



Q and A about Tenure Rights and the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of NJ Act (TEACH)

1. How would the TEACH NJ act change the process for new teachers to earn tenure?

If enacted, TEACH would:

- Pair new teachers with an experienced teacher for a “mentorship year” prior to a three-year tenure review, extending the tenure process to four years.
- Require an “effective” or “highly effective” rating for at least two of the three years after the mentorship year to earn tenure.

2. How would teachers be rated?

TEACH would require evaluation rubrics to be developed by the district and approved by the Commissioner of Education to rate teachers either “highly effective,” “effective,” “partially effective,” or “ineffective” each year. At the local level, leaders and members can work with the district in shaping these evaluation rubrics.

3. What if a teacher gets a poor evaluation?

When a teacher is rated “ineffective” or “partially effective,” a corrective action plan must be developed to support the teacher and address documented deficiencies. The teacher would collaborate with an experienced teacher acting in a supervisory capacity to develop the plan.

4. How can a tenured teacher be dismissed as a result of evaluations?

If a tenured teacher is rated “partially effective” or “ineffective” one year and “ineffective” the next year despite the corrective action plan, the superintendent would move to dismiss the teacher. Also, if a teacher is rated “partially effective” two years in a row or “ineffective” then “partially effective,” the superintendent may move to dismiss the teacher, or may defer moving to dismiss the teacher for one additional year pending an “effective” or “highly effective” rating. In any event, the tenured teacher has access to due process.

5. What due process would a teacher have to appeal dismissal?

Dismissal would be appealed through expedited binding arbitration. The arbitrator would judge whether the evaluation was conducted according to the agreed-upon process, including the provision of a corrective action plan; if mistakes were made; whether charges were filed due to political, personal or union activities; or the dismissal was arbitrary and capricious.

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6. What professional development opportunities would TEACH offer?

The legislation requires the creation of a school improvement panel that must include a teacher with a proven record of success. The panel would oversee the mentoring of teachers, conduct evaluations of teachers (with union consent), and identify professional development for all instructional staff. Mentoring would create career ladder opportunities for teachers acting in supervisory capacities.

7. Why did we as a union give input to the legislators crafting this bill?

Union members and leaders testified in Trenton and worked with legislators to make sure the bill included supports to improve teaching practice and to bring the voice of teachers into the process.

- Despite a political push, the bill does not undermine protections for experienced teachers during a layoff.
- A provision allowing principals to have total control over hiring is not included.
- Having attained tenure, no teacher loses their due process rights.
- Teachers receive professional support via mentoring and individualized professional development.

8. Where can I find additional information?

- www.aft.org. See the Key Issues section.
- www.aftnj.org. See the Prekindergarten-12 news section.