PLANS FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT OF LICENSED EMPLOYEES

Policy Code: **7710**

The board expects all professionally licensed employees to maintain high levels of performance. If an employee does not meet this standard, the superintendent and administrative staff shall address any identified performance or other deficiencies through appropriate means, including placing the employee on a monitored growth, directed growth, or mandatory improvement plan when required by state law, State Board of Education (SBE) policy, or this policy, or when otherwise deemed necessary.

Growth and mandatory improvement plans as defined by law and this policy are valuable tools to promote the professional development of licensed employees. The board recognizes, however, that not all conduct and performance issues require the development of a plan. Administrators and supervisory personnel are authorized to address inappropriate conduct and/or inadequate performance using such other lawful means as they may deem appropriate. This policy should not be interpreted to limit in any way the authority of administrators or other supervisory personnel to direct and reprimand licensed employees for inappropriate conduct or inadequate performance.

Further, the superintendent may move to recommend nonrenewal, dismissal, or demotion of a licensed employee whether or not the employee has been first placed on a growth or other improvement plan. (See policies 7840, Professional Employees: Demotion and Dismissal, and 7845, Non-Career Status Teachers: Nonrenewal.)

The superintendent shall require administrative staff to implement the requirements of this policy in accordance with state law and ~~State Board~~ SBE guidelines.

DRAFT

A. DEFINITIONS

1. As used in this policy, "~~teacher~~ educator" refers to teachers, teacher leadership specialist, career development coordinators, instructional technology facilitators, school counselors, school library media coordinators, school psychologists, and school social workers ~~means an individual defined as a teacher in G.S. 115C-325(a)(6) (for career status teachers) or G.S. 115C-325.1(6) (for non-career status teachers)~~.

2. As used in this policy, "licensed employee(s)" includes principals, assistant principals, and other school administrators as defined in G.S. 115C-325.1(5), and ~~teachers~~ educators.

3. "The North Carolina Educator Evaluation System" refers to the professional standards, processes, and rubrics approved by the ~~State Board of Education~~ SBE for each educator role in North Carolina public schools.

B. INDIVIDUAL, MONITORED, AND DIRECTED GROWTH PLANS FOR ~~TEACHERS~~ EDUCATORS

1. Use of Growth Plans for ~~Teachers~~ Educators

~~Teachers~~ Educators who receive an overall rating of at least "proficient" on all standards on the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System rubric as indicated on the Summary Rating Form shall develop an individual growth plan designed to improve performance on specifically identified standards and elements.

A ~~teacher~~ educator who is performing below a proficient level on the Summary Rating Form will be placed on a monitored growth plan or a directed growth plan unless dismissal, demotion, nonrenewal, or placement on a mandatory improvement plan (see Section D, below) is warranted. A monitored growth plan ~~developed in accordance with State Board policy~~ is required for an educator ~~teacher~~ who is rated "developing" on one or more standards of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System rubric. The monitored growth plan will be developed by the supervising evaluator, in consultation with the educator. ~~State Board policy also requires that a~~ An educator ~~teacher~~ who is rated "not demonstrated" on any standard or who is rated "developing" on any standard for two sequential years must be placed on a directed growth plan developed by the supervising evaluator. The board or superintendent may establish other criteria that will be deemed evidence that performance is below a proficient level or otherwise represents unsatisfactory or below standard performance and warrants placement on either a monitored growth plan or a directed growth plan.

Unless otherwise limited by state law or ~~State Board~~ SBE policy, the principal is authorized to place an ~~teacher~~ educator on a monitored or directed growth plan or other plan of assistance at any point during the school year if the principal determines that the ~~teacher~~ educator is performing below the expected level.

2. Components of Growth Plans for ~~Teachers~~ Educators

Individual growth plans may contain, but are not limited to, any of the components listed below. However, monitored or directed growth plans must include at least the following components.

a. Identification of Performance Deficiencies

All performance deficiencies, including conduct deficiencies and all specific standards and elements of the applicable ~~Teacher Ee~~evaluation ~~R~~rubric identified for improvement during the ~~teacher's~~ educator's evaluation, must be identified and addressed in the growth plan.

DRAFT

b. Performance Expectations and Goals

For each performance deficiency identified, the growth plan must include a statement of the expected level of performance and/or other goals to be accomplished.

c. Strategies

The growth plan must set forth a strategy or strategies designed to correct each identified performance deficiency. The strategies should be specific and clearly state the activities the ~~teacher~~ educator should undertake to achieve the expected level of performance. The strategies also should identify all individuals responsible for implementing the plan.

d. Dates for Monitoring and Completion

The growth plan must include dates upon which the ~~teacher's~~ educator's progress under the plan will be reviewed and the date by which performance or conduct is to be improved to the expected level. Under a monitored growth plan, the ~~teacher~~ educator must achieve proficiency within one school year. A directed growth plan may provide for a shorter period to achieve proficiency, not to exceed one school year.

3. Review of Growth Plans

Individual growth plans should be reviewed at least annually with the ~~teacher's~~ educator's principal or supervisor.

In the case of an educator's ~~teacher's~~ monitored or directed growth plan, once the designated time period for completion of a plan has elapsed, the principal or supervisor shall review the ~~teacher's~~ educator's performance, including the results of any subsequent evaluation and determine whether the ~~teacher~~ educator continues to perform below the expected level in any area or whether the ~~teacher's~~ educator's performance has improved sufficiently. If the ~~teacher's~~ educator's performance remains below proficient, the principal or supervisor shall recommend to the superintendent one of the following:

a. the board non-renew, dismiss, or demote the ~~teacher~~ educator, or transfer the ~~teacher~~ educator to a position in which the teacher can be successful;

b. the ~~teacher~~ educator be placed on a mandatory improvement plan in accordance with the provisions of Section D below; or

c. the ~~teacher~~ educator be moved to a new monitored or directed growth plan

DRAFT

or continue on a previous growth plan that has been revised as necessary, provided the principal or supervisor determines that:

1) the ~~teacher's~~ educator's continuing performance problems are not having an adverse impact on student learning or the school environment, or

2) the ~~teacher~~ educator is making good progress toward improvement in deficient areas and is likely to improve to an acceptable level within a reasonable, additional time period.

C. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLANS FOR PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

1. Professional Growth Plans

Professional growth plans will be developed for principals and assistant principals as provided in ~~State Board~~ SBE policy. The professional growth plan will include mutually agreed upon performance goals and recommendations based upon the principal or assistant principal's self-assessment, the consolidated assessment, and the summary evaluation using the *North Carolina School Executive; Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation Process*. Development of the professional growth plan will be discussed at a meeting between the principal or assistant principal and the superintendent or designee when completing the annual evaluation process. The superintendent or designee should review the professional growth plan with the employee at least annually.

DRAFT

2. Optional Action Plan Component to the Professional Growth Plan

a. The superintendent may incorporate an action plan into the principal or assistant principal's professional growth plan to address performance or conduct deficiencies. The action plan must include the following:

i. Identification of Performance Deficiencies

All performance and conduct deficiencies identified in the employee's evaluation must be identified and addressed in the action plan.

ii. Performance Expectations and Goals

For each performance deficiency identified, the action plan must include a statement of the expected level of performance and/or other goals to be accomplished.

iii. Strategies

The action plan must set forth a strategy or strategies designed to correct each identified performance or conduct deficiency. The strategies should be specific and clearly stated and should identify all individuals responsible for implementing the plan.

iv. Dates for Monitoring and Completion

The action plan must include the dates upon which the employee's progress under the plan will be reviewed and the date by which performance is to be improved to the expected level, which will be no less than 60 calendar days and no longer than the end of the current school year.

b. Upon completion of the action plan, the superintendent or designee shall reevaluate the employee and determine whether the employee continues to perform below the expected level in any area or whether the employee's performance has improved sufficiently. If the employee is within the final year of his or her contract, the reevaluation must occur prior to the statutory deadline for notice of contract nonrenewal. If the employee's performance remains below proficient, the superintendent shall either:

i. recommend that the board non-renew, dismiss, demote, or transfer the employee to a position in which the employee can be successful; or

ii. retain the employee in the current position if the superintendent determines that the employee is making good progress toward improvement in deficient areas and is likely to improve to an acceptable level within a reasonable period of time. A principal or assistant principal who is retained in his or her position after demonstrating performance below proficiency on the reevaluation must be given a new action plan and reevaluated as described in subsection C.2.b, above.

DRAFT

D. MANDATORY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

A mandatory improvement plan is an instrument designed to improve a licensed employee's performance by providing the employee with notice of specific performance areas that have substantial deficiencies and a set of strategies, including the specific support to be provided to the employee, so that he or she may satisfactorily resolve such deficiencies within a reasonable time frame.

The use of mandatory improvement plans as provided in this policy is discretionary and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Nothing in this policy will be interpreted so as to require the use of mandatory improvement plans in addition to, or in lieu of, growth

plans or other disciplinary action, including nonrenewal or dismissal from employment as provided by law.

1. Initiating a Mandatory Improvement Plan

a. Licensed Employees in Low-Performing Schools

If a licensed employee in a low-performing school receives a rating on any standard on an evaluation that is below proficient or otherwise represents unsatisfactory or below standard performance in an area that the licensed employee was expected to demonstrate, the individual or team that conducted the evaluation shall recommend to the superintendent that (i) the employee receive a mandatory improvement plan designed to improve the employee's performance, (ii) the superintendent recommend to the board that the employee be dismissed, demoted (if a career teacher), or nonrenewed (if the teacher is on a contract), or (iii) a proceeding for immediate dismissal or demotion be instituted against the employee for conduct or performance that causes substantial harm to the educational environment. If the individual or team that conducted the evaluation elects not to make any of the above recommendations, the individual or team evaluator shall notify the superintendent of this decision. The superintendent shall determine whether to develop a mandatory improvement plan, to recommend nonrenewal of the employee's contract, or to recommend a dismissal proceeding.

b. ~~Teachers~~ Educators in Schools Not Identified as Low-Performing

If, in an observation report or year-end evaluation, an ~~teacher~~ educator in a school not identified as low-performing receives a rating that is below proficient or otherwise represents unsatisfactory or below standard performance on any standard that the ~~teacher~~ educator was expected to demonstrate, the principal may place the employee on a mandatory improvement plan. The mandatory improvement plan will be utilized only if the superintendent or designee determines that an individual, monitored, or directed growth plan would not satisfactorily address the deficiencies.

c. Any Licensed Employees Engaging in Inappropriate Conduct or Performance

A principal may recommend to the superintendent or designee that a licensed employee be placed immediately on a mandatory improvement plan if the employee engages in inappropriate conduct or performs inadequately to such a degree that the conduct or performance causes substantial harm to the educational environment, but immediate dismissal or demotion of the employee is not appropriate. The principal must

DRAFT

document the exigent reason for immediately instituting such a plan.

2. Components of the Plan

A mandatory improvement plan for any licensed employee must include the following components.

a. Identification of Performance Deficiencies

The performance or conduct areas in which the employee is deficient must be identified and addressed in the mandatory improvement plan.

b. Performance Expectations

For each performance or conduct deficiency identified, the plan must include a statement of the expected level of performance.

DRAFT

c. Strategies

The plan must establish a strategy or strategies designed to correct each identified performance or conduct deficiency. The strategies should be specific and clearly state the activities the employee should undertake to achieve the expected level of performance or conduct and the specific support to be provided to the employee. The strategies also should identify all individuals responsible for implementing the plan.

d. Dates for Monitoring and Completion

The plan must include dates upon which the employee's progress under the plan will be reviewed and the date by which performance is to be improved to the expected level.

3. Development and Implementation of the Plan

a. Licensed Employees in Low-Performing Schools

When directed by the superintendent, a mandatory improvement plan to improve the performance of a licensed employee will be developed by the person who evaluated the licensed employee or the employee's supervisor, unless the evaluation was conducted by an assistance team. If the evaluation was conducted by an assistance team, that team shall develop the mandatory improvement plan in collaboration with the employee's supervisor. Mandatory improvement plans will be designed to be

completed within 90 instructional days or before the beginning of the next school year.

b. ~~Teachers~~ Educators in Schools Not Identified as Low-Performing

When a principal decides to put an ~~teacher~~ educator on a mandatory improvement plan, the principal shall develop the plan in consultation with the ~~teacher~~ educator. The ~~teacher~~ educator shall have five instructional days after receiving the plan to request a modification to the plan before it is implemented. The principal must consider the requested modification before finalizing the plan. The ~~teacher~~ educator shall have at least 60 instructional days to complete the mandatory improvement plan.

A ~~teacher~~ educator has five workdays after finalization of the mandatory improvement plan within which to submit a request to the principal for a qualified observer, as defined in G.S. 115C-333.1(c)(1), to observe the ~~teacher~~ educator in the area or areas of concern identified in the plan. In accordance with G.S. 115C-333.1(c)(2), the board will create and maintain a list of qualified observers who are employed by the board and available to conduct observations. The board will strive to limit the list to administrators and teachers who have excellent reputations for competence and fairness. Selection of the qualified observer and submission of the qualified observer's report to the principal will be in accordance with G.S. 115C-333.1(c)(3).

4. Reassessment

a. Licensed Employees in Low-Performing Schools

After the expiration of the time period for the mandatory improvement plan, the superintendent or designee or the assistance team shall assess the employee's performance. If the assessor determines that the employee has failed to become proficient in any of the performance or conduct standards articulated in the mandatory improvement plan or to demonstrate sufficient improvement toward such standards, the superintendent shall recommend that the employee be dismissed, demoted, or nonrenewed under applicable state law, or that the employee be immediately dismissed for conduct or performance that causes substantial harm to the educational environment.

b. ~~Teacher~~ Educator in Schools Not Identified As Low-Performing

Upon completion of a mandatory improvement plan, the principal or supervisor shall assess the performance of the employee. The principal shall also review and consider any report provided by the qualified

DRAFT

observer if one has been submitted before the end of the mandatory improvement plan period. If, after the assessment of the employee and consideration of any report from the qualified observer, the superintendent or designee determines that the ~~teacher~~ educator has failed to become proficient in any of the performance or conduct standards identified as deficient in the mandatory improvement plan or demonstrate sufficient improvement toward such standards, the superintendent may recommend that the employee be dismissed, demoted, or nonrenewed under applicable state law or that the employee be immediately dismissed for conduct or performance that causes substantial harm to the educational environment.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-325 (applicable to career status teachers), -325.1 *et seq*. (applicable to non-career status teachers), -333, -333.1; State Board of Education Policy TCP-C-004, TCP-C-005

Adopted: 07/16/2001
Revised: 10/20/2014, 05/15/2017

DRAFT