



REDUCTION IN FORCE POLICY

Purpose

This policy establishes a clear and fair process for reducing staff when necessary, due to changes in the academic or operational needs of the district. It is designed to guide decision-making using objective criteria, with a focus on student outcomes and the district's financial stability.

Scope

This policy applies to all district employees, including administrators, teachers, support staff, and other personnel.

Policy Statement

When workforce reductions are required due to financial constraints, declining enrollment, program changes, or other operational needs, the district will follow a structured and transparent process. The intent is to maintain high-quality instruction and services while operating within available resources.

Criteria for Reduction

Academic Needs

- Priority will be given to positions that directly impact student learning and achievement.
- Critical subject areas, special education, and specialized instructional programs will receive priority consideration.
- Teacher impact will be reviewed to retain highly effective educators.

Operational Needs

- Essential roles required for daily operations will be prioritized.
- Positions that support student safety, health, and well-being will be considered essential.
- Roles that provide key support to academic programs and administrative functions will be evaluated.

Seniority

- Seniority within the district will be considered.

Performance

- Teacher effectiveness, including evidence of student growth, will be a significant factor.
- Staff performance will be evaluated based on adherence to personnel policies, professional expectations, and assigned responsibilities.

Certifications and Qualifications

- Employees with multiple certifications or credentials that allow for flexibility in assignments will be prioritized.
- Specialized skills aligned to district priorities will be considered.

Leave Status and Reduction in Force

The District shall not consider an employee's use of approved leave, including leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or any other protected leave, as a factor in determining whether an employee is subject to a reduction in force.

Employees on approved leave shall be subject to the same reduction criteria and evaluation process as all other employees. An employee may be included in a reduction in force during a period of approved leave when the action is based on legitimate academic, operational, or financial considerations and is supported by objective, job-related criteria applied consistently across similarly situated employees.

The District retains the authority to eliminate positions as part of a reduction in force. If a position is eliminated, the employee assigned to that position shall have no right to reinstatement solely based on leave status.

All reduction in force decisions will be implemented in accordance with applicable federal laws, including the Family and Medical Leave Act (29 U.S.C. § 2601 et seq.), and applicable Arkansas laws and personnel policies governing employment decisions.

Procedures

1. Assessment and Planning

- The Superintendent and leadership team will assess financial conditions, enrollment trends, and program needs.
- A plan identifying affected areas and positions will be developed.



2. Communication

- Employees will be notified as early as possible when reductions are anticipated.
- Clear communication will be maintained regarding timelines, criteria, and available support.

3. Implementation

- Reductions will be carried out in accordance with this policy and applicable laws or agreements.
- Employees selected for reduction will receive written notice with information on benefits, continuation options, and job placement resources.

4. Support for Affected Employees

- Support services will be made available, including counseling, career assistance, and unemployment information.
- The district will make reasonable efforts to assist employees in securing new employment opportunities.

5. Appeal Process

- Employees may appeal a reduction decision if they believe it was made in error or inconsistent with this policy.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing to Human Resources within five (5) business days of receiving notice.
- The appeal will be reviewed, and the Superintendent will issue a final determination.

Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to remain aligned with district needs and applicable laws.

Approval

This policy was approved by the School Board on July 24, 2024

Effective Date

This policy is effective as of July 24, 2024.