**CSCE Succession Planning Guide**

Updated: 7.12.2023

Board Approved: TBD

**Overview:**

Succession planning should be a proactive rather than reactive approach to school leadership transition. Succession planning works best when Board members and the School Leaders collaborate in advance to create the conditions for a successful leadership transition, whether or not it is expected in the near future. Some of the steps described here should be revisited annually or as needed.

**Communication Plan:**

In the event of a departure of the current School Leader, the Board Chair will be the main point of contact. The Board Chair will call an emergency board meeting to notify all the board members and discuss the next steps. Once the plan of action has been determined, a message from the Board Chair should be sent to the school’s key stakeholders detailing the plan.

**Interim School Leader:**

The Board needs to decide who will be the Board Designee to perform the School Leader’s essential duties while the board conducts a search for a new School Leader. There are three options:

**Option 1: Renegotiation of Contract for Head of School**

The board will engage in an attempt for a final negotiation with the Head of School that even if the School Leader is leaving, he/she/they will stay one more year until the board finds the right person to fill the Head of School position. Upon notification of the registration or offer decline, the Board Chair will call an Special Board meeting to be held within 48 hours or an emergency Board meeting to vote on the identification of a representative to serve as the “one voice” of the school in employment negotiations on behalf of the Board and to identify wage ranges for negotiations. The Board will communicate with legal counsel prior to making a final offer of employment in order to avoid any unintended contract or employment at will issues.

**Option 2: Interim Replacement**

Hire an outside Interim Head of School to serve in the absence of a permanent Head of School.

Potential Individuals:

| **Name** | **Known Title** | **Contact Number** | **Email Address** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Kenya Strong | ALMA Partners Consultant | ‭(818) 274-6360‬ | Kenya0506@hotmail.com |
| Tess McGinley | Waldorf Coach Consultant | (510) 776-7290 | msmacg@mac.com |
| Current Board Chair |  |  |  |

Potential Individuals for Replacement:

| **Name** | **Known Title** | **Contact Number** | **Email Address** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Delana Hill |  | 270-302-1004 |  |
| Gina Stiens |  |  |  |

**Optional 2: Promotion Replacement**

Potential Individuals for Replacement:

| **Name** | **Known Title** | **Contact Number** | **Email Address** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Anayaxy Barraza | Assistant Head of School | ‭(510) 424-4649‬ | anayaxyb@communityschoolforcreativeeducation.org |
| Kimberly Palmore | Director of Finance and Operations | ‭(510) 916-8893‬ | kimberlyp@communityschoolforcreativeeducation.org |
| Amy Gaerlan | Multilingual Learner Intervention Specialist | ‭(510) 590-6918‬ | amyg@communityschoolforcreativeeducation.org |

**Optional 3: Distribution of Job Duties**

| **Task** | **Board Chair** | **Assistant Head of School** | **Director of Finance and Operations** | **Dean of Student Culture** | **Director of Special Education** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Immediate Supervisor of Special Education |  | X |  |  | X |
| Immediate Supervisor of Teachers & General Instructional Aides |  | X |  |  |  |
| Student Discipline |  |  |  | X |  |
| Parental and Community Liaison |  | X |  |  |  |
| Authorizer Liaison | X | X |  |  |  |
| Coordinates and Oversees all Policies |  | X |  |  |  |
| Primary Liaison to the Board of Directors |  |  | X |  |  |
| Oversees day-to-day staffing operations |  |  |  | X |  |
| Oversees day-to-day logistical operations |  |  | X |  |  |
| External Liaison to Community |  |  | X |  |  |
| Primary Liaison in Overseeing and Coordinating School Activities/Events |  |  |  | X |  |
| Overseeing Staffing & Hiring |  | X | X |  |  |
| Primary Person for Drafting and Submitting Annual Accountability Reports |  | X |  |  |  |
| Primary Person for Communication Regarding the Search for HOS | X |  |  |  |  |
| Approval of Time Off Requests |  | X |  |  |  |

**Note:** Any boxes with more than one “x” mark should be discussed with both individuals for final determination of assignment.

Financial Oversight  
**Having multiple signatories on the school’s accounts** enables business to continue in the School Leader’s absence, only during crisis management, and not at any other time. These signatories might be the Board Chair, Secretary, or the Treasurer.

**Head of School Search Process:**

While interim management is in place, the Board has the option to work with a search consultant or search committee.

**Step 1:**

The Board of Directors creates a search committee. The task of the committee is to identify the traits for the new HOS, review resumes, select candidates to be interviewed and identify two top candidates for recommendation to the Board for final interview and selection.

**Define the Search:**

The Board will determine the job description and qualifications of the Head of School. The job description will include but is not limited to the following:

* Enhancement of Personnel Skills: provides activities which facilitate the professional growth of the school staff and enhance the quality of the instructional program.
* School Objectives: identifies the annual objectives for the instructional, extracurricular, and athletic programs of the school.
* Curriculum Objectives: ensures that instructional objectives for a given subject and/or classroom are developed, and involves the faculty and others in the development of specific curricular objectives to meet the needs of the school program. The School Leader provides opportunities for staff participation in the school program.
* Community: encourages the use of community resources, cooperates with the community in the use of school facilities, interprets the school program for the community, and maintains communication with community members.
* Supplies and Equipment: manages, directs, and maintains records on the materials, supplies and equipment which are necessary to carry out the daily school routine. The School Leader involves the staff in determining priorities for instructional purposes.
* Services: organizes, oversees, and provides support to the various services, supplies, material, and equipment provided to carry out the school program. The School Leader makes use of community resources.

**Search Committee Composition:**

The Board will decide whether a Search Committee is needed. The Search Committee will be composed of 2 Board Members (including the Chair and/or Vice Chair) and 2 School Staff Members.

**Note:** The committee cannot have more than one less then current quorum of the Board are involved in search meetings, these meetings are subject to the Brown Act and Sunshine Law and must be open meetings.  
The Board Chair or Vice Chair will serve as the Head of the Search Committee. The Board Chair or Vice Chair will oversee the search and ensure that involved persons are well trained and well prepared for their task. The Board Chair or Vice Chair ensures that members involved in the search adhere to certain requirements:

● Read and agree in writing to be guided by the Charter Application, vision, and mission of the school in the interview process.

● Agree on the minimum qualifications for candidates selected to be interviewed.

● Affirm a commitment to locating and considering for employment a wide pool of applicants, including qualified minority persons, women, veterans, and disabled individuals.

● Draft and agree on a written job description for the position to be filled.   
● Agree on the scope of the search (i.e., internal, local, state, or national.)  
   
● Establish a deadline for the recommendations of the committee.  
   
● Affirm confidentiality and communication guidelines regarding candidates

**Job Posting Procedure:**

The job will be posted both internally & externally. The job position will be advertised or posted in various locations, within the Waldorf community as well as the traditional public administrator community. The wording of the job posting should include the vision and mission statements of the school along with a job description.  
 **Review Applications:**

Applications will be reviewed by the Search Committee. The Search Committee should review resumes and rate applicants based on the agreed upon selection criteria for the position.Board members should be mindful of the tendency to approve of applications that look like their own credentials. Boards should be open to viewing the experience and education of candidates whose background is different from the majority experience. Applicants that do not meet the minimum established criteria should be screened out immediately, keeping in mind that all documentation on candidates may be subject to an open records request. Notification to candidates no longer under consideration should be sent by the The Board Chair and/or Vice Chair as promptly as possible. See sample notification letters in Appendix below.

**Candidates can reasonably be rejected on grounds such as the following but limited to:**

● Does not have required degree   
● Experience not applicable to position   
● Not aligned with vision and mission   
● Inadequate communication skills   
● References weak   
● Poor writing sample

● Failed background check

● Failure to manage and meet hiring deadline dates

**Selection of Candidates to Interview:**

The Search Committee will select candidates to interview based on the predetermined qualifications. After candidates have been identified, an interview schedule for the Search Committee Board should be drawn up by the CHair or Vice Chair or their designee . A copy of the candidate’s resume and any supporting documents, such as recommendation letters, should be provided in confidence to all individuals who will meet with the candidate. The Board Chair or Vice Chair should ensure a consistent structure for candidates’ evaluations by interviewers - ideally using a hiring rubric/form . The Board Chair or Vice Chair should also let the candidates know when a decision is expected to be reached and how they will be notified. See sample notification letters in Appendix below.

**Interview of Candidates:**

The Hiring Committee would interview all candidates, and subsequently, make a recommendation to the Board. The Search Committee will devise a list of core questions based on the job-related criteria that will be asked of all candidates. A consistent interview structure for every candidate allows the Board to make the best comparisons, ensures that each candidate is treated fairly, and minimizes unconscious biases. Note: the interview meetings must have less than quorum minus one members of the Board, these meetings are subject to the Brown Act and Sunshine Law and must be open meetings. Interviews of candidates are NOT a valid reason to resolve the Board into Executive Session.

The questions should be aimed at discovering what the candidate can bring to the position and the school, and must be limited to issues that directly relate to the job to be performed. There are inquiries that are not permitted because they request or allow use of information that may lead to an unfair or biased decision. See appropriate interview questions in Appendix below.

**Selection of Final Candidates:**

References must be checked before an offer is made, including verification of degrees obtained by the applicant. It is expected that letters of reference will be part of the application.

Selection of the final two candidates is decided by the Search Committee. After the Search Committee has fully discussed the evaluations of all of the candidates, the Search Committee will make a recommendation to the Board. This recommendation would be presented at a regular or special board meeting The presentation should include the names of candidates, ranked or unranked. It reviews the search process, including criteria for evaluation, and discusses the strengths of and concerns about each candidate. The Sunshine Law requires that the list of final candidates be made public at least 14 days prior to hiring, and no offer of employment can be made until the 14 days has passed. Once the Board has made a hiring decision, the offer letter should come from the Board Chair, who should be the primary contact on behalf of the school with the candidate. In addition, the Chair should be the “one voice” of the school in employment negotiations on behalf of the Board. The Board will communicate with legal counsel prior to making an offer of employment in order to avoid any unintended contract or employment at will issues.

Once the successful candidate is identified, the Board Chair should be authorized by the Board to make the offer of employment, write the written offer, and sign the employment contract. The Board may negotiate the specific terms of the employment contract in Executive Session, but then will vote on the contract in regular session.

**Record Keeping:**

It is a best practice for the charter school to maintain summary information about the search process, the applicants and the hired personnel. The Chair and Secretary are responsible for ensuring that complete records are kept during the search. As a best practice, search files should be kept for two years from the dates of appointment of the candidate selected. The search files should include the following:

● Position description;  
● Actual dated copies of announcements, advertising, and other solicitations for applications and nominations;  
● Applications, nominations, correspondence, evaluations, references, and a record of verbal contacts with or about applicants or nominees;  
● Minutes for all search related meetings to include selection criteria, decision making, and voting;  
● Evaluations of candidates at each step of the interview process, including evaluations of candidates who are interviewed and reasons why candidates were not referred for selection.

**Evaluation Process:**

The new School Leader will be subject to the School Leader Evaluation Plan as outlined in the CSCE Policy Handbook and/or the Governing Board Bylaws.

**Sudden Departure Plan:**

The Sudden Departure Plan will follow many of the above steps, while also naming an immediate and temporary successor in order to carry out the regular daily duties of the school.

**Sources:**● Case Western Reserve University   
● CDE Charter School Board President Handbook, Nov. 2010

**Appendix:**

***Candidate Communication Templates***

***Sample Letter of Application Receipt*:​**

Candidate’s Name Address City, State Zip

Dear (insert candidate’s name):

XYZ Charter School has received your application for the position of (insert position title) at XYZ Charter School. The Board is beginning to review applications, and plans to have final candidates identified by (insert date).

Thank you for your interest in the continued growth of our school.

Sincerely,  
Chair, Board of Directors

***Sample Letter of Request for Interview*:​**

Candidate’s Name

Address City, State Zip

Dear (insert candidate’s name)

On behalf of the Community School for Creative Education Board of Directors, I am writing to follow-up on an earlier correspondence and inform you of the status of the search for (insert position title) at Community School for Creative Education. The committee has reviewed your qualifications and would like to invite you to interview with our Search and Hiring Committee. Our Board Chair will reach out via phone to schedule a time to meet.

Thank you again for your interest in Community ! We look forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,  
Chair, Board of Directors

***Sample Letter of Application Rejection*:​**

Candidate’s Name

Address City, State Zip

Dear (insert candidate’s name)

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am writing to follow-up on an earlier correspondence and inform you of the status of the search for (insert position title) at XYZ Charter School. The committee has reviewed the qualifications of a large number of applicants and has identified a shortlist of candidates whose experience we judge to be more suitable to our needs at this time.

We wish you continued professional success, and thank you again for your interest in the position and in XYZ Charter School.

Sincerely,  
Chair, Board of Directors

***Acceptable and Unacceptable Interview Questions*:​**

OK:Whether the applicant has worked under another name.

NOT OK: Inquiries about the name that would seek to elicit information about the candidate’s ancestry or descent. Inquiries about name change due to a court order, marriage, or otherwise.

*Birthplace*

See citizenship below.  
 NOT OK: Birthplace of applicant, spouse, parents, or other relatives.

*Citizenship*

OK: Statement that employees must be eligible to work in the US

NOT OK: Any inquiries about citizenship.

*Residence, Nationality*

OK: Place of residence. Length or residence in this city.

NOT OK: Specific inquiry into foreign addresses that would indicate national origin and/or nationality of applicant. Whether the applicant owns or rents a home.

*Age*

OK: Can inquire if the applicant meets minimum age requirements, or state that proof may be required upon hiring, or that hire is subject to verification of minimum age.

NOT OK: Cannot require that applicant state age or date of birth. Cannot require that applicant submit proof of age before hiring. Any questions that may tend to identify applicants over 40 years of age.

*Sex*

OK: Inquiry or restriction of employment is permissible only when a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ) exists. (This is highly unlikely in a charter school context.)

NOT OK: Any inquiry that would indicate sex of the applicant. Applicant’s sex cannot be used as a factor for determining whether an applicant will be “satisfied” in a particular job.

*Marital and Family Status, Sexual Identity*

OK: Whether applicant can meet specific work schedules.

NOT OK: Marital status or number of dependents. Names, ages or addresses of spouse, children, or relatives. Questions about sexual identity, orientation, or preference.  
 *Race, Color, Physical Characteristics* NOT OK: Inquiry as to applicant’s race, color of skin, eyes, or hair, or other questions directly or indirectly indicating race or color. Applicant’s height or weight when it is not relevant to the job.

*Disability*

OK: Can ask an applicant questions about his or her ability to perform job-related functions, as long as the questions are not phrased in terms which would seek to elicit whether the applicant has a disability.

NOT OK: General inquiries (“Are you disabled?”) that would tend to reveal disabilities or health conditions that do not relate to fitness to perform the job. Applicant’s height or weight when it is not relevant to the job. It is unlawful to ask an applicant whether he or she is disabled or about the nature or severity of his or her disability.

*Education*

OK: Applicant’s academic attainment.

NOT OK: Date last attended high school (reflects age).

*Pregnancy*

NOT OK: Any question concerning pregnancy or birth control.

*Arrests and Convictions*

OK: Asking about conviction of a crime related to job qualification.

NOT OK: Asking about arrests.

*Religion*

NOT OK: Any question requesting the applicant’s religious affiliation, church, parish, pastor, or religious holidays observed.

*Military Experience*

OK: If needed for employment history, you may ask about the applicant's military experience in the US Armed Forces.

NOT OK: Any question into the applicant's general military experience. Any questions about the type of discharge.

*Organizations*

OK: Any question into applicant’s membership in organizations which the applicant considers relevant to his or her ability to perform the job.

NOT OK: Asking what organizations, clubs, and societies the applicant belongs to that are not relevant to his or her ability to perform the job (political, social, religious etc.).