

REDUCTION IN FORCE: CLASSIFIED STAFF

The Board of Education recognizes that in the event of declining enrollment, financial exigency, system reorganization, or program change, it may become necessary, appropriate, or in the best interest of the school system to reduce the number of classified employees.

The reduction of classified employees shall be accomplished through normal attrition unless the best interests of the school system shall dictate otherwise. When the number of classified employees exceeds the needs of the school system and the reduction-in-force cannot be accomplished through normal attrition, this policy and procedures established by the Superintendent shall govern the reduction-in-force process.

The termination of an employee to achieve a reduction-in-force is not to be confused with the non-reappointment of an employee, employed on a time-certain basis.

Grounds for a Reduction in Force

A reduction in force is any justifiable decrease in the number of classified positions due to:

- District Reorganization- District reorganization is defined as the closing, consolidation or reorganization of schools, school buildings or facilities, or the elimination, curtailment, or reorganization of a curriculum offering, program, department, or school operation due to projected program needs and enrollment, positions, the existence of combined work functions for employees or educational opportunities for students, and/or reduced demand for curriculum, programs, operations or other services
- Decreased Enrollment – Decreased enrollment exists when the enrollment or projected enrollment for the next succeeding school year causes a decrease in the positions allocated by the state or any other funding source; or when the enrollment or projected enrollment for the next succeeding school year of a curriculum offering or program is inadequate to justify continuation of the course program.
- Decreased Funding – Decreased funding shall mean any decline in the Board of Education’s financial resources that is brought about by the decline in enrollment or by other actions or events that change the school system’s current operational budget; or any decrease or elimination in funding for a particular program; or any insufficiency in funding that would render the Board unable to continue existing programs at current levels.

When the Superintendent believes that a reduction in force of classified employees is appropriate, the Superintendent shall present a written recommendation to the Board of Education. The recommendation shall include the grounds for a reduction in force and the number or estimated number of classified positions to be reduced.

The Board of Education shall review the Superintendent's recommendation and shall determine whether to authorize a reduction in classified positions.

If the Board authorizes a reduction in force, the Superintendent shall recommend to the Board which employees are to be dismissed or demoted, based on guidelines established in this policy. The Superintendent shall determine whether the cut shall be made on a system-wide basis or on a departmental or program basis, whichever shall assure maintenance of a sound, balanced educational program and is consistent with the functions and responsibilities of the school system. Employees may be grouped together by specific or similar job categories. If different pay grades exist in a job category, each pay grade may be grouped separately for reduction-in-force purposes.

Criteria

The Superintendent shall first reduce staff through normal attrition. In the event normal attrition does not reduce the necessary number or classifications of employees, the Superintendent shall recommend reductions in force based upon the following criteria listed in order of priority.

1. Employees who have been placed on a disciplinary suspension without pay for more than three (3) work days within the last two (2) school years.
2. Employees who, during the current school year, either failed to satisfactorily complete an action plan, plan of assistance or directed growth plan or were placed on an action plan, plan of assistance or directed growth plan for the second time during the employee's employment with New Hanover County Schools, regardless of whether the employee satisfactorily completed such plan.
3. Continuity and stability of existing operations and programs.
4. Degrees, license or professional experience related to specific job needs.
5. Seniority as measured system wide or by department, program, school basis or otherwise, whichever is in the best interest of the school system as determined by the Superintendent.
6. Such other criteria as determined by the Board, including criteria based on recommendations and advice from the Superintendent.

The measurement of length of service applies only to years in which an employee has been employed by New Hanover County Schools. A year of service shall be defined as not less than 180 days during a normal fiscal year. In the event of a tie, total days of service shall be calculated to make a determination.

Notification

The Superintendent shall notify each employee released by this action by mail within ten (10) working days after the decision is made final.

When classified employees are dismissed in accordance with this policy, their names shall be placed on a list of employees to be maintained by the school system for three (3) consecutive years succeeding the dismissal unless they are dismissed due to poor performance or disciplinary reasons. Such employees shall have priority for any position that becomes vacant for which they are qualified. However, if the school system offers dismissed employees a position for which they are qualified and they refuse the offer, their names shall be removed from the priority list.

In compliance with federal laws, New Hanover County Schools administers all educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

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New Hanover County Public Schools, Wilmington, North Carolina