

**REDUCTION IN PROFESSIONAL STAFF WORK FORCE  
(RIF – Reduction in Force)**

**PURPOSE:**

Sweetwater County School District Number One is required to exercise sound fiscal management of its assets and resources, including personnel. When, in the sole, exclusive and final judgment of the Board of Trustees of the District a reduction in force is required to meet financial or other best interests of the District, this policy shall apply to continuing contract staff members and other certificated/ licensed non-administrative personnel.

**I. DEFINITION:**

A “reduction in force” (RIF) is an action to reduce the number of employees within a department or program, within a school, or at the District level overall.

**II. GROUNDS FOR REDUCTION IN FORCE:**

A reduction in force may be utilized when the Board of Trustees determines that any of the following circumstances require a decrease in the number of continuing contract staff positions and other certificated/ licensed non-administrative personnel.

1. Reorganization which is defined as the closing, consolidation or reorganization of schools, school buildings or facilities; or the elimination, reduction or reorganization of a curriculum offering, program or school operation.
2. Declining enrollment is present when actual enrollment or projected enrollment for the next succeeding school year causes a decrease in the State Funding Model or other funding source; or, when the actual enrollment or projected enrollment of a curriculum offering or program for the next succeeding school year is inadequate to justify continuation of the offering or program; or, when demographic changes require adjustment of teaching positions within a school or the District.
3. Financial exigency occurs when the Board of Trustees determines that a significant decline in the Board’s financial resources compels a reduction in the District’s current operating budget; or, when a significant decrease or elimination of funding for a particular program occurs; or, any insufficiency in funding makes it impractical for the Board to continue existing programs at current levels.

### **III. IDENTIFICATION OF POSITIONS FOR A REDUCTION IN FORCE:**

When the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent have cause to believe that a reduction in force is necessary, either alone or in conjunction with other cost-saving measures, the Superintendent shall present the Board with a proposed plan to address the needs of the District. The plan shall contain a description of the circumstances requiring a proposed staff reduction and a timetable to achieve the required reductions. The plan shall include estimates of the proposed dollar amounts to be eliminated from the budget or program and the potential number of positions to be impacted. Any additional pertinent information that would assist the Board in considering the proposal for a reduction in force shall be presented as well.

The District shall utilize normal attrition of teachers due to retirements, resignations, leaves of absence, and district reassignments as the first means of achieving a reduction in force. However, when normal attrition is projected to be insufficient to achieve the necessary reduction in force, the Superintendent is directed to prepare recommendations to the Board to identify potential positions subject to a reduction in force based upon the best interests of the District.

The Superintendent shall establish an Ad Hoc RIF Committee that may be comprised of representatives from the Human Resources Office, the Fiscal Management Office and other appropriate departments. The Superintendent shall also seek input from building principals regarding possible program changes or budget reductions and then incorporate those suggestions into the consideration of positions subject to a reduction in force. In making recommendations to the Superintendent, the members of the Committee may utilize a combination of the factors below to identify positions to be affected by a reduction in force.

1. The Superintendent and Committee will assess the staffing needs of the District based upon the circumstances necessitating the reduction in force.
2. The determination of which positions are subject to a reduction in force shall include a review of departments, courses, and programs to determine if there are less essential, duplicative or excess personnel, job responsibility or position inefficiencies or opportunities for combined work functions. As a part of the position review, consideration will be given to decreased student or other demand for curriculum offerings, programs or other services.
3. The Superintendent shall present the Board of Trustees with the recommendations for positions to be eliminated by the reduction in force.

### **IV. IDENTIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES FOR A REDUCTION IN FORCE:**

In reviewing staff for any reduction in force, consideration shall be given to maintaining a sound education program to serve the District's students consistent with the District's functions and responsibilities. Factors in no particular order that may be considered related to individual employees include but are not limited to:

- Areas of licensure(s), certification(s), endorsement(s), or highly qualified status
- Continuing education (above and beyond PTSB required)
- Educational degree level
- Evidence of student growth and / or achievement
- Extra-curricular, co-curricular and/or leadership responsibilities
- Professionalism
- Professional teaching experience at accredited institutions
- Years of certified service in the district

The Superintendent shall present the Board of Trustees with the recommendations for positions to be eliminated by the reduction in force.

#### **V. IMPLEMENTATION OF REDUCTION IN FORCE:**

The Board of Trustees shall consider the Superintendent's recommendations and may by Board action order the implementation of the reduction in force and direct, pursuant to Wyo. Stat. § 21-7-111(iv), the termination of the contract of a teacher at the end of the current school year, because of a decrease in the size of faculty due to decreased enrollment or an event beyond the control of the Board.

Notice of the Board's action to terminate the contract of a teacher at the end of the current school year shall be given to the continuing contract teacher on or before April 15<sup>th</sup> of the year pursuant to Wyo. Stat. § 21-7-106(a). A request for hearing under Wyo. Stat. § 21-7-106(a) before an independent hearing officer is not authorized under Wyo. Stat. § 21-7-111(iv).

Employees receiving notice of termination of their contract under this policy shall have the opportunity to either accept separation of employee under the reduction in force or submit a voluntary resignation prior to April 15<sup>th</sup> of the year. An employee who fails to respond will be deemed to have accepted the reduction in force.

#### **VI. RE-EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:**

When a continuing contract teacher is subject to a reduction in force in accordance with this policy, the teacher may apply to the District for any vacant positions for which the teacher is qualified pursuant to the District's normal hiring practices. Employees who were part of a reduction in force, as well as those employees who voluntarily resigned, will be eligible for rehire, if they had a satisfactory work record while employed by the District.

#### **VII. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAW AND POLICY:**

All termination and re-employment decisions under this policy will be made in compliance with applicable law and without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, handicap, disability or other protected status of the employee.

## **VIII. INAPPLICABILITY OF THIS POLICY:**

The provisions of this policy do not apply to at-will positions in the District. At-will employees are subject to discharge at any time for any reason not prohibited by law.

The provisions of this policy also do not apply to initial contract teachers, whose contracts may be terminated at the end of the school year for any reason not specifically prohibited by law. Wyo. Stat. § 21-7-105.

Adopted: 4/8/85  
Reviewed: 3/13/96  
Revised: 2/22/2021

Legal References: Wyo. Stat. § 21-7-111(iv)  
Wyo. Stat. § 21-7-106(a)  
Wyo. Stat. § 21-7-105