

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) recognizes that an effective staff is critical to the smooth operations of the school system and to creating a learning environment in which students can succeed. The board further believes that students will not excel in performance unless those who most directly affect students, including school administrators, teachers, and other licensed professionals, excel in their performance. For the purposes of this policy, the term “school administrator” is defined as a principal, assistant principal, supervisor, or director whose major function includes the supervision of teaching or any other part of the instructional program.

A. STANDARD FOR INITIAL, EXTENDED, OR RENEWED CONTRACTS

School administrator contracts will be granted, extended, or renewed only for individuals of proven ability who strive for excellence. School administrators should be able to facilitate student learning and effectively carry out the responsibilities of providing for school safety and enforcing student discipline. The superintendent is expected to be able to substantiate any recommendation for granting a new contract, extending a current contract, or renewing a contract with evaluation data, as described in policy 7810, Evaluation of Licensed Employees, or with regard to applicants, with data from the selection process as provided in policy 7100, Recruitment and Selection of Personnel. If the board is not satisfied that an applicant or employee has met the standards established by the board, employment will be denied, following statutorily prescribed procedures and other applicable legal requirements.

B. TERM OF CONTRACT

1. Initial Contracts

Initial contracts between a school administrator and the board will be for a term of two to four years. Four-year initial contracts will be granted only to exemplary school administrators. Absent unusual circumstances, two-year initial contracts will be granted for individuals who do not have experience as school administrators. In addition, one-year contracts may be granted to individuals who hold a provisional assistant principal’s license.

2. Subsequent Contracts

Subsequent contracts between a principal or assistant principal and the board will be granted for a term of four years.

C. PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

An employee who has a school administrator contract with the school system is expected to continue to strive for excellence, meet all performance standards established by the board, and pursue professional development as provided in policy 7800, Professional and Staff Development. Any employee who is unable or unwilling to meet reasonable

standards of the board may be subject to demotion or dismissal, as provided in policy 7930, Professional Employees: Demotion and Dismissal, and in accordance with statutorily prescribed procedures.

D. PROCEDURE FOR NEW, RENEWED, OR EXTENDED CONTRACTS

1. Decisions of the superintendent and board with regard to recommendations and offers and decisions not to recommend or offer new, renewed, or extended contracts will be made in accordance with G.S. 115C-287.1.
2. If the superintendent decides not to recommend that the board offer a school administrator a new, renewed, or extended contract, the employee has all procedural rights accorded by G.S. 115C-287.1.
3. In considering a recommendation of the superintendent to offer a school administrator a new, renewed, or extended contract, the board may review any information that was in the employee's personnel file at the time of the superintendent's recommendation. If the board determines that it needs additional information to reach a decision, it will notify the administrator of the board's concerns and of the additional information that it is considering and provide an opportunity for the employee to respond to the additional information.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -47(18), -270.20(b), -287.1, -289, -325.1 *et seq.*; *Tobe-Williams v. New Hanover Co. Bd. of Educ.*, 234 N.C. App. 453, 759 S.E.2d 680 (2014)

Cross References: Professional and Staff Development (policy 7800), Hearings Before the Board, Recruitment and Selection of Personnel (policy 7100), Evaluation of Licensed Employees (policy 7810), Professional Employees: Demotion and Dismissal (policy 7930)

Adopted: April 13, 2015

Revised: November 14, 2016; November 17, 2025 (Legal references only)