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LAW ALERT

Principal Evaluation Reminder

January 12, 2011

All principals with single year contracts, and principals who are currently in the final year of a multi-year contract, must be evaluated no later than March 1, 2011. Failure to evaluate the principal by March 1 will serve to automatically extend the principal's contract for a period of one year under the same terms and conditions as the prior year's contract. 105 ILCS 5/24A-15, as amended. If however, a principal's contract specifically provides that the evaluation should occur by an earlier date (i.e. February 1) we recommend that the school district complete the evaluation by the date stated in the contract, which will also satisfy the statutory requirement.

Procedurally, the principal's evaluation must:

- take place by March 1 (or earlier contractual date)
- be in writing
- be placed in the principal's personnel file and given to the principal
- be performed by the Superintendent or designee, or a person with a Type 75 certificate appointed by the School Board

Substantively, the principal's evaluation must:

- describe the principal's duties and responsibilities and the standards to which the principal is expected to conform
- consider the principal's specific duties, responsibilities, management and competence
- specify the principal's strengths and weaknesses with supporting reasons
- align with the Illinois Professional Standards for School Leaders or research-based District standards

If the Principal will be recommended for non-renewal or reclassification, the Superintendent must ensure that the principal's failure to meet designated standards and performance criteria is clearly documented in the principal's evaluation. Further, the evaluation should advise the principal of the recommendation for non-renewal, or at a minimum, advise the principal that the failure to meet the standards and criteria may serve as the basis for a recommendation for non-renewal of the principal's contract. In addition, the Superintendent should review the Principal's employment contract to ensure that any applicable contractual timelines or procedures for evaluation and notice of contract non-renewal or reclassification are met.

The Illinois Professional Standards for School Leaders can be viewed at: www.isbe.net/profprep/CASCDvr/Wd97/29100_ILprofschleader.doc. If you require additional information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact any RSNLT labor and employment attorney.

Camille Cribaro-Mello, an associate in the firm's Chicago office, prepared this *Law Alert*.

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