

8.30—REDUCTION IN FORCE

SECTION ONE

The School Board acknowledges its authority to conduct a reduction in force (RIF) when a decrease in enrollment or other reason(s) make such a reduction necessary or desirable. A RIF will be conducted when the need for a reduction in the work force exceeds the normal rate of attrition for that portion of the staff that is in excess of the needs of the district as determined by the superintendent.

In effecting a RIF, the primary goals of the school district shall be: what is in the best interests of the students; to maintain accreditation in compliance with the Standards of Accreditation for Arkansas Public Schools and/or the North Central Association; and the needs of the district. A RIF will be implemented when the superintendent determines it is advisable to do so and shall be effected through non-renewal, termination, or both. Any RIF will be conducted by evaluating the needs and long- and short-term goals of the school district in relation to the staffing of the district.

If a RIF becomes necessary, the RIF shall be conducted separately for each occupational category of classified personnel identified within the district on the basis of each employee's points as determined by the schedule contained in this policy. The employee within each occupational category with the fewest number of points will not be recommended for renewal or will be terminated first.

Points

- Employee evaluation scores
 - 3 points- Received the highest evaluation score
 - 2 points- Received the second highest evaluation score
- Advanced degree in any area relevant to the employee's position (only the highest level of points apply)
 - 1 point- Bachelor's degree
 - 2 points- Master's degree
 - 3 points- Master's degree plus fifteen (15) additional hours
- License or credential relevant to the position
 - 1 point- Basic license or certification
 - 2 points- Advanced license or certification

When the District is conducting a RIF, all potentially affected classified employees shall receive a listing of the personnel within their category with corresponding point totals. Upon receipt of the list, each employee has ten (10) working days within which to appeal his or her point total to the superintendent whose decision shall be final. Except for changes made pursuant to the appeals process, no changes will be made to the list that would affect an employee's total after the list is released.

Except as may occur during a RIF in the District's teaching staff, there is no right or implied right for any employee to "bump" or displace any other employee. When there is a RIF of the District's teaching staff, a teacher with full licensure in a position shall prevail over a teacher with greater points but who is lacking full licensure in that subject area. "Full licensure" means an initial, or standard, non-contingent license to teach in a subject area or grade level, in contrast with a license that is provisional; temporary; or conditional on the fulfillment of additional course work or passing exams or any other requirement of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, other than the attainment of annual professional development training; or teaching under a waiver of licensure. The exception for a RIF in the District's teaching staff specifically does not allow a licensed employee who might wish to assume a classified position to displace a classified employee.

In the event of a tie between two (2) or more employees, the employee(s) shall be retained based on the following:

1. An employee with the highest evaluation rating shall be retained over an employee with the second highest evaluation rating.
2. If both employees have the same evaluation rating, the employee whose name appears first in the Board minutes to be hired or whose name was first recommended for hire in the District's applicant tracking system shall be retained.

Pursuant to any RIF brought about by consolidation or annexation and as a part of it, the salaries of all employees will be brought into compliance, by a partial RIF if necessary, with the receiving district's salary schedule. Further adjustments will be made if the length of contract or job assignments change. A Partial RIF may also be conducted in conjunction with any job reassignment whether or not it is conducted in relation to an annexation or consolidation.

Recall

For a period of up to two (2) years from June 30 of the year an employee was not renewed or was terminated under this policy, a classified employee shall be offered an opportunity to fill a classified vacancy comparable as to pay, responsibility and contract length to the position from which the employee was not renewed or was terminated, and for which he or she is qualified. No right of recall shall exist for the elimination or reduction of a stipend or a reduction in contract length. Recall of employees under this policy shall be in reverse order of that used to determine the employees that would be RIFed (i.e. the employee with the highest points will be recalled first and the employee with the lowest points will be recalled last).

Notice of vacancies to non-renewed employees shall be by first class mail to all employees reasonably believed to be both qualified for and subject to rehire for a particular position and they shall have 10 working days from the date the notification is mailed in which to conditionally accept or reject the offer of a position with the actual offer going to the qualified employee with the most points who responds within the 10 day time period. A lack of response, as evidenced by a teacher's failure to respond within 10 working days, or an employee's express refusal of an offer of a position or an employee's acceptance of a position but failure to sign an employment contract within two business days of the contract being presented to the employee shall constitute a rejection of the offered position and shall end the district's obligation to rehire the employee. No further rights to be rehired because of the RIF shall exist.

SECTION TWO

The employees of any school district which annexes to, or consolidates with, the Van Buren School District will be subject to dismissal or retention at the discretion of the school board, on the recommendation of the superintendent, solely on the basis of need for such employees on the part of the Van Buren School District, if any, at the time of the annexation or consolidation, or within ninety (90) days after the effective date of the annexation or consolidation. The need for any employee of the annexed or consolidated school district shall be determined solely by the superintendent and school board of the Van Buren School District.

Such employees will not be considered as having any seniority within the Van Buren School District and may not claim an entitlement under a RIF to any position held by a Van Buren School District employee prior to, or at the time of, or prior to the expiration of ninety (90) days after the consolidation or annexation, if the notification provision below is undertaken by the superintendent.

The superintendent shall mail, email, or have hand-delivered the notification to such employee of his intention to recommend the employee not be renewed or be terminated pursuant to a RIF within ninety (90) days of the effective date of the annexation or consolidation in order to effect the provisions of this section of the Van Buren School District's RIF policy. Any employees who were not renewed or terminated pursuant to Section Two are not subject to recall. Any such employees shall be paid at the rate for each person on the appropriate level on the salary schedule of the annexed or consolidated district during those ninety (90) days and/or through the completion of the RIF process.

This subsection of the RIF policy shall not be interpreted to provide that the superintendent must wait ninety (90) days from the effective date of the annexation or consolidation in order to issue notification of his intention to recommend dismissal through RIF, but merely that the superintendent has that period of time in which to issue notification so as to be able to invoke the provisions of this section.

The intention of this section is to ensure that those Van Buren School District employees who are employed prior to the annexation or consolidation shall not be displaced by employees of the annexed or consolidated district by application of the RIF policy.

Legal References: A.C.A § 6-13-636
 A.C.A § 6-17-2301
 A.C.A. § 6-17-2407

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