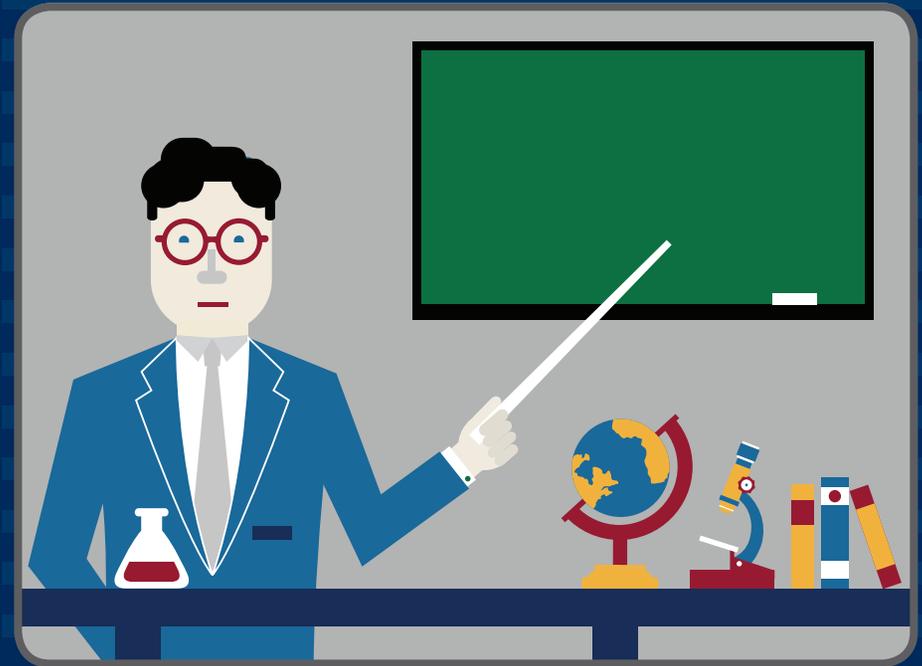
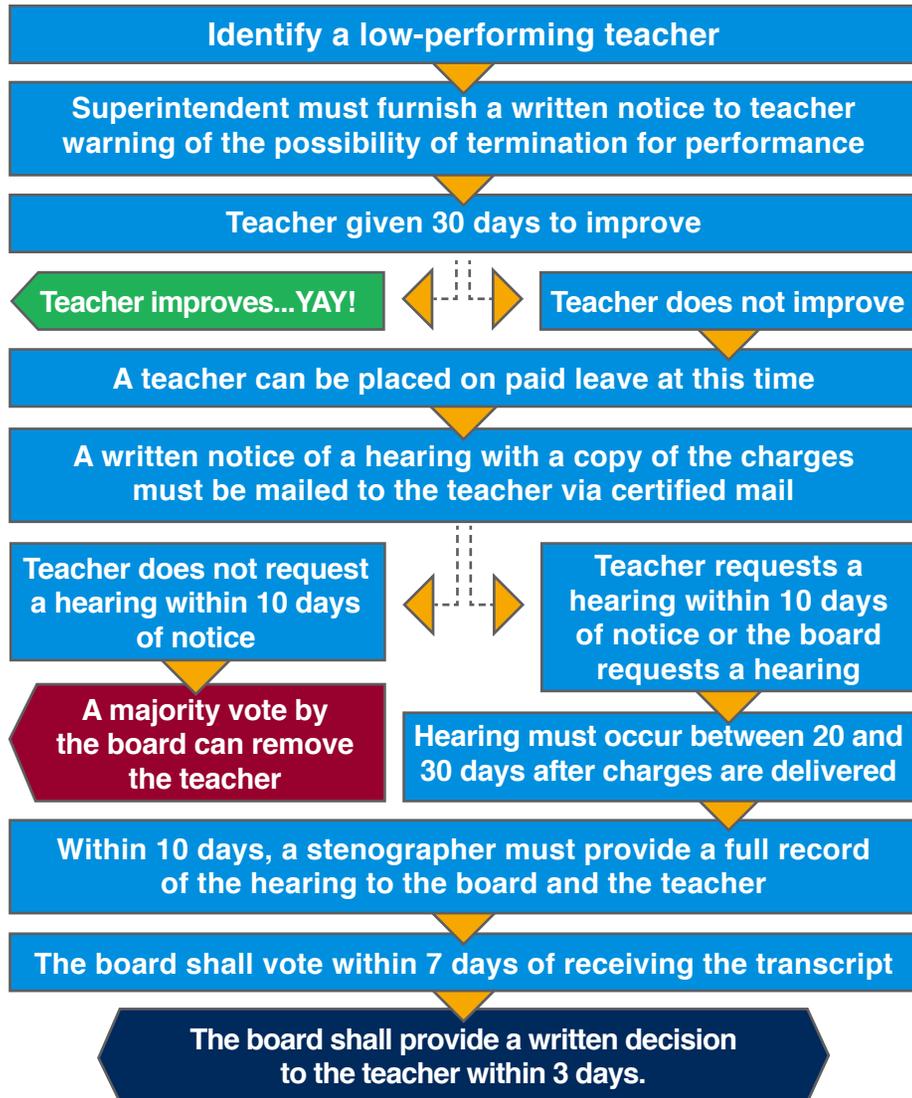


Figure 1: Steps Necessary to Remove A Tenured Teacher in Missouri



MISSOURI FAST FACTS



A Snapshot of Missouri's Teacher Tenure Laws

A Show-Me Institute Publication

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What is teacher tenure?

Tenure is a permanent contract between a school district and a teacher. Missouri statutes state that this contract “shall be known as an indefinite contract and shall continue in effect for an indefinite period....” State statutes also spell out the exact steps that must be taken to remove a tenured teacher.

When do Missouri teachers earn tenure, and how is K-12 different from tenure in colleges and universities?

Upon receiving his or her fifth consecutive contract from a single school district, the teacher earns tenure and has a permanent position. In higher education, tenure is based on merit, which often includes teaching performance, contribution to the community or university, and scholarly publications. Many professors are denied tenure and many more are not in tenure-track positions. The National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty notes that just 55 percent of college professors are tenured.

How long does it take to remove a tenured teacher for his or her performance in the classroom?

Assuming each step in the process takes the minimum time the law requires, a tenured teacher could be officially fired from his or her job in just more than 50 days. In reality, the process may take much more time. If at any point school officials do not comply with the law, they are back at square one, and the teacher is back in the classroom.

Can a tenured teacher be dismissed for his or her performance?

Yes, a tenured teacher can be removed on the grounds of “incompetency, inefficiency, or insubordination in the line of duty.” The district must follow the steps detailed in the revised state statutes, which are illustrated in Figure 1.

Is it difficult to remove a tenured teacher?

According to Missouri public school superintendents, it is. Nearly three-fourths of superintendents in a Show-Me Institute survey indicated that it is “somewhat” or “very difficult” to remove a tenured teacher because it takes a lot of time and there is a tremendous amount of paperwork.

Is it costly to remove a tenured teacher?

This depends on the specifics of the case. An easy, open-and-shut case may not cost a district anything. However, some cases can cost a significant amount of money. Investigations in New York and Illinois have uncovered that it can cost upwards of \$200,000 to remove a tenured teacher. Missouri’s laws are a little less stringent, but it could still cost a district tens of thousands of dollars to remove a tenured teacher for his or her performance in the classroom.

How many tenured teachers are removed each year?

That is a difficult question to answer with certainty because no one tracks the data. Estimates from the Show-Me Institute survey of school superintendents suggest that approximately 3/10ths of 1 percent of tenured teachers are removed in a given year. Of course, many ineffective tenured teachers may be “counseled out” of the classroom, but not actually terminated.