

Case Study: Staff Reassignment

Background

You are the principal of a school serving special education students in grades K-12. The school is part of a special education cooperative that provides many different programs. One program serves students with behavioral and emotional disorders, but are functioning at or near the academic level of their same age peers. Another program serves students with learning disabilities that are so involved that the least restrictive environment is a self-contained program. And the third program serves students with moderate to severe cognitive and physical disabilities. You are the principal of this third, most severe school. Obviously, the level of need for students across the cooperative varies greatly, as does the academic curriculum. All teachers in the cooperative are certified special education teachers. In addition to classroom teachers, adaptive physical education teachers, vision teachers, and hearing impaired specialists are also certified special education teachers.

The cooperative is going through programmatic changes. School districts that are members of the cooperative and pay tuition for their students to attend are beginning to develop their own special education services within their own district. This is changing the enrollment in many of the cooperative's programs. The drop in enrollment in the program for students with behavior and emotional disorders has reduced the number of classrooms and the need for special education teachers at that particular school. Three tenured teachers, with high seniority, will be transferred to your school. Background information on the teachers is listed below:

Mr. A was the adaptive physical education teacher at the behavior program. He has been "coach" for 24 years and is one year away from retirement. He has very little experience using

technology and only uses a computer to check his email. He has never followed curriculum other than outdated PE lessons and those were for typically developing students with behavior disorders, not students with significant cognitive, physical delays, or even autism. He has toured your school and has been kind and open to the students and treats them with respect.

Mrs. B was the high school English teacher at the behavior program. She has been teaching for 15 years and previously served on the curriculum committee at her past program. She received satisfactory evaluations from her principal. On her tour of your school, she appeared uncomfortable and asked questions that you found to have a condescending tone (ie: Do teachers have to change diapers? Why are the students drooling? Why are you teaching them reading if they can't read?).

Ms. C was an elementary teacher from the behavior program and has 8 years seniority in the cooperative. She also had experience teaching students with autism at her first job, ten years ago. She has used various forms of curriculum in her experience and has received excellent ratings on her evaluations. Her past principal has told you that she is a flexible and cooperative teacher. She was a strong leader in her past program and always puts student needs first.

Challenge

Your enrollment is up and last year, two teachers retired. You are retaining the rest of your staff members, and still have three classrooms unassigned. The three teachers from the behavior program have all been reassigned to your school for the next school year. You currently have an APE teacher, but have openings in an elementary autism classroom, a high school class for students with physical and medical needs, and a transition class for students who are learning work skills for after they graduate. You need to decide which teacher to assign to each

classroom and how you will train and support each teacher as they are new to your program and to this population of students. It should be noted that since these three teachers are considered veteran teachers in the cooperative, they are not eligible to receive typical mentor services provided by a mentor who receives a stipend for their time and are not required to attend mentee meetings. Describe the training you will provide, who will provide it, how they will be evaluated, and your role and approach with each individual teacher.