

Welcome to your new job as a Probationary Teacher

Adrien Amirault, Executive Director

All New to the NWT teachers that are hired into positions are on probation for the first two years of their employment. There are two exceptions to this rule:

1. Teachers that have successfully completed their probationary period in another jurisdiction can have their probation period reduced to one year at the Superintendent's discretion.
2. Teachers that finish their two year probation can have their probationary period extended if there is a concern with the teaching practice that the employer wants to see improvement on.

A two year probationary period is longer than many other occupations. Many probationary periods in the Government of the Northwest Territories are six months long, but because of the vulnerable population that teachers work with, and the difficulty of assessing the work and pedagogy of teachers, the probationary period for teachers is longer than most.

So since you are a probationary employee, what should you be concerned about? The most important thing to remember is that the Principal in the school is responsible for your supervision and evaluation as a teacher. At the end of the probationary period it is the Principal that will make a recommendation that you be granted indeterminate status. With this

in mind it is very important that you set up a good communication dialogue with the Principal as soon as possible. The Principal will be formally and informally evaluating you through your probationary period. The standard that the Principal is trying to gauge is your suitability as a teacher in your particular school and community.

So it is important that you ask questions of colleagues and listen carefully to the direction that the Principal is giving. It is also important to contribute to the school climate, culture, and to be a valuable staff member outside of your classroom. The main issue that all Principals are looking for is that you are an effective teacher in your classroom. That does not mean that you are an expert. In fact if you are in your first few years of teaching, there is too much to learn to be an expert right away.

Being let go at the end of (or in the middle of) a probationary period may be a judgement based on your suitability for the position. It is not a dismissal that needs to show cause, but remember for the most part the employer pays a lot of money to move teachers into the NWT; they are not looking to have their new teachers fail. Take advantage of this; ask questions, take advice, try suggestions from more experienced northern teachers. We are all here to help you. Remember all of the experienced teachers you see around you were new once, and they too had to pass a probationary period.

NWTTA Website Quick Connect

One of the features of our new NWTTA website (nwttanw.ca) is the Quick Connect form. Members or general public can use the Quick Connect form to know your message is going to the appropriate person as soon as you click "Send Message".

Who do the messages go to?

- General Inquiries ⇒ Denise
- Accounts Payable & Receivable ⇒ André
- Newsletter Advertising ⇒ André
- Member Support ⇒ Adrien
- Media Inquiries ⇒ André
- Professional Development ⇒ Amanda
- Member Wellness ⇒ Fraser

