capped 6 percent per year, is not guaranteed. BOCES must weigh whether to authorize salary increases weighing issues such as budgetary capacity and market place factors. This bill also maintains strict limitations on leave time and other fringe benefits that are well below those provided to public school superintendents, assistant superintendents and in many cases principals.

To be clear about the intent of this legislation, it would simply update a calculation that is outdated, transferring the same legislative intent, as previously executed in 2003, to the current year. THE COUNCIL does *not* support a cap of any kind on salaries of our educational leaders. These are accomplished individuals leading multi-million dollar organizations. Their work hours far exceed the bounds of a normal work day, and their responsibilities to their teachers, students, and communities are considerable.

BOCES District Superintendents are called upon to be leaders among leaders. By law, they are the State Education Commissioner's representatives in the field. In that role they are charged to guide implementation of complex state initiatives and to lead interventions in troubled schools and districts.

Component school superintendents also heavily rely on district superintendents to advocate on their behalf with the State Education Department. They provide a truly local perspective on a wide-ranging degree of issues to the Department, and the Department equally relies on their expertise.

They not only coordinate shared-services, efficiencies, training, and exceptional educational programs within their component districts, but they also often assist those districts in choosing their own school superintendents.

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This legislation was vetoed last year. In the veto message the Governor indicated that this issue should be addressed in the context of the budget because of state budget costs. The bill however would not increase BOCES aid or any other aid category and any costs would be borne by local component districts that are responsible for electing the members of a BOCES boards of education that would ultimately determine if a salary increase is appropriate. Notwithstanding these facts, we implore the legislature to address this issue during the 19-20 budget negotiations.

Failure to update BOCES District Superintendents' salaries is currently creating concern as to the state's ability to recruit and retain professionals to these important positions.

THE COUNCIL strongly supports this legislation and urges its approval.