

Teachers

MEMORANDUM

TO: TOM FREEDMAN, MICHAEL COHEN, MARY SMITH, BILL KINCAID
FROM: JULIE MIKUTA
RE: NEA'S RESOLUTION ON PEER REVIEW
DATE: JULY 7, 1997

SUMMARY

Over the weekend, the NEA adopted a resolution (attached) which will enable local affiliates to run peer assistance and review programs. The resolution states that the primary purpose of any such program is to provide "assistance" and that the local association may, if it desires, include a "review" component. A last minute amendment allows the teacher in question to approve the mentor. These are some of the general guidelines for peer assistance and review programs outlined in the resolution:

- The program should ensure that the consulting teacher must be deemed by his/her peers to be a "highly skilled practitioner".
- The program will establish guidelines for referral of teachers.
- Upon completion of the program, no mention of it will be placed into the teacher's files.

Peer Review and Termination of Contracts

The resolution acknowledges that peer review could lead to the termination of teachers' contracts, and sets out the responsibilities of the school district and the peer review program in such cases. Under bullet "c", it establishes that local affiliates should design programs which respect that the school district makes the final decision for nonrenewal or termination of contracts. However, the opinion of the peer review program should be routinely accepted and acted upon. Bullet "k" requires that peer review programs should provide rigorous assistance to teachers to help them achieve competence before they are recommended for dismissal.

The "Biggest Debate" at the Convention

The measure was divisive. The NEA's local publication called the topic the conference's "biggest debate". Fifty-four percent of California's 900 delegates opposed the resolution.