

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

*Policy Code:*     **7811**

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1 The Transylvania County Board of Education (the “board”) expects all professionally licensed  
2 employees to maintain high levels of performance. If an employee does not meet this standard,  
3 the superintendent and administrative staff shall address any identified performance or other  
4 deficiencies through appropriate means, including placing the employee on a monitored growth,  
5 directed growth, or mandatory improvement plan when required by state law, State Board policy,  
6 or this policy, or when otherwise deemed necessary.  
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8 Growth and mandatory improvement plans as defined by law and this policy are valuable tools to  
9 promote the professional development of licensed employees. The board recognizes, however,  
10 that not all conduct and performance issues require the development of a plan. Administrators  
11 and supervisory personnel are authorized to address inappropriate conduct and/or inadequate  
12 performance using such other lawful means as they may deem appropriate. This policy should  
13 not be interpreted to limit in any way the authority of administrators or other supervisory  
14 personnel to direct and reprimand licensed employees for inappropriate conduct or inadequate  
15 performance.  
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17 Further, the superintendent may move to recommend nonrenewal, dismissal, or demotion of a  
18 licensed employee whether or not the employee has been first placed on a growth or other  
19 improvement plan. (See policies 7930, Professional Employees: Demotion and Dismissal, and  
20 7950, Non-Career Status Teachers: Nonrenewal.)  
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22 The superintendent shall require administrative staff to implement the requirements of this policy  
23 in accordance with state law and State Board guidelines.  
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25 **A. DEFINITIONS**

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- 27 1. As used in this policy, “teacher” means an individual defined as a teacher in G.S.  
28 115C-325(a)(6) (for career status teachers) or G.S. 115C-325.1(6) (for non-career  
29 status teachers).  
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  - 31 2. As used in this policy, “licensed employee(s)” includes principals, assistant  
32 principals, and other school administrators as defined in G.S. 115C-325.1(5), and  
33 teachers.  
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  - 35 3. “The North Carolina Educator Evaluation System” refers to the professional  
36 standards, processes, and rubrics approved by the State Board of Education for  
37 each educator role in North Carolina public schools.  
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39 **B. INDIVIDUAL, MONITORED, AND DIRECTED GROWTH PLANS FOR TEACHERS**

40 **1. Use of Growth Plans for Teachers**  
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43 Teachers who receive an overall rating of at least “proficient” on all standards on  
44 the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System rubric as indicated on the  
45 Summary Rating Form shall develop an individual growth plan designed to  
46 improve performance on specifically identified standards and elements.  
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48 A teacher who is performing below a proficient level on the Summary Rating  
49 Form will be placed on a monitored growth plan or a directed growth plan unless  
50 dismissal, demotion, nonrenewal, or placement on a mandatory improvement plan  
51 (see Section D, below) is warranted. A monitored growth plan developed in  
52 accordance with State Board policy is required for a teacher who is rated  
53 “developing” on one or more standards of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation  
54 System rubric. State Board policy also requires that a teacher who is rated “not  
55 demonstrated” on any standard or who is rated “developing” on any standard for  
56 two sequential years be placed on a directed growth plan. The board or  
57 superintendent may establish other criteria that will be deemed evidence that  
58 performance is below a proficient level or otherwise represents unsatisfactory or  
59 below standard performance and warrants placement on either a monitored  
60 growth plan or a directed growth plan.  
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62 Unless otherwise limited by state law or State Board policy, the principal is  
63 authorized to place a teacher on a monitored or directed growth plan or other plan  
64 of assistance at any point during the school year if the principal determines that  
65 the teacher is performing below the expected level.  
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## 67 **2. Components of Growth Plans for Teachers**

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69 Individual growth plans may contain, but are not limited to, any of the  
70 components listed below. However, monitored or directed growth plans must  
71 include at least the following components.  
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### 73 **a. Identification of Performance Deficiencies**

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75 All performance deficiencies, including conduct deficiencies and all  
76 specific standards and elements of the Teacher Evaluation Rubric  
77 identified for improvement during the teacher’s evaluation, must be  
78 identified and addressed in the growth plan.  
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### 80 **b. Performance Expectations and Goals**

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82 For each performance deficiency identified, the growth plan must include  
83 a statement of the expected level of performance and/or other goals to be  
84 accomplished.  
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**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 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 or conduct is to be improved to the expected level. Under a monitored growth plan, the teacher 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 principal or supervisor.

In the case of a 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 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 non-renew, dismiss, or demote the teacher, 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 D, 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

- 129                                   2)     the teacher is making good progress toward improvement in  
130   deficient areas and is likely to improve to an acceptable level  
131   within a reasonable, additional time period.  
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133 **C.     PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLANS FOR PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS**

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135 **1.     Professional Growth Plans**  
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137             Professional growth plans will be developed for principals and assistant principals  
138             as provided in State Board policy. The professional growth plan will include  
139             mutually agreed upon performance goals and recommendations based upon the  
140             principal or assistant principal’s self-assessment, the consolidated assessment, and  
141             the summary evaluation using the *North Carolina School Executive; Principal*  
142             *and Assistant Principal Evaluation Process*. Development of the professional  
143             growth plan will be discussed at a meeting between the principal or assistant  
144             principal and the superintendent or designee when completing the annual  
145             evaluation process. The superintendent or designee should review the  
146             professional growth plan with the employee at least annually.  
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148 **2.     Optional Action Plan Component to the Professional Growth Plan**  
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- 150             a.     The superintendent may incorporate an action plan into the principal or  
151             assistant principal’s professional growth plan to address performance or  
152             conduct deficiencies. The action plan must include the following:  
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154                     **i.     Identification of Performance Deficiencies**  
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156                             All performance and conduct deficiencies identified in the  
157                             employee’s evaluation must be identified and addressed in the  
158                             action plan.  
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160                     **ii.    Performance Expectations and Goals**  
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162                             For each performance deficiency identified, the action plan must  
163                             include a statement of the expected level of performance and/or  
164                             other goals to be accomplished.  
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166                     **iii.   Strategies**  
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168                             The action plan must set forth a strategy or strategies designed to  
169                             correct each identified performance or conduct deficiency. The  
170                             strategies should be specific and clearly stated and should identify  
171                             all individuals responsible for implementing the plan.

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**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 non-renewal. 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.

**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 timeframe.

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 non-renewal or dismissal from employment as provided by law.

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**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 in Schools Not Identified as Low-Performing**

If, in an observation report or year-end evaluation, a teacher 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 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

258 document the exigent reason for immediately instituting such a plan.

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260 **2. Components of the Plan**

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

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265 **a. Identification of Performance Deficiencies**

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

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270 **b. Performance Expectations**

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

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275 **c. Strategies**

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

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284 **d. Dates for Monitoring and Completion**

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

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290 **3. Development and Implementation of the Plan**

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292 **a. Licensed Employees in Low-Performing Schools**

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



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

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304 **b. Teachers in Schools Not Identified As Low-Performing**

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

313  
314 A teacher has five workdays after finalization of the mandatory  
315 improvement plan within which to submit a request to the principal for a  
316 qualified observer, as defined in G.S. 115C-333.1(c)(1), to observe the  
317 teacher in the area or areas of concern identified in the plan. In  
318 accordance with G.S. 115C-333.1(c)(2), the board will create and maintain  
319 a list of qualified observers who are employed by the board and available  
320 to conduct observations. The board will strive to limit the list to  
321 administrators and teachers who have excellent reputations for  
322 competence and fairness. Selection of the qualified observer and  
323 submission of the qualified observer's report to the principal will be in  
324 accordance with G.S. 115C-333.1(c)(3).

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326 **4. Reassessment**

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328 **a. Licensed Employees in Low-Performing Schools**

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

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341 **b. Teachers in Schools Not Identified As Low-Performing**

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343 Upon completion of a mandatory improvement plan, the principal or



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344 supervisor shall assess the performance of the employee. The principal  
345 shall also review and consider any report provided by the qualified  
346 observer if one has been submitted before the end of the mandatory  
347 improvement plan period. If, after the assessment of the employee and  
348 consideration of any report from the qualified observer, the superintendent  
349 or designee determines that the teacher has failed to become proficient in  
350 any of the performance or conduct standards identified as deficient in the  
351 mandatory improvement plan or demonstrate sufficient improvement  
352 toward such standards, the superintendent may recommend that the  
353 employee be dismissed, demoted, or nonrenewed under applicable state  
354 law or that the employee be immediately dismissed for conduct or  
355 performance that causes substantial harm to the educational environment.  
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357 Legal References: G.S. 115C-325 (applicable to career status teachers), -325.1 *et seq.* (applicable  
358 to non-career status teachers), -333, -333.1; State Board of Education Policies ~~TCP-CEVAL-~~  
359 004, ~~TCP-CEVAL-~~005  
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361 Cross References: Professional and Staff Development (policy 1610/7800), Evaluation of  
362 Licensed Employees (policy 7810), Professional Employees: Demotion and Dismissal (policy  
363 7930), Non-Career Status Teachers: Nonrenewal (policy 7950)  
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365 Adopted: June 16, 2014  
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367 Revised: April 18, 2016; November 21, 2016; [DATE] (legal references only)