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Date: May 4, 2023

To: Honorable Members, California State Senate

From: Dorothy Johnson, Legislative Advocate, Association of California School Administrators (ACSA)

Re: **Senate Bill 494 (Newman) – REQUEST FOR “AYE” VOTE**  
School district superintendent dismissal without cause

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The Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) respectfully requests your “AYE” vote on Senate Bill 494 (Newman) related to school superintendent dismissals without cause. In light of the sudden firings of superintendents taking place throughout our state, this measure would modify public meeting requirements to increase transparency for education leaders, parents, students, teachers and staff, and the entire school community.

- There have been a growing number of incidents where **school boards abruptly acted at a special meeting to terminate superintendents without cause**. In some of the most unsettling instances this action was called during the winter holidays when the district was on break, the individual who was subject to the dismissal without cause was out of the country, or the meeting was announced on Sunday for a meeting on Monday. In other instances, the dismissal without cause took place at the first meeting of newly elected board members.
- **Sudden changes in school leadership have lasting consequences** that go far beyond the individual superintendent. It can have financial and emotional impacts on a school community. It can also **cultivate fear and destabilize a district**. Research shows superintendent longevity has a positive impact on student achievement and teacher retention.
- SB 494 would modify current Brown Act requirements for school boards by making two changes. It does not limit any dismissals *for cause* or school board authority for any other administrative action at regular or special public meetings.
  - Require that dismissals of a superintendent or assistant superintendent without cause may only be acted upon at a regular meeting, providing **at least 72-hours of public notice**, rather than 24-hours for a special meeting.
  - Create a **30-day period immediately following a school board election** during which a governing board may not terminate, without cause, the district superintendent or assistant superintendent.
- **SB 494 will further transparency and community awareness** when changes in non-elected school leadership are under consideration. It will also allow newly elected school board members the opportunity to work directly with the superintendent after gaining their office.

For more information, please contact Dorothy Johnson, ACSA Legislative Advocate, at (916) 329-3807.