

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUCCESSION POLICY

Board Approved: 10.17.13

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**Policy Number: 305**

### I. PURPOSE

A change in Executive Directors is inevitable for all schools at some point. Spectrum Middle School and Spectrum High School's (Spectrum) Board of Directors (Board) recognizes that succession planning is one of its most important responsibilities. The Board also recognizes that the transition from one Director to another is a complex process. It can be a time of uncertainty with the potential of significant impact on Spectrum and its mission. The Board is committed to guiding Spectrum through the transition as smoothly as possible, all while maintaining accountability and mitigating instability.

The purpose of this policy is to provide instruction and guidance for planned or unplanned absences of the Executive Director. It addresses the appointment of an Interim Director, gives duties and expectations to the Interim Director and search committee, and outlines the ways the Board will support the new Executive Director during the transition time. This policy also addresses the importance of building leadership talent within the school in order to have a pool of suitable candidates from which to draw leadership positions. Having inside talent makes succession easier to navigate, and cushions any temporary waves caused by a change in leadership.

The Board is also committed to communicating with staff, parents, students, business service providers, bondholders, and other stakeholders during the success and transition process.

### II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- A. Succession: The process of replacing a person in a leadership position.
- B. Planned Succession: Succession in the case of retirement or Board term initiation.
- C. Unplanned Succession: Succession in the case of serious illness or injury, death, or untimely resignation.
- D. Interim Director: The person appointed to fill the Executive Director's position on a temporary basis; placing an Interim Executive Director gives the Board more time to make needs assessments and decisions surrounding succession.
- E. Transition Time: The time period between when the Executive Director is first known to be leaving through the first year of the permanent replacement Executive Director.
- F. Transition Assistance: Planned support given to the Interim Executive Director during the succession process, including the new Executive Director's first year on the job.

### III. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- A. Leadership development within the school is critical to succession planning. With a pool of trusted leaders already familiar with the school, its staff, students, mission, values, and processes, transition time can be shorter and smoother. Economic impact is also lessened. Interim Executive Directors, whether from inside or outside the organization, will draw from this pool the knowledge they need to be successful.

- B. The Executive Director will identify, assess, and develop leadership potential on an ongoing basis. Leadership development can be accomplished through:
  - 1. Training and workshops
  - 2. Transfer of knowledge and ongoing leadership discussion and development
  - 3. Testing potential through special assignments
  - 4. Promotion to stepping-stone positions
  - 5. Encouragement to earn certificates, degrees, or other additional education in academic leadership
- C. The Board is committed to ensuring that school leaders, both current and aspiring, receive opportunities for growth.
- D. Professional development opportunities offered internally are tracked. External opportunities are offered and tracked by the individual leaders (often as part of their licensure process).

#### **IV. ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL NEEDS**

- A. The Board, or its designated committee, will assess school leadership needs during the succession process. Tools may include:
  - 1. A review of the Executive Director's performance evaluations for the previous two years
  - 2. A review of the Spectrum's mission and vision
  - 3. Student achievement and test results
  - 4. A review of the most recent Executive Summary of the audited financials and current financial standing
  - 5. An interview with the exiting Executive Director to identify future needs of the School
  - 6. Interviews with current members of the executive leadership team
- B. The Board, or its committee, will analyze the Executive Director's strengths and successes in order to provide continuity in those areas. Assessment will begin immediately during the transition time.
- C. The Board will consider the use of an outside consultant for a possible needs assessment.

#### **V. INTERIM DIRECTOR**

- A. The Board may appoint an Interim Executive Director to perform the duties and responsibilities of the exiting Executive Director in his or her absence.
- B. The Board may assign the task of finding Interim Executive Director candidates to a transition and succession committee. The committee shall have at least one member of the Executive Committee, and at least two other members of the Board.
- C. School employees should be considered for potential fit in the role of Interim Executive Director.
- D. Roles and responsibilities may also be split between multiple positions or picked up by current employees.
- E. The Interim Executive Director will be appointed no later than five (5) business days of the Executive Director's absence or as soon as reasonably possible.
- F. The Interim Executive Director will ensure that the School continues to operate without disruption and that all school commitments previously made are adequately executed, including loans, reports, contracts, licenses, certifications, memberships, and other obligations.

#### **VI. SEARCH COMMITTEE**

- A. The Search Committee will be appointed with ten (10) business days of knowing of the unplanned loss of the Executive Director. If planned and sufficient time allows, the search committee should be appointed at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, but no later than 6 months prior to the

scheduled end of employment. The Committee shall have at least one member of the Executive Committee and at least two other members of the Board.

- B. The Search Committee will perform or use the results of the needs assessment outlined in Section IV of this policy in their work.
- C. The Search Committee will consider the use of an outside consultant to help identify candidates.
- D. The board will approve a time frame for the recruitment and selection process.

## **VII. TRANSITION ASSISTANCE**

- A. Transition assistance is an opportunity for the Board to ease any school community concerns during the first stages of the new Interim Executive Director's employment.
- B. The Board is committed to supporting the new Interim Executive Director during the beginning stages of his or her new position and throughout his or her employment. The Board will specifically show this by:
  - 1. Budgeting for the Interim Executive Director's continuing professional development in the area of academic leadership, including workshops and conferences.
  - 2. Meeting with the Interim Executive Director as needed to discuss topics as suggested by either the Board or the Interim Executive Director.
- C. The Interim Executive Director, particularly in the case of an appointment that lasts 3 or more months, will receive transition support (listed under letter (B) above) from the Board and staff equivalent to that of the Executive Director.

## **VIII. COMMUNICATION**

- A. The Board will communicate with school staff, parents, students, business service providers, bondholders, and other stakeholders about the succession and transition process, including:
  - 1. How the Search Committee identifies candidates
  - 2. The importance of looking within Spectrum for potential leaders
  - 3. Promoting respect for the Executive Director and the importance of that role in the overall school mission
  - 4. Promoting the Board's commitment to the work outlined in this policy
  - 5. How we involve the school community in the selection process

## **IX. EVALUATION**

- A. The Board will evaluate and reflect on the succession process and its impact on Spectrum as each phase is completed. Methods may include surveys, parent or staff forums, succession and search committee reports, or interviews, in addition to the Board's self-evaluation discussion.
- B. This policy will be reviewed after each succession and at least every three years.

In the event that policies adopted by the School are in conflict with then applicable Minnesota law, the provisions of the law will apply.