

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Dr. Cynthia Stevenson, Superintendent of Schools

RE: Recommendation of Rebecca Shaw Teacher Dismissal

DATE: June 14, 2007

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 Rebecca Shaw from her position as a teacher with the Jefferson County School District. The basis for this recommendation of dismissal is Ms. Shaw's physical or mental disability, unsatisfactory performance, insubordination and other good and just cause.

Ms. Shaw was hired to teach fourth grade at Kendrick Lakes Elementary in August 2001. Prior to being hired as a probationary teacher for this position, Ms. Shaw had approximately 28 years of teaching experience as an elementary school teacher in Dubuque Community School District in Iowa. Ms. Shaw has a Master's Degree and Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education the University of Northern Iowa.

Ms. Shaw has an extensive history of unprofessional conduct. At the end of her first full year in the District, on May 1, 2002, she received a Letter of Expectation regarding her interaction in the classroom and her inability to refrain from discussing personal and professional issues with her students. This Letter was the result of Ms. Shaw's discussing with her students her dissatisfaction with her reassignment and her practice of requiring students to phone their parents from the classroom, in front of other students, to discuss behavioral issues. Ms. Shaw was transferred to Ryan Elementary for academic year 02-03.

On August 18, 2003, Ms. Shaw received a Memo of Direction regarding a confrontation with another teacher. Ms. Shaw aggressively confronted the teacher and verbally abused her both at school and over the phone at the teacher's home over whether the teacher had removed something from Ms. Shaw's classroom.

On October 14, 2005, Ms. Shaw was given a Memo of Direction regarding an incident an unprofessional verbal and physical confrontation with a student in her classroom that occurred on October 11, 2005. Ms. Shaw refused to accept or sign a copy of the Memo of Direction.

On February 8, 2006, Ms. Shaw received a Letter of Reprimand regarding her unprofessional confrontation with a student and the student's parent in her classroom. The Letter also addressed her unprofessional and inappropriate confrontation with the Principal who attempted to investigate the complaint of the student's parent.

As a result of her unprofessional interactions with the Principal, students, parents and other staff, throughout the 05-06 academic year Ms. Shaw was evaluated as not meeting District Standards in the areas of Human Resources and Professional Conduct. Pursuant to District policy Ms. Shaw was placed on a remediation plan.

On August 24, 2006, Ms. Shaw received another Memo of Direction for her unprofessional and abusive interaction with her Principal in which Ms. Shaw raised her voice and was disrespectful to the Principal during a meeting.

The next day, on August 25, 2006, Ms. Shaw received a Letter of Reprimand for her unprofessional interaction with another staff member in front of students, parents and other staff.

On December 7, 2006, Ms. Shaw received a Letter of Reprimand for an incident that involved an unprofessional interaction with a student in her class that was abusive and demeaning. Ms. Shaw was also reprimanded for her defensive and misleading statements made in the course of the investigation into the incident.

On December 13, 2006, staff expressed concerns regarding Ms. Shaw's well being. Because of these concerns and the repeated and increasing incidents of abusive and unprofessional behavior towards students and staff, and her failure to correct that behavior despite repeated reprimands and directives to do so, Ms. Shaw was placed on administrative leave pending receipt of a fitness for duty evaluation. The evaluation performed by an independent medical professional, indicated that Ms. Shaw was not fit to return to her position. Ms. Shaw disputes this finding and has failed or refused to take steps recommended by the professional that may remediate her condition. Ms. Shaw was placed on sick leave and advised to refrain from contacting her former students to avoid interfering with their relationship with their new teacher. Despite this directive, Ms. Shaw did indeed contact some of her students who were upset as a result of the communication.

The documentation indicates that Ms. Shaw has been repeatedly advised in Memos of Direction, Letters of Reprimand, an annual evaluation and a Remediation Plan to behave professionally towards students, staff and parents. She has repeatedly failed and refused to comply with these directives. Her behavior, based on the fitness for duty evaluation of an independent medical professional constitutes a mental disability. Alternatively her refusal to conform her behavior to the legitimate directives of her supervisors comes within the classification of unsatisfactory performance, insubordination and other good and just cause and forms the basis for this recommendation of dismissal.