

Submitter: Matt Resnick
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: HB3227

For the record, my name is Matt Resnick and I am a Head Custodian at Portland Public Schools. I have done this work for 8 years. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 3227

Custodians and nutrition service workers form the backbone of our schools. They keep the lights on, keep classrooms clean, and keep our students warm and fed. House Bill 3227 passed in the House last month and makes a few changes to the current Custodial Civil Service Law:

It removes the requirement that a candidate for the Civil Service Board be an elector of the corresponding school district and reside within the school district boundaries for at least five years immediately preceding their appointment

It doesn't make any sense to have someone elected to a governing body that has jurisdiction over a school district if they do not live within the district's boundaries or nearby.

It removes the requirement that candidates for custodial positions complete examinations and instead allows for the district to make assessments of a candidate's suitability for the position

The examination is in many ways, a test of someone's English proficiency. While I understand the importance of making job opportunities available to people from all backgrounds, it is critical that candidates demonstrate a basic understanding of English as they are working with chemicals and help mitigate the impacts of emergencies at our schools (fires, lock-downs, earthquakes, etc.)

Custodians play a crucial role in the health and safety of students, staff, and guests. This is a part of my job that I take very seriously. It is important that candidates for custodial positions are able to successfully execute these parts of their jobs.

I understand that PPS has claimed that these examinations are serving as barriers to employment for applicants. I would like to point to the fact that when we negotiated a 15% pay increase for all custodial staff during our last bargaining session – many of the vacancies the district had were filled even in spite of the continued use of the examination.

Increases to the population threshold for qualification of the law from 300,000 to 475,000 has no effect on Portland Public Schools however it has a negative impact on other school districts where their Custodians would greatly benefit from having a Custodian Civil Service Board.

Thank you
Matt Resnick