Indicator: The LEA/School facilitates swift exits to minimize further damage caused by underperforming employees. (5156)

Explanation: The evidence review indicates that successful staff dismissal protocols hinge upon time responsive terminations. Doing so can minimize further damage to student learning and staff morale. In addition, when LEAs/schools have a continuous, ongoing active recruitment process, it is more likely that those vacated positions can be filled as quickly as possible with more qualified teachers.

Questions: What will the LEA do to ensure swift, timely dismissals? What process with the LEA employ to synchronize its search for the most qualified replacement teacher as it moves forward to terminate the poor performing teacher?

Swift Exits when Termination Decisions are Final

Research and case studies from across sectors suggest that once a supervisor has determined that a poorly-performing employee must be dismissed, there are many benefits to communicating the decision quickly (Coursey & Rainey, 1990; Greenwald, 2001; Human Resources, 2001; Levinson, 2003; Lewis, 2004). As one human resources specialist suggests, "If the problems are important enough to fire someone for," then they are "important enough to do so promptly." This is true in high-functioning organizations as well as in the turnaround context, where swift exits minimize further damage caused by underperforming employees and open the door for higher-quality replacements. During the turnaround at the Medical Education Collaborative, Steven Lewis carried out a number of dismissals within his first year. He explains, "instead of fighting a long, losing battle to change culture, we opted to change staff and positions where appropriate. In 11 months, we eliminated 13 of 17 staff positions" (Lewis, 2004). Letting problem employees go as soon as possible also minimizes their impact upon their higher-performing peers. The sooner these employees depart, the less drain they cause for all of their colleagues (Levinson, 2003).

Cultivation of Replacement Pipelines

Reallocation or elimination of a terminated employee's job responsibilities can pose an important challenge, especially when leaders let an employee go quickly. The broad cross-sector literature suggests that in an ideal situation, supervisors are engaged in succession planning and recruiting on an ongoing basis, so there is a pool of high-potential recruits available to fill empty positions in a relatively short period of time (Colvin, 2001; Roche, 2008). Of course, in many organizations—particularly those that are in decline or have a history of failure—this pool of replacements may not exist. Under these circumstances, a leader's best option is often to reassign as much of the former employees' responsibilities as possible over the term that the position remains unfilled (Colvin, 2001; Guthridge, 2008; Levinson, 2003). At the same time, the vacancy may prompt leaders to re-evaluate the importance of the post in the context of the organization's new goals and direction, and eliminate or reduce the need for the position entirely.

(Kowal, Rosch, Hassel, & Hassel, 2011, p. 16)

In its *Recruitment Plan for 2015–2016*, the Sunflower County (MS) Consolidated School District (SCCSD) articulates the ideal characteristics of a SCCSD candidate as well as the parameters of the search for those candidates. "Because the SCCSD is a majority-minority school district, it is imperative that the workforce of the SCCSD is sensitive to the needs of its student population. In addition, the District must revise its recruitment and hiring practices to screen all candidates for an equity and excellence approach to their work. All SCCSD hires must view the uniqueness of the District as an asset and seek to celebrate the cultures that make our district so rich.

"In terms of new teachers, many are finishing their teacher preparation programs in May; however, it is beneficial to interview and screen in early spring and offer these promising teachers Contingency Contracts. Most of the recruitment trips, described more comprehensively in this plan, are scheduled during February, March, and April to facilitate this process. In addition, the Personnel Director and Superintendent are developing relationships with university contacts to gain access to qualified candidates as early as possible, so that we can actively recruit. Because the SCCSD current student population is continuously growing, it is essential for the District to maintain contact with SCCSD graduates who are in teacher preparation programs. More than likely, after graduation, they will seek to move back home, and they are familiar with the core values and caliber of the SCCSD. Obtaining names from the high school principals of students who are entering teacher education programs will assist the District in "growing our own" teachers. An additional strategy will be to identify strong student teachers in our district and offer those students Contingency Contracts after completion of their practicum. In addition, the district will offer PRAXIS training for those staff members who are struggling with passing the required assessments for standard license certification. Lastly, it will be important for the Superintendent and Personnel Director to nurture relationships with other human resources educational recruiters and directors as these connections may yield information about qualified and experienced teachers who are seeking to live closer to home, desire a change of teaching assignment, or seek to work in a different district."

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