

AN ACT relating to background checks of child abuse and neglect records.

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

➔Section 1. KRS 160.380 is amended to read as follows:

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) "Alternative education program" means a program that exists to meet the needs of students that cannot be addressed in a traditional classroom setting but through the assignment of students to alternative classrooms, centers, or campuses that are designed to remediate academic performance, improve behavior, or provide an enhanced learning experience. Alternative education programs do not include career or technical centers or departments;
- (b) "Contractor" means an adult who is permitted access to school grounds pursuant to a current or prospective contractual agreement with the school, school board, school district, or school-affiliated entity, at times when students are present. The term "contractor" includes an employee of a contractor;
- (c) "Relative" means father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, son, daughter, aunt, uncle, son-in-law, and daughter-in-law; and
- (d) "Vacancy" means any certified position opening created by the resignation, dismissal, nonrenewal of contract, transfer, or death of a certified staff member of a local school district, or a new position created in a local school district for which certification is required. However, if an employer-employee bargained contract contains procedures for filling certified position openings created by the resignation, dismissal, nonrenewal of contract, transfer, or death of a certified staff member, or creation of a new position for which certification is required, a vacancy shall not exist, unless certified positions remain open after compliance with those procedures.

(2) Except as provided in KRS 160.346:

- (a) All appointments, promotions, and transfers of principals, supervisors, teachers, and other public school employees shall be made only by the superintendent of schools, who shall notify the board of the action taken. All employees of the local district shall have the qualifications prescribed by law and by the administrative regulations of the Kentucky Board of Education and of the employing board. Supervisors, principals, teachers, and other employees may be appointed by the superintendent for any school year at any time after February 1 preceding the beginning of the school year. No superintendent of schools shall appoint or transfer himself or herself to another position within the school district;
- (b) When a vacancy occurs in a local school district, the superintendent shall notify the chief state school officer thirty (30) days before the position shall be filled. The chief state school officer shall keep a registry of local district vacancies which shall be made available to the public. The local school district shall post position openings in the local board office for public viewing;
- (c) When a vacancy needs to be filled in less than thirty (30) days' time to prevent disruption of necessary instructional or support services of the school district, the superintendent may seek a waiver from the chief state school officer. If the waiver is approved, the appointment shall not be made until the person recommended for the position has been approved by the chief state school officer. The chief state school officer shall respond to a district's request for waiver or for approval of an appointment within two (2) working days;
- (d) When a vacancy occurs in a local district, the superintendent shall conduct a search to locate minority teachers to be considered for the position. The superintendent shall, pursuant to administrative regulations of the Kentucky Board of Education, report annually the district's recruitment process and the

- activities used to increase the percentage of minority teachers in the district;
- (e) No relative of a superintendent of schools shall be an employee of the school district. However, this shall not apply to a relative who is a classified or certified employee of the school district for at least thirty-six (36) months prior to the superintendent assuming office, or prior to marrying a relative of the superintendent, and who is qualified for the position the employee holds. A superintendent's spouse who has at least eight (8) years of service in school systems may be an employee of the school district. A superintendent's spouse who is employed under this provision shall not hold a position in which the spouse supervises certified or classified employees. A superintendent's spouse may supervise teacher aides and student teachers. However, the superintendent shall not promote a relative who continues employment under an exception of this subsection;
- (f) No superintendent shall employ a relative of a school board member of the district, unless on July 13, 1990, the board member's relative is an employee of the district, the board member is holding office, and the relative was not initially hired by the district during the tenure of the board member. A relative employed in 1989-90 and initially hired during the tenure of a board member serving on July 13, 1990, may continue to be employed during the remainder of the board member's term. However, the superintendent shall not promote any relative of a school board member who continues employment under the exception of this subsection; and
- (g) 1. No principal's relative shall be employed in the principal's school, except a relative who is not the principal's spouse and who was employed in the principal's school during the 1989-90 school year.
2. No spouse of a principal shall be employed in the principal's school, except:

- a. A principal's spouse who was employed in the principal's school during the 1989-90 school year for whom there is no position for which the spouse is certified to fill in another school operated in the district; or
 - b. A principal's spouse who was employed in the 1989-90 school year and is in a school district containing no more than one (1) elementary school, one (1) middle school, and one (1) high school.
 3. A principal's spouse who is employed in the principal's school shall be evaluated by a school administrator other than the principal.
 4. The provisions of KRS 161.760 shall not apply to any transfer made in order to comply with the provisions of this paragraph.
- (3) No superintendent shall assign a certified or classified staff person to an alternative education program as part of any disciplinary action taken pursuant to KRS 161.011 or 161.790 as part of a corrective action plan established pursuant to the local district evaluation plan.
- (4) No superintendent shall employ in any position in the district any person who is a violent offender or has been convicted of a sex crime as defined by KRS 17.165 which is classified as a felony. The superintendent may employ, at his discretion, *except at a Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children program,* persons convicted of sex crimes classified as a misdemeanor *or persons with a substantiated finding of child abuse and neglect in records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.*
- (5) (a) A superintendent shall require a national and state criminal background check *and a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services* on all new certified hires in the school district and student teachers assigned within the district. Excluded are certified individuals who were employed in another certified position in a

Kentucky school district within six (6) months of the date of hire and who had previously submitted to a national and state criminal background check *and a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services* for the previous employment.

- (b) The superintendent shall require that each new certified hire and student teacher, as set forth in paragraph (a) of this subsection, submit to a national and state criminal history background check by the Department of Kentucky State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation *and a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services*.
 - (c) All fingerprints requested under this section shall be on an applicant fingerprint card provided by the Department of Kentucky State Police. The fingerprint cards shall be forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation from the Department of Kentucky State Police after a state criminal background check is conducted. The results of the state and federal criminal background check *and the results of a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services* shall be sent to the hiring superintendent. Any fee charged by the Department of Kentucky State Police, ~~and~~ the Federal Bureau of Investigation, *and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services* shall be an amount no greater than the actual cost of processing the request and conducting the search.
 - (d) The Education Professional Standards Board may promulgate administrative regulations to impose additional qualifications to meet the requirements of Public Law 92-544.
- (6) (a) A superintendent shall require a state criminal background check *and a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services* on all classified initial hires.

- (b) The superintendent shall require that each classified initial hire submit to a state criminal history background check by the Department of Kentucky State Police and a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. If an applicant has been a resident of Kentucky twelve (12) months or less, the superintendent may require a national criminal history background check as a condition of employment.
- (c) Any request for any criminal background records under this section shall be on an applicant fingerprint card provided by the Department of Kentucky State Police. The results of the state criminal background check and the results of the national criminal history background check, if requested under the provisions of paragraph (b) of this subsection, and the results of a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services shall be sent to the hiring superintendent. Any fee charged by the Department of Kentucky State Police and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services shall be an amount no greater than the actual cost of processing the request and conducting the search.
- (7) The superintendent may require a contractor, volunteer, or visitor to submit to a national and state criminal history background check by the Department of Kentucky State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Any request for records under this section shall be on an applicant fingerprint card provided by the Department of Kentucky State Police. The results of the state criminal background check and the results of the national criminal history background check, if requested, and the results of a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health

and Family Services shall be sent to the hiring superintendent. Any fee charged by the Department of Kentucky State Police and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services shall be an amount no greater than the actual cost of processing the request and conducting the search.

- (8) (a) If a school term has begun and a certified or classified position remains unfilled or if a vacancy occurs during a school term, a superintendent may employ an individual, who will have supervisory or disciplinary authority over minors, on probationary status pending receipt of the criminal history background check and a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Application for the criminal record and for a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services of a probationary employee shall be made no later than the date probationary employment begins.
- (b) Employment shall be contingent on the receipt of the criminal history background check documenting that the probationary employee has no record of a sex crime nor as a violent offender as defined in KRS 17.165.
- (c) Notwithstanding KRS 161.720 to 161.800 or any other statute to the contrary, probationary employment under this section shall terminate on receipt by the school district of a criminal history background check documenting a record of a sex crime or as a violent offender as defined in KRS 17.165 and no further procedures shall be required.
- (d) The provisions of KRS 161.790 shall apply to terminate employment of a certified employee on the basis of a criminal record other than a record of a sex crime or as a violent offender as defined in KRS 17.165.
- (9) (a) Each application or renewal form, provided by the employer to an applicant for a classified position, shall conspicuously state the following: "FOR THIS

TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT, STATE LAW REQUIRES A STATE CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK AND A BACKGROUND CHECK OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT RECORDS MAINTAINED BY THE CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES AS A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT. UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, A NATIONAL CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK MAY BE REQUIRED AS A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT."

- (b) Each application or renewal form, provided by the employer to an applicant for a certified position, shall conspicuously state the following: "FOR THIS TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT, STATE LAW REQUIRES A NATIONAL AND STATE CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK AND A BACKGROUND CHECK OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT RECORDS MAINTAINED BY THE CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES AS A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT."
- (c) Each application form for a district position shall require the applicant to:
1. Identify the states in which he or she has maintained residency, including the dates of residency; and
 2. Provide picture identification.
- (10) The provisions of subsections (5), (6), (7), (8) and (9) of this section shall apply to a nonfaculty coach or nonfaculty assistant as defined under KRS 161.185.
- (11) A school-based decision-making council parent member, as defined under KRS 160.345, shall submit to a state and national fingerprint-supported criminal history background check by the Department of Kentucky State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. The results of the state criminal history background check and the results of the national criminal

history background check, if requested, and the results of a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services shall be sent to the district superintendent. Any fee charged by the Department of Kentucky State Police and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services shall be an amount no greater than the actual cost of processing the request and conducting the search. A parent member may serve prior to the receipt of the criminal history background check report but shall be removed from the council on receipt by the school district of a report documenting a record of a sex crime or criminal offense against a victim who is a minor as defined in KRS 17.500 or as a violent offender as defined in KRS 17.165, and no further procedures shall be required.

- (12) Notwithstanding any provision of the Kentucky Revised Statutes to the contrary, when an employee of the school district is charged with any offense which is classified as a felony, the superintendent may transfer the employee to a second position until such time as the employee is found not guilty, the charges are dismissed, the employee is terminated, or the superintendent determines that further personnel action is not required. The employee shall continue to be paid at the same rate of pay he or she received prior to the transfer. If an employee is charged with an offense outside of the Commonwealth, this provision may also be applied if the charge would have been treated as a felony if committed within the Commonwealth. Transfers shall be made to prevent disruption of the educational process and district operations and in the interest of students and staff and shall not be construed as evidence of misconduct.

- (13) (a) Every four (4) years of employment of each certified and classified employee of the school district, the superintendent shall require a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Any results from the background

check shall be sent to the superintendent.

(b) If a certified or classified employee transfers from a district and seeks employment in another district, a background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services shall be conducted upon the completion of four (4) years of employment from the last background check of child abuse and neglect records maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Any results from the background check shall be sent to the hiring superintendent.

➔Section 2. 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; or
 - (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 *the actions of the teacher upon which the charge is based,* *provided*~~[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 and the superintendent of his or her intention to answer the charge, and upon failure of the teacher to give notice within ten (10) days, the dismissal shall be final.

- (4) (a) Except as provided in KRS 163.032, upon receiving the teacher's notice of his or her intention to answer the charge, the commissioner of education 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) attorney to serve as hearing officer and chair of the tribunal~~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 teacher or administrator 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 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 unless an extension is granted by the hearing officer or otherwise agreed to by the parties.

- (b) The hearing officer shall be appointed from a pool of hearing officers who

have received in-depth training in the law related to employment of teachers and in the conduct of due process hearings pursuant to KRS Chapter 13B, and who hold other qualifications as determined by the Kentucky Board of Education.

(c) The hearing officer training shall be designed and conducted by the Kentucky Department of Education, with input and assistance from the Attorney General and the professional organizations representing teachers, administrators, superintendents, and school boards.

(d) The Kentucky Board of Education shall adopt administrative regulations to implement the due process provisions required by this section. Persons serving as hearing officers shall be paid or reimbursed as provided in KRS 13B.030.

(5) The hearing officer shall schedule a mandatory prehearing conference with the parties, which may be held in person or through the use of technology. Prehearing motions may be disposed of at the conference. The hearing officer shall have the authority to mediate settlement and to enter an agreed order if the matter is resolved by the parties. A hearing officer shall have final authority to rule on dispositive prehearing motions.

(6) If the matter is not settled or dismissed as a result of the prehearing conference, a tribunal hearing shall be conducted. The hearing may be public or private at the discretion of the teacher. At the hearing, ~~the~~ hearing officer appointed by the commissioner of education shall preside with authority to rule on procedural matters, but the tribunal as a whole shall be the ultimate trier of fact. The local board shall pay each teacher and administrator 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. The decision,

written in a recommended order, or any final order shall be limited to upholding or overturning the decision of the superintendent. The hearing officer shall within fifteen (15) days submit to the parties a written recommended order in a form complying with the requirements of KRS 13B.110(1). Each party may file written exceptions no later than fifteen (15) days from receipt of the recommended order. Upon consideration of the exceptions filed by the parties, the hearing officer may order a settlement conference between the parties. If no settlement is reached, or no conference is ordered, the hearing officer shall, within ten (10) days, enter a final order, which may modify the recommended order. Provisions of KRS Chapter 13B notwithstanding, the hearing officer's~~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 or her judgment, the character of the charge warrants the action. If the contract termination is overturned by the final order~~after the hearing the decision of the tribunal is against termination of the contract~~, the suspended teacher shall be paid his or her 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.