

## CHAPTER 141

## (SB 211)

AN ACT relating to teacher tribunals.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

Section 1. KRS 161.790 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) The contract of a teacher shall remain in force during good behavior and efficient and competent service by the teacher and shall not be terminated except for any of the following causes:
  - (a) Insubordination, including but not limited to violation of the school laws of the state or administrative regulations adopted by the Kentucky Board of Education, the Education Professional Standards Board, or lawful rules and regulations established by the local board of education for the operation of schools, or refusal to recognize or obey the authority of the superintendent, principal, or any other supervisory personnel of the board in the performance of their duties;
  - (b) Immoral character or conduct unbecoming a teacher;
  - (c) Physical or mental disability;
  - (d) Inefficiency, incompetency, or neglect of duty, when a written statement identifying the problems or difficulties has been furnished the teacher or teachers involved.
- (2) Charges under subsections (1)(a) and (1)(d) of this section shall be supported by a written record of teacher performance by the superintendent, principal, or other supervisory personnel of the district, except when the charges are brought as a result of a recommendation made under KRS 158.6455.
- (3) No contract shall be terminated except upon notification of the board by the superintendent. Prior to notification of the board, the superintendent shall furnish the teacher with a written statement specifying in detail the charge against the teacher. The teacher may within ten (10) days after receiving the charge notify the **commissioner of education**~~chief state school officer~~ and the superintendent of his intention to answer the charge, and upon failure of the teacher to give notice within ten (10) days, the dismissal shall be final.
- (4) Upon receiving the teacher's notice of his intention to answer the charge, the **commissioner of education**~~chief state school officer~~ shall appoint a three (3) member tribunal, consisting of one (1) teacher, **who may be retired**, one (1) administrator, **who may be retired**, and one (1) lay person, none of whom reside in the district, to conduct an administrative hearing in accordance with KRS Chapter 13B within the district. **Priority for selection as a tribunal member shall be from a pool of potential tribunal members who have been designated and trained to serve as tribunal members on a regular and ongoing basis, pursuant to administrative regulations promulgated by the Kentucky Board of Education. Funds appropriated to the Department of Education for professional development may be used to provide tribunal member training.** The **commissioner of education**~~chief state school officer~~ shall name the chairman and set the date and time for the hearing. The hearing shall begin no later than forty-five (45) days after the teacher files the notice of intent to answer the charge.
- (5) A hearing officer shall have final authority to rule on dispositive prehearing motions.

- (6) The hearing may be public or private at the discretion of the teacher. At the hearing, a hearing officer appointed by the *commissioner of education* ~~[chief state school officer]~~ shall preside with authority to rule on procedural matters, but the tribunal shall be the ultimate trier of fact. The local board shall pay each member of the tribunal a per diem of one hundred dollars (\$100) and travel expenses.
- (7) Upon hearing both sides of the case, the tribunal may by a majority vote render its decision or may defer its action for not more than five (5) days. Provisions of KRS Chapter 13B notwithstanding, the tribunal decision shall be a final order and may be rendered on the record.
- (8) The superintendent may suspend the teacher pending final action to terminate the contract, if, in his judgment, the character of the charge warrants the action. If after the hearing the decision of the tribunal is against termination of the contract, the suspended teacher shall be paid his full salary for any period of suspension.
- (9) The teacher shall have the right to make an appeal to the Circuit Court having jurisdiction in the county where the school district is located in accordance with KRS Chapter 13B. The review of the final order shall be conducted by the Circuit Court as required by KRS 13B.150.
- (10) As an alternative to termination of a teacher's contract, the superintendent upon notifying the board and providing written notification to the teacher of the charge may impose other sanctions, including, suspension without pay, public reprimand, or private reprimand. The procedures set out in subsection (3) of this section shall apply if the teacher is suspended without pay or publicly reprimanded. The teacher may appeal the action of the superintendent if these sanctions are imposed in the same manner as established in subsections (4) to (9) of this section. Upon completion of a suspension period, the teacher may be reinstated.

**Approved April 2, 2002**