

Running Head: REMEDIATION PLAN – MATTHEW 18

Template

Indiana District, LCMS

2009

Introduction

Educators are great gifts from God to His church. Many are dedicated servants with a passion to serve children and their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. These dedicated men and women are intentional about integrating their faith and sharing that precious Gospel message each and every day with children and young adults entrusted in their care. Their zeal to teach coupled with their unselfish nature to serve reflects the quality of instruction offered to little children and young adults. Educators in our Lutheran schools are redeemed children of God and valuable to the school families and congregational members that embody God's church.

Need for Remediation

We, who have the responsibility to supervise workers in God's vineyard, need to do so with a willingness to help. Educators in our Lutheran schools are not perfect; however, they are forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ. Sometimes staff members do not perform effectively or err in their work or living and thus become a stumbling block. For these workers a special kind of ministry is necessary. Out of love for them and for those who may be affected by them, these people must be helped. Sometimes that means helping them make a career change. But, more often, it means guiding and helping them to remedy their deficiencies and improve their level of performance. What follows is not a legal document or opinion. The suggestions and exhibits offered in this template are merely a guide to assist supervisors and Boards of Christian Education as they deal with personnel problems.

Part I – Divine Call

Synod Bylaw 3.8.3.8.5 identifies the only causes for which members of a faculty may be removed from office, other than honorable retirement, which are listed as follows:

(1) professional incompetency including, but not limited to, the failure to meet criteria identified in Bylaw 3.8.3.8.2 (d); (2) incapacity for the performance of duty; (3) insubordination; (4) neglect of or refusal to perform duties of the office; (5) conduct unbecoming a Christian; and (6) advocacy of false doctrine (Constitution, Art. II) or failure to honor and uphold the doctrinal position of the Synod as defined further in Bylaw 1.6.2 (b).

With this in mind, educators need to be served evangelically, fairly, and responsibly. We, who do supervise those entrusted to us, do so by calling upon the Lord for help, guidance, and a discerning heart and mind. Encouraging and assisting those under our care strengthens one's ministry and enhances the educational experience for all. Matthew 18:15-20 gives supervisors the procedure when dealing with erring colleagues. These passages in Scripture provide guidance for how to approach a colleague and emphasize the concept of forgiveness and reconciliation. When leaders approach an erring brother or sister in Christ with an understanding of genuine care and mutual concern, the process is more likely to bring about resolution and improve one's performance.

Part II – Four Part Model

The suggested model to use is the model offered in Synod's handbook, *How to Help: Guidelines for Dealing with Problem Teachers or Administrators*. Other models do exist; however, this model is promulgated as the model of choice for it is specific to the needs of Lutheran educators and follows God's Word. In any model, the goal is to improve not punish. The model of choice for Lutheran schools does outline a progressive action plan for remediation.

Serve Notice

Pray for guidance and wisdom prior to approaching the erring colleague. When approaching a colleague, it is important to establish a time and place to meet. You may begin by asking, “Is this a good time to talk for about ten minutes?”, or “Is another time more appropriate for you?” Begin the meeting with prayer. Never rely on opinion or recall. Put in writing exactly what the problem is. Be forthright with the teacher and relate reasons why such behavior cannot continue. Pen your response so that it clearly depicts what is adversely affecting people: children, other colleagues, parents, children, other congregational members. Factual and documented incidents keep the conversation moving forward and eliminate opportunities for debate. Close the meeting in prayer. See exhibit A for sample documentation. Below is a summary of steps regarding the first step, “Serve Notice:”

- Deal in facts not opinions.
- Put in writing exactly what the problem is and how it affects people for whom the teacher is responsible.
- Document the essence of the meeting and that a notice was served.
- Inform the Pastor(s) about the essence of the meeting and that a notice was served.

Clearly Explain

When approaching the colleague and explaining, it is important to remember you always want to function as a servant of the Lord Jesus. Your perspective is one of serving others. By doing so, use the documented incident to better help you explain the seriousness of the situation. Allow the colleague to speak. Listen carefully. Continue the discussion until you are certain the individual understands the seriousness of the situation. Document other important matters that took place during the conversation. Pray for resolve. Below is a summary of steps regarding the second step, “Clearly Explain:”

- Use the documented incident to clearly explain the seriousness of the situation.
- Explain the concern as often as possible to assure the colleague understands.

- Document any other important matters that surfaced during the conversation.
- Sign the documentation from the meeting and share the very next day.
- Continue to keep good lines of communication with Pastor(s).

Offer Assistance

It is right and proper to suggest alternatives for improvement. Have a variety of helpful suggestions ready in advance (i.e. people to consult, possible graduate classes, professional counseling people, resource books, journal articles, budgeting and time management suggestions, task planning assistance, etc.). Document the types of assistance agreed upon and the amount of financial help available. Both administrator and educator sign the action plan. See Exhibit B for a sample action plan. Below is a summary of step three, "Offer Assistance."

- Put in writing some helpful suggestions to bring to the meeting.
- Share and explain all the available resources for help.
- Document the assistance and amount of financial help available.
- Sign documentation from the meeting and share the very next day.
- Inform Pastor(s) that an agreed action plan for improvement is implemented.

Specify a Time Frame

An action plan is more likely to be effective when that action plan has predetermined benchmarks that are specific to the needs of the individual, measureable, and obtainable. The success of that agreed upon plan is integral when administrator and colleague work together for resolve; however, the implementation of that plan and consequences if deadlines are not met are not negotiable. Below is a summary of step four, "Specify a Time Frame."

- Set an exact date or time by which specific improvement(s) are to occur.
- Arrive at as much agreement as possible, but remember the supervisor sets the time frame.
- Explain clearly the consequences if the deadlines are not met.
- Both parties sign the plan of remediation.

Conclusion

This template is to assist administrators and educators in helping resolve performance or lifestyle issues. The suggestions and exhibits are merely a guide. Each party needs to keep all signed documentation and written summaries of every meeting in order that good communication occurs. Signed documentation also helps convince the person of the problem, helps maintain objectivity, helps protect all involved, and helps disseminate accurate information. If termination becomes a reality, a Divine called worker involved in a termination has the constitutional right of dispute resolution process explained in the Handbook of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod Bylaws 1.10.10 through 1.10.10.2.

Reference

Moser, Carl J. and Boldt, James H. (1993). *How to Help: Guidelines for Dealing with Problem Teachers or Administrators*. Concordia Publishing House: MO