

**Reduction in Professional Staff Work Force -  
Excluding Administrators**

If it becomes necessary for the Columbia County Board of Education to reduce the work force for professional staff members excluding administrators, every effort will be made to retain as many staff members as possible. **In that effort and as possible, full-time employees shall have preference over current retired employees who have returned to work at 49%.**

If a reduction in force (RIF) becomes necessary, the field(s) of certification requiring reduction will be identified with reduction in force being applied relative to professional employees within said field(s) of certification. Personnel holding multiple areas of certification will have the right to employment within one of the other areas based on seniority in the system.

The criteria for reduction in force are described below and shall be applied in the following manner:

- A. Seniority in the school system
- B. Level of certification
- C. Particular need of the school system

**Explanations**

Seniority in the system will be the first criteria applied for reduction in staff. Seniority is defined as the length of uninterrupted service in the Columbia County School System based on the date of hire, or first day of employment, with the system. Interrupted service refers to a break in service of 30 or more days by any employee who worked previously for the school system and is then rehired. In such instances, the employee's seniority begins with the most recent date of hire. If while under contract a teacher ceases to work because of documented a disability and then promptly returns to work with the system when the disability ends, prior to accepting employment with anyone else, such documented disability shall not interrupt the teacher's service within the system for purposes of calculations used in this policy.

If further reductions are needed and employees have equivalent seniority in the system, then the level of certification will take preference. If equally qualified by seniority in the system and level of certification, then the particular need of the school system as determined by the Superintendent and Board of Education will be considered. If all criteria are equal, then the reduction will be made by lot.

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Any teacher whose services are terminated because of a necessary reduction in personnel will be appointed to the first vacancy for which the teacher is certified according to seniority in the school system.

Re-employment rights will be granted within a space of two calendar years. Openings will be filled in reverse order of termination under this policy with the same criteria to be used. An employee's eligibility for re-employment under this policy shall terminate if:

1. The employee fails to provide written acceptance of an offer of position on the same level of employment in the school system within seven days of such offer being made. Current, correct mailing address is the responsibility of the employee.
2. The employee resigns prior to actual termination or demotion and/or after notification.

The immediate supervisor shall schedule an individual conference with each employee whose release is to be recommended to the Board of Education to inform the employee of such recommendation. Any staff member released under the provisions of this policy will be so notified, in writing, along with a statement of honorable dismissal.

In defining "fields of certification," the following guidelines shall apply. It is recognized by the Board that the Georgia Professional Standards Commission from time to time determines fields of certification for kindergarten, elementary, middle schools and secondary schools and specialized areas of special education. Prior to any reduction in force under this policy, the current State areas and fields of certification shall be examined, and where possible, adopted as the "field of certification" areas used for reduction in force. These certification areas shall be presented to the Board for its approval prior to actual reduction in force.

There shall be no deviation from this policy, except by the Board following a special conference in which the valid interests of the Board to deviate are fairly demonstrated.

Any reduction in force shall be carried out in accordance with relevant statutes.

This policy affects terminations and demotions which are necessary due to a change in the size or nature of the student population, including loss of students, budgetary limitations, changes in the curriculum, cancellation of programs, reduction in the number of employees in a certain subject area, field, department, program, elimination or consolidation of

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positions or for any other good and sufficient reason deemed necessary by the Board of Education.

Terminations and/or demotions will be governed by the Georgia Fair Dismissal Law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-940; O.C.G.A. 20-2-941; O.C.G.A. 20-2-942).

Any teacher terminated through application of this policy, upon request, shall be given a letter of recommendation explaining the circumstances and shall have priority for substitute teaching.

**PROCEDURE: NO**

**ADOPTED: 1/8/85**

**REVISED: 5/10/88, 10/01/97, 8/10/99**

**Columbia County Board of Education**