

279.17 Appeal by teacher to adjudicator.

If the teacher is no longer a probationary teacher, the teacher may, within ten days, appeal the determination of the board to an adjudicator by filing a notice of appeal with the secretary of the board. The notice of appeal shall contain a concise statement of the action which is the subject of the appeal, the particular board action appealed from, the grounds on which relief is sought and the relief sought.

Within five days following receipt by the secretary of the notice of appeal, the board or the board's legal representative, if any, and the teacher or the teacher's representative, if any, may select an adjudicator who resides within the boundaries of the merged area in which the school district is located. If an adjudicator cannot be mutually agreed upon within the five-day period, the secretary shall notify the chairperson of the public employment relations board by transmitting the notice of appeal, and the chairperson of the public employment relations board shall within five days provide a list of five adjudicators to the parties. Within three days from receipt of the list of adjudicators, the parties shall select an adjudicator by alternately removing a name from the list until only one name remains. The person whose name remains shall be the adjudicator. The parties shall determine by lot which party shall remove the first name from the list submitted by the chairperson of the public employment relations board. The secretary of the board shall inform the chairperson of the public employee relations board of the name of the adjudicator selected.

If the teacher does not timely request an appeal to an adjudicator the decision, opinion, or conclusion of the board shall become final and binding.

Within thirty days after filing the notice of appeal, or within further time allowed by the adjudicator, the board shall transmit to the adjudicator the original or a certified copy of the entire record of the private hearing which may be the subject of the petition. By stipulation of the parties to review the proceedings, the record of the case may be shortened. The adjudicator may require or permit subsequent corrections or additions to the shortened record.

The record certified and filed by the board shall be the record upon which the appeal shall be heard and no additional evidence shall be heard by the adjudicator. In such appeal to the adjudicator, especially when considering the credibility of witnesses, the adjudicator shall give weight to the fact findings of the board; but shall not be bound by them.

Before the date set for hearing a petition for review of board action, which shall be within ten days after receipt of the record unless otherwise agreed or unless the adjudicator orders additional evidence be taken before the board, application may be made to the adjudicator for leave to present evidence in addition to that found in the record of the case. If it is shown to the adjudicator that the additional evidence is material and that there were good reasons for failure to present it in the private hearing before the board, the adjudicator may order that the additional evidence be taken before the board upon conditions determined by the adjudicator. The board may modify its findings and decision in the case by reason of the additional evidence and shall file that evidence and any modifications, new findings, or decisions, with the adjudicator and mail copies of the new findings or decisions to the teacher.

The adjudicator may affirm board action or remand to the board for further proceedings. The adjudicator shall reverse, modify, or grant any appropriate relief from the board action if substantial rights of the teacher have been prejudiced because the board action is:

1. In violation of a board rule or policy or contract; or
2. Unsupported by a preponderance of the competent evidence in the record made before the board when that record is viewed as a whole; or
3. Unreasonable, arbitrary or capricious or characterized by an abuse of discretion or a clearly unwarranted

exercise of discretion.

The adjudicator shall, within fifteen days after the hearing, make a decision and shall give a copy of the decision to the teacher and the secretary of the board. The decision of the adjudicator shall become the final and binding decision of the board unless either party within ten days notifies the secretary of the board that the decision is rejected. The board may reject the decision by majority vote, by roll call, in open meeting and entered into the minutes of the meeting. The board shall immediately notify the teacher of its decision by certified mail. The teacher may reject the adjudicator's decision by notifying the board's secretary in writing within ten days of the filing of such decision.

All costs of the adjudicator shall be shared equally by the teacher and the board.

[C77, 79, 81, § 279.17]