

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Education, Jefferson County School District No. R-1

FROM: Dr. Cynthia Stevenson, Superintendent of Schools

RE: Recommendation of Dismissal of Teacher Linda Baggus

DATE: June 15, 2006

Pursuant to the procedures specified in the Colorado Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act of 1990, C.R.S. § 22-63-302, I recommend that the Board of Education dismiss Linda Baggus from her position as a teacher with the Jefferson County School District. The basis for this recommendation of dismissal is unsatisfactory performance.

Ms. Baggus was hired as an English teacher at Lakewood High School commencing in the 2002-03 school year. Ms. Baggus possesses a B.A. from Muskingum College and a Masters of Education degree from Edinboro State University with an emphasis in remedial reading. She has Colorado Department of Education endorsements in Secondary English Language Arts and K-12 Reading. Prior to being hired as a probationary teacher for this position, Ms. Baggus had approximately one year of substitute teaching experience.

First Year Performance

During the first semester of the 2002-03 academic year, Ms. Baggus' assignments included Freshman English, Sophomore English, and Business Communications. She was observed for evaluation purposes on August 22, September 18, and in October 2002. Ms. Baggus was rated as Meets or Exceeds District Standards in all four performance areas for the first half of the 2002-03 academic year. In the Summary Narrative portion of her evaluation, it was noted that Ms. Baggus had "major accomplishments" and "minor setbacks." Classroom management, specifically discipline, and lesson planning were identified as areas of future focus.

During the second semester of the 2002-03 academic year, Ms. Baggus was observed for evaluation purposes on March 12, April 17, and May 13, 2003. Ms. Baggus was again rated as Meets or Exceeds District Standards in all four performance areas and recommended for reemployment. The narrative assessments of her performance identify several areas of concern, however, and note that this first year was a year of "experimentation, practice, and development." Additionally, the narrative noted that

Ms. Baggus “knows she needs to start the year off with a stronger management and behavior plan with her class; then she needs to stick to it.”

Second Year Performance

During the first semester of the 2003-04 academic year, Ms. Baggus was observed for evaluation purposes on September 16, October 7, October 27, and December 4, 2003. On September 18, 2003, Ms. Baggus met with Assistant Principal Lisa Ritchey to discuss the Assistant Principal’s observations of her performance. Based on Assistant Principal Ritchey’s observations, Ms. Baggus received a Letter of Expectations dated September 18, 2003, which identified a number of areas of deficient performance, described in detail specific actions Ms. Baggus was required to improve her performance, and identified school and District resources available to Ms. Baggus to help her meet the Assistant Principal’s expectations. Additionally, Ms. Baggus was advised that “[i]f you do not correct these issues and meet my expectations in a timely manner, you may not meet standard on your next evaluation.” Ms. Baggus’ overall performance evaluation for the first semester of the 2003-04 academic year was Meets or Exceeds District Standards.

During the second semester of the 2003-04 academic year, Ms. Baggus was observed for evaluation purposes on March 11, April 26, and April 29, 2004. Ms. Baggus’ overall evaluation was Meets or Exceeds District Standards and she received a recommendation for continued employment.

Third Year Performance

During the first semester of the 2004-05 academic year, Ms. Baggus was evaluated for evaluation purposes on November 4, 2004. Ms. Baggus received an overall Meets or Exceeds District Standards rating.

During the second semester of the 2004-05 academic year, on March 11, 2005, Ms. Baggus met with Assistant Principal Alexandridis to discuss her performance. Assistant Principal Alexandridis, by letter dated March 16, 2005, gave Ms. Baggus another Letter of Expectations. This Letter of Expectations noted specific areas of deficient performance, described in detail specific actions that Ms. Baggus was required to take to improve her performance, and identified school and District resources available to Ms. Baggus to help her meet the Assistant Principal’s expectations. Ms. Baggus was again advised that her failure to correct these issues could result in her failure to meet standard on her next evaluation.

Ms. Baggus did indeed fail or refuse to improve her performance as required by the Letter of Expectations. She was observed for evaluation purposes on November 4, 2004, and on January 25, March 3, March 10, April 6, April 13, and April 19, 2005. For the second semester of 2004-05, Ms. Baggus was rated as Does Not Meet District

Standards in three of the four Performance Areas and she was not recommended for continued employment. She received a Does Not Meet Standard Rating in the areas of Professional Preparation and Growth, Professional Techniques, and Human Resources.

Observation of deficiencies included failure to generate respect from her students, changing class expectations, not enforcing class expectations, not challenging all students, failure to teach a project that met an adequate level for seniors, and changing standards over the duration of a project. A number of issues related to Ms. Baggus' inability to manage her classroom were again identified in the Summary Narrative of the Evaluation.

As a result of the poor evaluation, Ms. Baggus was placed on a Remediation Plan dated May 4, 2005. The Remediation Plan identified a number of performance deficiencies, recommendations to improve performance, acceptable levels of performance, and a timeline within which the improvements were to occur. The Remediation Plan also identified resources available to assist Ms. Baggus in improving her performance and advised her that her failure to correct the deficiencies in her performance could result in her dismissal.

Fourth Year Performance

During the first semester of the 2005-06 academic year, Ms. Baggus was observed for evaluation purposes on September 20, November 7, and November 11, 2005. Ms. Baggus showed some slight improvement in her performance, but she received an overall Does Not Meet District Standards rating. She was evaluated as Does Not Meet District Standards in the areas of Professional Preparation and Growth and Human Resources. While noting that she had made "great strides" in organizing her lessons, Assistant Principal Alexandridis noted that Ms. Baggus' teaching technique was still not challenging to the students and that she was "still not aware of things going on in her classroom." Ms. Baggus submitted written comments in response to the Evaluation, which did not challenge or object to the observations, but instead proclaimed her intent to continue to develop her teaching skills so as to meet and exceed District standards.

On January 13, 2006, Assistant Principal Alexandridis and Principal Castagna met with Ms. Baggus to discuss her evaluation for the first semester of the 2005-06 academic year and her progress towards meeting the goals identified in the May 4, 2005 Remediation Plan. Ms. Baggus was advised by Assistant Principal Alexandridis that if the Assistant Principal had to make a recommendation for continued employment at that time, she could not do so because of Ms. Baggus' performance deficiencies. Assistant Principal Alexandridis advised Ms. Baggus that her "organization of lessons to provide maximum learning, your lack of classroom management, and your questioning techniques to promote higher levels of thinking and synthesis are still areas of concern." Ms. Baggus was offered a new teaching position where she would be working with the

ACE Program that had smaller classes and older students to provide her the opportunity to refine her performance particularly regarding her classroom management abilities. Ms. Baggus was advised that her employment would be continued through the end of the 2005-06 school year at which time a decision would be made regarding her continued employment.

During the second semester of the 2005-06 academic year, Ms. Baggus was observed for evaluation purposes on January 11, February 6, February 22, and March 31, 2006. Ms. Baggus was evaluated as Not Meeting District Standards in three of the four Performance Areas and was not recommended for continued employment. At a meeting on May 8, 2006, with Assistant Principal Alexandridis, Principal Castagna, and Carl Koonsman, Employee Relations, Ms. Baggus was advised that she was being placed on Administrative Leave and a recommendation for her dismissal would be submitted to the Board.

Performance Summary

Ms. Baggus' performance evaluations, portions of which are quoted in this recommendation, demonstrate that she had serious performance deficiencies in a number of areas, including classroom management and instructional techniques. Further, despite numerous and repeated warnings, Ms. Baggus failed to raise her performance to meet District Standards. During her first two years as a teacher, Ms. Baggus' supervisors provided her with a number of suggestions and identified available school and District resources to enable her to improve her performance. She was given a Letter of Expectation in the first semester of her second year which noted areas of concern regarding her classroom management and teaching technique skills and advised as to strategies to improve observed performance deficiencies. Despite all the positive feedback, by the end of her third year of teaching it began to become apparent that Ms. Baggus was not going to succeed and she was advised that her continued employment was in jeopardy. Ms. Baggus received a Remediation Plan which formally identified her performance deficiencies in detail. She was also advised again of the consequences if she failed to improve her performance. Ms. Baggus did not dispute the validity of the observations of her performance.

Ms. Baggus was given ample opportunity to raise her classroom performance to meet District Standards and she failed to do so. The Annual Evaluations, Letters of Expectations, and Remedial Plans indicate that Ms. Baggus was repeatedly notified in detail of the District's Performance Expectations and advised that she was not meeting them. Despite the efforts of her supervisors to provide her the resources and feedback necessary to improve her teaching and classroom management skills, Ms. Baggus was unable to improve her performance to meet District Standards. Given Ms. Baggus' performance history, I have no confidence that she will be able to improve her performance to adequately meet the needs of our students as measured by the District

Standards and, therefore, I recommend that she be dismissed for unsatisfactory performance.

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