

## **GUIDELINES TO RECRUIT, SUPPORT AND RETAIN HIGHLY EFFECTIVE STAFF**

### **PURPOSE:**

The Rhode Island Department of Education has reenacted and updated the Basic Education Program (BEP) as of July 1, 2010. The North Kingstown School Committee and Administration have a statutory responsibility to follow and implement the Department of Education's rules and regulations.<sup>1</sup>

### **PHILOSOPHY:**

Two essential principles contained in the BEP require the North Kingstown School Department to select, promote and retain only the most highly effective staff and to strategically deploy teachers, administrators and other staff based upon student need and qualifications. Under the BEP, the management of the Human Capital system is "essential to the mission of implementing a statewide system of public education."<sup>2</sup> The following policy outlines the educational mission of the North Kingstown School Department to recruit, support and retain highly effective staff.

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

#### **I. OBJECTIVE:**

To ensure the selection and hiring of highly qualified, effective, certified staff that best meet the needs of the students of North Kingstown.

The North Kingstown School Department shall regard a highly qualified, effective applicant as one who fulfills and best meets all Federal, State and District laws, rules, regulations and requirements for a particular position. The decision as to which applicant is selected for a particular position lies within the management discretion of the Administration. Such responsibility may not be delegated, in any fashion, through the collective bargaining process and no collective bargaining agreement shall contain any language expressly or impliedly in derogation thereof.

With the approval of the revised BEP by the Board of Regents, effective July 1, 2010, the overarching goal of the BEP is clear: continuous improvement of student learning must be the primary reference point for all decision making, including personnel assignment and evaluation. "in order to effectively meet these functions, each LEA shall maintain control of its ability to recruit, hire, manage, evaluate and assign its personnel."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> R.I.G.L. 16-2-9(3), (14), (15) and 16-2-11(a)(4).

<sup>2</sup> BEP G-15-1.2(c).

<sup>3</sup> BEP G-15-2.2(a).

The final authority for the determination and recommendation of personnel to be employed by the School Department should be its chief administrative agent, the Superintendent of Schools.

II. CERTIFIED PERSONNEL:

- A. Applications shall be made available, through the Personnel Department, to all persons interested in staff positions in the North Kingstown schools.
- B. Completed applications shall be processed further only after all related materials, i.e. transcripts, reference statements, and evidence of certification or eligibility for certification, have been received by the Personnel Department. Each applicant shall be notified periodically of the need for such related materials before the application can be processed further.
- C. All completed applications and related materials shall be reviewed by screening committees of not less than two administrators/supervisors. On the basis of preparation, experience, references, transcripts and certification, the best qualified applicants shall be identified by the screening committee.
- D. Preliminary interviews shall be held with those applicants who have been identified as the best qualified candidates. These preliminary interviews shall be conducted by not less than two administrators at the appropriate level of the job, using a standardized interview document.
- E. Following the preliminary interviews, the results of these interviews shall be reviewed by the administrative staff to determine the best qualified of the candidates interviewed and a list of best qualified prospective candidates shall be developed.
- F. Every position in the North Kingstown School Department, which in the judgment of the Superintendent must be filled to meet the needs of the school district, shall be filled by a candidate with the knowledge and skills that best match the needs of the North Kingstown School Department. Recruitment shall be directed both to those not currently employed by the District and to those currently employed by the District but in other positions. Consideration of both internal and external candidates will allow the North Kingstown School Department place the most effective and experienced staff in the locations and position where they are most needed in compliance with State and Federal Law as well as the BEP.<sup>4</sup> All applicants shall be given equal consideration as the District seeks to fill vacant positions. As part of the filling of vacancies the District shall allow input to include staff, parent and community involvement where appropriate.
- G. The administrator shall make a recommendation to the Superintendent of the person deemed best qualified for the specific vacancy. The Superintendent shall review this recommendation and make a recommendation to the School Committee. The Superintendent's recommendation shall be based upon his/her best independent

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<sup>4</sup> BEP G-15-2.2(b)(1), see also Commissioner of Education Letter to Superintendents dated October 20, 2009 re: Basic Education Program Regulations and Seniority Based Teacher Assignments.

educational and judgment in conformance with state law, with input from the process described above<sup>5</sup>.

- H. The School Committee shall be responsible to consider the Superintendent's recommendation and provide consent, if in their collective judgment, the recommended applicant is best qualified for the specific vacancy.

III. SUPPORT STAFF:

The preceding steps of consideration shall, in general and where appropriate, be applicable to all candidates applying for positions of the Department where certification is not required. Screening of such candidates will be determined through the utilization of Administrative employees involved in the specific areas of departmental designations of the position(s) to be filled.

IV. REFERENCE CHECK:

All hires are conditioned upon successful verification of reference checks and BCI background checks. Reference verification shall be conducted by the Superintendent and/or his designee. Prior to the acceptance of employment, all new hires must submit:

1. BCI (Background Criminal Investigation)
2. W-4 and I-9 forms
3. Mantoux (PPD) skin test (tuberculosis) must be done within twelve (12) months and other testing as required from time to time by RIDE or the Department of Health
4. Evidence of appropriate certification from RIDE
5. Evidence of appropriate prior certified experience with respect to step placement<sup>6</sup>.

V. POLICY STATEMENT FOR HIRING SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF:

The North Kingstown School District is committed to providing every child with access to a quality, cost effective education, consistent with the district's mission statement and applicable federal and state requirements.

The School District recognizes the essential elements to provide students with disabilities a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) are:

1. Recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers, related service personnel, and support staff to implement each child's individualized education program (IEP); and
2. Maintaining and providing quality professional development activities to support school personnel with the implementation of each child's educational program consistent with the requirements and intent of all regulations and research based practices used to provide an appropriate education for all students.

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<sup>5</sup> R.I. Gen Laws 16-2-11.

<sup>6</sup> All new hires shall execute a statement of experience and provide such evidence of experience as requested by the Administration to verify the same. Once a certified employee is hired at a particular step, he/she hereby waives the right to subsequently appeal or contest step placement and shall indemnify the school district from any claim or loss as a result of inappropriate step placement.

The School District recognizes that a successful Personnel Policy requires a Staffing Plan that aligns with the complements the underlying Policy. To that end, the North Kingstown Special Education Program will maintain a Special Education Staffing Plan in conjunction with the District Strategic Plan that will ensure that appropriate personnel are available to deliver the services and instruction required to fully implement each student's IEP and provide FAPE in the LRE. The plan will be based on the needs of students and will follow the guidelines outlined in this policy. The staffing plan will follow these principles:

1. Assignment of personnel will be based on student needs.
2. Staffing decisions will support the availability of a full continuum of special education and related support services for students as determined by the IEP team, consistent with the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and State Regulations of the Board of Regents Governing the Special Education of children with Disabilities.
3. Staffing decisions will support the provision of a free appropriate public education for children as determined by their IEP Team.
4. Staffing decisions will support placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment as determined by their IEP Team.
5. Special education staffing will be compliant with Federal and State law, regulation, and policies governing special education.

VI. INTERVIEWS:

Whenever possible, a qualified North Kingstown resident applying for a position within the School Department may be interviewed for the position.

VII. SELECTION OF EMPLOYEES:

The North Kingstown School Committee can employ personnel only upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. Should a person nominated by the Superintendent be rejected by the School Committee, it shall be the duty of the Superintendent to make another nomination.

VIII. CONFORMANCE:

This policy shall be in strict conformance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the Rhode Department of Education and the Rhode Island Board of Regents as well as all relevant federal and state law as amended from time to time. In the event of a conflict between the stated terms of this policy and such laws, rules and regulations, this policy shall be considered automatically amended to be in conformance therewith.

IX. SUBSTITUTION AND REVOCATION:

The policy is a substitution for the following policies which are hereby expressly revoked and this policy shall be in their place and stead: GCF.1, GCD-1, GDD-1, GCF-R, GDF-R.

First Read: 4/12/2011

Second Read: 4/26/2011

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