

Teacher Tenure - Sometimes A Good Thing , Sometimes Not

Part Four in a Series on
Bush Schools

By MARY MOSES

Teacher tenure law is a re-
curring issue in each year's

legislature. Each year the legislature wants to change it. The teacher organizations don't want it changed. Usually, nothing happens.

Under the present law, teachers are hired for one year at a time the first two years. The administrator does not need a really strong reason not to rehire a teacher then. If the teacher really isn't needed, the beginning teacher is the first laid off, even if he is very good.

After two years of working for the same school system, the teacher acquires tenure rights. That means he is automatically

rehired each year, unless he is fired for some strong reason. Usually, the only reason a teacher may be fired is to do something really morally wrong. Often failure to do a good job in the classroom cannot be proven, and can't be used as a reason to fire.

Because it is hard to get rid of a teacher who is not really good at teaching, many people want to change the tenure law. They want contracts issued each year for all teachers just the same. The best teachers would then get the jobs. The ones who do not teach as well would be

the first fired.

Teachers usually do not like this, because it leaves too many things open. A teacher could get fired just for disagreeing with the principal even if the principal were wrong. Teachers with many years of experience

and many years of college training might be laid off first, because they get the highest pay. Schools could try to hire only new, inexperienced teachers because they cost the school less wages.

(Continued on Page 6)

Teacher Tenure . .

(Continued from page 3)

Obviously, if this happened, the children would not have the very best teachers. Teachers would not try to keep going to school and learning better ways to teach, because the extra schooling would get them fired.

A compromise tenure law needs to be worked out. One possibility rest in lengthening the period before tenure is given. Another idea is to review tenure every five years, when the teacher's State certificate to teach must be renewed. Some people favor having teachers evaluated by the local school board or community.

This idea is often tied to merit promotion. Teachers who teach best are given promotions. The community evaluation would be one way to decide who deserves raises in pay. Another way might be test results on standard tests.

Each of these ideas has many points both for and against them. The legislature must consider all the points and try to find a fair solution for the children, the teachers, the school administrators, and school boards. Most of all, the legislature must try to find what kind of tenure law the people of the state really want.