

# Stockbridge Community School District

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TO: House Education Committee

FROM: Laurie Goodlock, Trustee  
Stockbridge Board of Education

DATE: April 12, 2011

RE: Overview of Teacher Tenure in the State of Michigan - Written Testimony

As currently regulated by the Tenure Act, the management of poor teacher behavior is overly expensive and time consuming. It is very complicated and has the effect of weakening a local School Board's ability to correct poor professional behavior in teachers.

The Tenure process takes the control of a teacher disciplinary issue away from the local School Board if the discipline is for more than three days without pay. The teacher union will always appeal any School Board decision not in their favor. An Administrative Law Judge hears the appeal and makes a decision, which, if it is not in the union's favor, is appealed to the State Tenure Commission. The State Tenure Commission then makes a final decision.

The Tenure process limits local district teacher discipline. Even in relatively minor cases of improper teacher behavior, which may not call for dismissal, when discipline is for more than three days without pay, school districts must bear the cost and complication of the process as regulated by the Tenure Act.

The Tenure process is very expensive for the school district because it is so complicated and takes so long to exhaust all appeals. Six months or more is not unusual. During the appeal process, the teacher remains on paid leave with full paid benefits and a substitute teacher must be retained to continue class instruction. In addition, the Tenure process, appeals included, requires an attorney to represent the district whose fees add exponentially to the expense.

Lengthening the probationary period before a teacher receives tenure is not the answer. No matter how long the probationary period, there are teachers who work less diligently to be effective once they receive tenure. There are also long serving teachers with tenure who behave later in their career in a manner that obligates discipline for more than three days without pay.