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- Guidelines for decisions regarding non-probationary status for third and fourth year teachers
- Letter for third and fourth year probationary teachers from Shayne Spalten
TIMELINE & ACTION ITEMS

By Feb. 6  
Review information contained in this toolkit to prepare you for meetings with probationary teachers, as well as to understand your role in the implementation of SB 191 requirements.

Discuss the SB 191 changes to non-probationary status with all of your probationary teachers.

Week of Feb. 6  
All teachers will receive a letter communicating the SB 191 changes to non-probationary status. You’ll find a copy of the letter teachers will receive included in this toolkit.

By Feb. 28  
Meet with IS/ED to discuss preliminary recommendations for renewal of third and fourth year probationary teachers, and any potential non-renewals.

Following review meeting with IS/ED, we recommend that you meet individually with third and fourth year probationary teachers and any potential non-renewals to discuss performance to date and review student achievement data (including CSAP growth data, interim data, etc.).

By March 30  
Where possible, arrange for IS/ED to observe in third and fourth year probationary teacher classrooms and any potential non-renewal classrooms.

By April 13  
Complete required paperwork and meet with IS/ED and HR School Partner to finalize decisions regarding all probationary teachers.

Submit non-renewals and recommendations for non-probationary status to IS/ED for approval.

By May 1  
Conduct final conferences with probationary teachers and share decisions regarding non-renewal/renewal; continuation in an alternative licensure program; and advancement/non-advancement to non-probationary status.

Submit final non-renewal/renewal forms to HR. Non-renewal/renewal forms are available in “Forms” section of the 2012-2013 Spring Staffing Handbook and can be downloaded from the HR section of the Principal Portal.

June 1  
Statutory deadline for informing teachers of non-renewal.
OVERVIEW OF NON-PROBATIONARY STATUS UNDER SENATE BILL 191

- We recognize the far-reaching and profound impact teachers have on students. Teachers want the best for the students in their classrooms. They want to help close the achievement gap and increase student performance.

- In every classroom, we must ensure that students are learning at a high level. This means ensuring a highly effective teacher in every classroom every day.

- Historically, our system has failed to recognize excellence in teaching and to address those situations in which, despite best intentions, students are not learning at the levels they need to in order to be successful and changes in instructional practice needs to improve to make that happen.

- Before the passage of Senate Bill 191 in May 2010, teachers were granted non-probationary status automatically if they were renewed into a fourth year. Senate Bill 191 aims to make the conferral of non-probationary status for teachers a meaningful point in a teacher’s career by tying it to demonstrated effectiveness and their ability to close achievement gaps, instead of just time in position.

- Senate Bill 191 calls for all districts to implement evaluation systems that include multiple measures of effectiveness, at least fifty percent of which must be measures of student growth. With the implementation of such evaluation systems, non-probationary status will no longer be granted automatically after their first three years of teaching. Rather, teachers will earn non-probationary status with three consecutive years of proven effectiveness. Once the new teacher effectiveness evaluation tool is in place, teachers can also lose non-probationary status with two consecutive years of ineffective performance.

- In the past, principals had two choices at the end of a teacher’s third year – renewal with non-probationary status or non-renewal. In 2011-12, the statute provides three options for third and fourth year probationary teachers: (1) Non-renewal; (2) Renewal with Non-Probationary Status; (3) Renewal with Probationary Status.

- The result of these changes is that the district is no longer forced to make the choice of offering a third or fourth year probationary teacher what is effectively lifetime employment or preventing them from ever working in the district again. This provides a teacher who is still growing and developing the opportunity for more time to earn non-probationary status and prove effectiveness, and ensures that the decision to award non-probationary status is a meaningful one, tied to multiple years of demonstrated effectiveness.

RENEWAL WITH NON-PROBATIONARY STATUS

- The decision around non-probationary status is a meaningful one, and one that is reserved for teachers who have demonstrated multiple years of consistently strong performance.

- Principals will be looking at multiple indicators of performance, including student performance data, observations of instructional practice, and professionalism. Those teachers who demonstrate progress, are strong contributors to the school, and have maintained strong professional standards, but have not yet demonstrated consistently strong performance over multiple years, may be renewed with probationary status.

- There is no change to the statutory standards for non-renewal of probationary teachers -- i.e., “The chief administrative officer of the employing school district may recommend that the board not renew the employment contract of a probationary teacher for any reason he deems sufficient.”, C.R.S., 22-63-203(4)(a).
MEETING TIPS

The following are some tips for talking with your probationary staff about SB 191 impacts:

- Stress that achieving non-probationary status should be a significant milestone in a teacher’s professional career.

- Provide staff with a simple explanation of what SB 191 provides.

- Review the impacts to probationary teachers, as well as what the possible outcomes are for the following year.

- Discuss how decisions will be made and share the timeframe for decisions to be made.

- Share the framework for decision making.

- Don’t forget to celebrate successes and let the staff know that while hard work is recognized and appreciated, these decisions must include overall teacher effectiveness including student achievement results.

- Open the floor for questions and address any staff concerns.
RENEWAL GUIDELINES FOR DECISIONS REGARDING NON-PROBATIONARY STATUS FOR THIRD-YEAR TEACHERS

Under Senate Bill 191, the district is no longer forced into the binary decision of either renewing a third/fourth year probationary teacher on non-probationary status or non-renewing that teacher. For 2010-11, Senate Bill 191 provides the following options with respect to third/fourth year probationary teachers: (1) non-renewal; (2) renewal with probationary status; (3) renewal with non-probationary status.

Consistent with Senate Bill 191, the award of non-probationary status should be a meaningful decision, tied to multiple years of strong demonstrated teacher performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>CONSIDER RENEWAL AS NON-PROBATIONARY FOR THIRD-YEAR TEACHERS IF:</th>
<th>CONSIDER RENEWAL AS PROBATIONARY IF:</th>
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<td>Student Achievement</td>
<td>Academic achievement results from multiple measures (e.g., DRA; interim assessments; CSAP; principal-vetted school-specific assessments) indicate strong and consistent student achievement growth over multiple years.</td>
<td>Academic achievement results from multiple measures (e.g., DRA; interim assessments; CSAP; principal-vetted school-specific assessments) indicate acceptable student achievement growth. Students are making adequate progress, and are not falling behind over the course of the year. Teacher has not yet demonstrated strong student achievement over multiple years.</td>
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<td>Instructional Practice</td>
<td>The teacher has demonstrated multiple years of strong instructional practice, as evidenced in formal and informal observations of instructional practice. The teacher’s classroom instruction, planning practices and utilization of student data reflect best practice.</td>
<td>The teacher demonstrates some areas of instructional strength and some areas of continual development need. Instructional best practice has not been demonstrated for multiple years, but there is continual progress and consistent growth in this area. There is a belief that the teacher will be able to demonstrate consistent, strong instructional practice, with one or more additional years of support.</td>
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<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>The teachers meet DPS expectations around professionalism, including but not limited to, a consistent record of the following:</td>
<td>Strong contributions to school community and being a valued member of school team; Collaborating with and being respected by colleagues; Strong teacher attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strong contributions to school community and being a valued member of school team;</td>
<td>• Strong student attendance; No other conduct issues</td>
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In making decisions around non-probationary status, principals should consider all of the following: student achievement gains, instructional practice, and professionalism. Teachers who have not demonstrated strong, consistent performance over multiple years on any of these dimensions, but who are demonstrating promising performance and progress toward excellence may be renewed under probationary status. C.R.S. 22-63-203(4)(a) provides that “The chief administrative officer of the employing school district may recommend that the board not renew the employment contract of a probationary teacher for any reason he deems sufficient.” The above guidelines and related documents, do not in any way alter the standard or authority for non-renewal in the statute.
Dear Teacher:

This letter serves to communicate changes that are occurring in Denver Public Schools to implement a comprehensive set of educator effectiveness strategies, with a focus on developing, supporting, rewarding, recognizing and retaining great teachers. Specifically, probationary teachers moving towards eligibility for non-probationary status will be affected by this comprehensive set of strategies.

In 2010, The Colorado legislature passed a law (Senate Bill 191) that creates a new standard for granting teachers non-probationary status — a standard that ensures these decisions are meaningful and are based on a teacher’s performance over time, rather than simply the number of years of service. The statute articulates that teachers must demonstrate three consecutive years of effective performance to receive non-probationary status. Effective performance is defined by principal observations of your practice as well as achievement of your students.

In the past, DPS principals were forced into a binary decision of granting a third-year teacher non-probationary status or non-renewing the teacher. In 2011-12, principals will have the following options for all probationary teachers with at least three years of DPS service:

1. **Renewal with award of non-probationary status** – contract renewed for the 2012-13 school year with conferral of non-probationary status, recognizing three consecutive years of strong performance.

2. **Renewal with continued probationary status** – contract renewed for the 2012-13 school year with continued probationary status, recognizing that a teacher is demonstrating potential, but has not yet demonstrated three consecutive years of strong performance.

3. **Non-renewal** – contract not renewed for the 2012-13 school year and the teacher’s employment is terminated.

That is to say, principals have the option to extend probationary status for third or fourth year probationary teachers who are still developing in their profession and have not yet demonstrated three consecutive years of strong performance. There has been no change to the standards articulated in state statute for non-renewal.

The statute’s approach toward awarding non-probationary status acknowledges that it takes time to develop the skills to be effective in the classroom and to demonstrate consistent levels of high performance. It allows the district to extend an additional year of service to those teachers who have not yet met expectations, but are demonstrating levels of progress and potential that will lead to strong performance results.

Over the next several months, your principal will be talking to you about your performance to date. You should be analyzing your student achievement data and setting goals throughout this year to ensure your performance will reach the high standards DPS sets for its students. If you have questions regarding the changes to the awarding of non-probationary status, you may contact your principal.

Sincerely,

Shayne Spalten
Chief Human Resources Officer
Denver Public Schools