

**PLANS FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT
OF LICENSED EMPLOYEES**

The Board expects all licensed employees to maintain high levels of performance. One way to attain and maintain this expected level of performance is through professional development plans. Professional development plans are valuable tools to promote the professional development of licensed employees. All licensed employees shall have a professional development plan based upon their most recent evaluation and other measures and standards of performance as set out below.

Inappropriate conduct and/or inadequate performance by licensed employees may be addressed through professional development plans and/or through such other lawful means as administrators and supervisory personnel deem appropriate. This policy shall 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.

A. DEFINITIONS

1. As used in this policy, "teacher" 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 employees(s)" includes school administrators as defined in G.S. 115C-325.1(5) and teachers.
3. "Individual Growth Plan" means a professional development plan for teachers who receive an overall rating of at least "proficient" on all standards on the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Rubric as indicated on the Teacher Summary Rating Form designed to improve their performance on specifically identified standards and elements.
4. "Monitored Growth Plan" means a professional development plan for teachers who receive a rating of "developing" on one or more standards of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Rubric designed to help the employee to achieve proficiency on the identified standard(s) within one school year. A Monitored Growth Plan meeting the requirements of Section B.2 may also be a Mandatory Improvement Plan.
5. "Directed Growth Plan" means a professional development plan for teachers who receive a rating of "not demonstrated" on any standard or a rating of "developing" on any standard for two sequential years of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Rubric designed to help the employee to achieve proficiency on the identified standard(s) within one school year or less. A Directed Growth Plan

meeting the requirements of Section B.2 may also be a Mandatory Improvement Plan.

6. "Professional Growth Plan" means a professional development plan for school administrators that includes mutually agreed upon performance goals and recommendations based upon the school administrator's self-assessment, the consolidated assessment and the summary evaluation using the *North Carolina School Executive; Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation Process*.
7. "Mandatory Improvement Plan" means a professional development plan for teachers who receive, in an observation report or year-end evaluation, a rating that is below proficient or otherwise represents unsatisfactory or below standard performance on any standard that the teacher was expected to demonstrate, that is designed to improve the 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 the individual, within a reasonable period of time, should satisfactorily resolve such deficiencies.

B. INDIVIDUAL, MONITORED AND DIRECTED GROWTH PLANS

1. Use of Growth Plans

- a. Teachers. Principals shall develop an Individual Growth Plan for all teachers meeting the evaluation rating standards for an Individual Growth Plan.

Principals shall develop a Monitored Growth Plan or a Directed Growth Plan, as appropriate, for all teachers meeting the rating standards for a Monitored Growth Plan or a Directed Growth Plan, unless dismissal, demotion, nonrenewal or placement on a Mandatory Improvement Plan (see Section C below) is warranted. The 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 policy, and notwithstanding their required use as set out above, the principal is authorized to place a teacher on a Monitored or a Directed Growth Plan or other plan of improvement at any point during the school year if the principal determines that the teacher is performing below the expected level.

- b. School Administrators. A Professional Growth Plan shall be developed for school administrators as provided in State Board Policy TCP-C-005.

Development of the Professional Growth Plan will be discussed at a meeting between the school administrator and the Superintendent or designee when completing the annual evaluation process.

Notwithstanding the above, the Superintendent may move to dismiss or demote a licensed employee whether or not the employee has been first placed on a Monitored Growth Plan, a Directed Growth Plan, a Professional Growth Plan, a Mandatory Improvement Plan, or other improvement plan. See policy 7930, Professional Employees: Demotion and Dismissal.

2. Components of Growth Plans

Individual Growth Plans and Professional Growth Plans may contain, but are not limited to, any of the components listed below. However, a Monitored Growth Plan or a Directed Growth Plan must include at least the following components:

- a. Identification of Deficiencies. All performance deficiencies, including all specific standards and elements of the Teacher Evaluation Rubric, identified for improvement during the teacher's evaluation, must be identified and addressed in the growth plan.
- b. Performance Expectations and Goals. For each problem identified, the growth plan must include a statement of the expected level of performance and/or the goals to be accomplished.
- c. Strategies. The growth plan must set forth a strategy or strategies designed to correct each identified deficiency. The strategies should be specific and clearly state the activities the teacher 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 progress under the plan will be reviewed and the date by which performance is to be improved to the expected level.

3. Review of Growth Plans

Individual Growth Plans and Professional Growth Plans should be reviewed at least annually between the licensed employee and their supervisor, principal, or Superintendent or designee, as applicable.

In the case of a teacher's Monitored Growth Plan 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 performance, including the results of any subsequent evaluation, and determine whether the teacher continues to perform below the expected level in any area or whether the teacher's performance has

improved sufficiently. If the teacher's performance remains below proficient, the principal or supervisor shall recommend to the Superintendent one of the following:

- a. the Board dismiss the teacher or demote or transfer the teacher to a position in which the teacher can be successful;
- b. the teacher be placed on a Mandatory Improvement Plan in accordance with the provisions of Section C below; or
- c. the teacher be moved to a new Monitored or Directed Growth Plan or continue on a previous growth plan that has been revised as necessary, provided the principal or supervisor determines that:
 - 1) the teacher's continuing performance problems are not having an adverse impact on student learning or the school environment, or
 - 2) the teacher 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. MANDATORY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

The use of Mandatory Improvement Plans 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 dismissal from employment as provided by law.

1. Initiating a Mandatory Improvement Plan

- a. Teachers. If, in an observation report or year-end evaluation, a teacher receives a rating that is below proficient or otherwise represents unsatisfactory or below standard performance on any standard that the teacher was expected to demonstrate, the principal may place the teacher 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.
- b. Any Licensed Employee 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 document the exigent reason for immediately instituting such a plan.

2. Components of the Plan

A Mandatory Improvement Plan for a teacher or other licensed employee must include the following components.

- a. Identification of Deficiencies. The performance areas in which the employee is deficient must be identified and addressed in the Mandatory Improvement Plan.
- b. Performance Expectations. For each problem identified, the plan must include a statement of the expected level of performance.
- c. Strategies. The plan must establish a strategy or strategies designed to correct each identified deficiency. The strategies should be specific and clearly state the activities the employee should undertake to achieve the expected level of performance 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

When a principal decides to put a teacher on a Mandatory Improvement Plan and the Superintendent has determined that an Individual Growth Plan, a Monitored Growth Plan or a Directed Growth Plan will not satisfactorily address the deficiencies, the principal shall develop the plan in consultation with the teacher. The teacher 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 shall have at least 60 instructional days to complete the Mandatory Improvement Plan.

A teacher 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 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 shall be in accordance with G.S. 115C-333.1(c)(3).

4. Reassessment

Upon completion of a Mandatory Improvement Plan, the principal or supervisor shall assess the performance of the employee. For teachers, the principal shall also review and consider any report provided by the qualified 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 has failed to become proficient in any of the performance 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 or demoted under applicable state law.

D. PROCEDURES

The Superintendent may develop procedures in accordance with state law, State Board of Education guidelines and this policy as necessary to carry out the Board's directives.

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 Policies TCP-C-004, TCP-C-005

Cross References: Professional and Staff Development (policy 7800), Evaluation of Licensed Employees (policy 7810), Professional Employees: Demotion and Dismissal (policy 7930)

Adopted: October 4, 1999

Revised: November 6, 2006

August 2, 2010

December 5, 2011