

I. PURPOSE and PHILOSOPHY

A change in school directors is inevitable for all schools. The LILA board of directors 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 the school and its mission. The board of directors is committed to guiding the school through the transition as smoothly as possible, while maintaining accountability and stability.

The purpose of this policy is to provide instruction and guidance for planned or unplanned absences of the school 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 of director will support the new 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 for leadership positions, whether interim or permanent. Having inside talent makes succession issues easier to resolve and cushions the temporary waves caused by a change in leadership.

The board of directors is also committed to communicating with staff, parents, students, business service providers, bondholders, and other stakeholders during the succession 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 termination
- c. Unplanned succession: succession in the case of serious illness or injury, death, or resignation
- d. Interim director: the person appointed to fill the school director's position until a permanent replacement is found; placing a temporary director gives the board of directors more time to make needs assessments and decisions surrounding the succession
- e. Transition time: the time period between when the director is first known to be leaving through the first year of the permanent replacement director
- f. Transition assistance: planned support given to the interim and replacement school director during the succession process, including the new director's first year on the job

III. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- a. Leadership development within LILA 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 is shorter and smoother. Economic impact is also lessened. Interim and permanent

- directors, whether from inside or outside the organization, will draw from this pool the knowledge they need to be successful.
- b. An important duty of the school director is to constantly identify, assess and develop leadership potential.
 - c. Leadership development can be accomplished in many ways, including:
 - i. Training and workshops
 - ii. Testing potential through special assignments
 - iii. Promotion to stepping-stone positions
 - iv. Encouragement to earn certificates, degrees, or other additional education in academic leadership
 - d. The board of directors is committed to ensuring that school leaders, both current and aspiring, receive opportunities for growth.
 - e. The school director, or his or her designee, will track employee professional development.
 - f. The board of directors will receive annual reports from the school director on the development of leadership potential within the school and efforts made to ensure job satisfaction and retain key employees.

IV. ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL NEEDS

- a. The board of directors, or its designated committee, will assess school leadership needs during the succession process. Tools may include:
 - i. A review of the school director's performance evaluations for the previous two years.
 - ii. A review of the school's mission and vision
 - iii. Student achievement/test results
 - iv. A review of the most recent Executive Summary of Audited Financials Report and current financial standing
 - v. An interview with the exiting school director to identify future needs
- b. The board, or its committee, will analyze the school director's strengths and successes in order to provide continuity in those areas.
- c. Assessment will begin immediately during the transition time.
- d. The board will consider the use of an outside consultant for needs assessment.

V. INTERIM DIRECTOR

- a. The board of directors will appoint an interim director to perform the duties and responsibilities of the exiting director in his or her absence, until a permanent replacement is identified.
 - i. The board may assign the task of finding interim 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 of directors.
 - ii. School employees should be considered first for potential fit in the role of interim director.

- iii. The interim director will be appointed no later than within five (5) business days of the school director's absence.
- b. The interim 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 within ten (10) business days of knowing of the loss of the school director. The committee shall have at least one member of the executive committee and at least two other members of the board of directors.
- b. The board of directors will appoint a search committee to identify finalist candidates for the permanent (not interim) school director's position. If the search committee's recommended finalist is not accepted by the board, the search fails and must begin again.
- c. The search committee will perform or use the results of the needs assessment outlined in Section IV of this policy in their work.
- d. The search committee will consider the use of an outside consultant to help identify candidates.
- e. The board of directors will approve a timeframe for the recruitment and selection process.

VII. TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

- a. Transition assistance is an opportunity for the board of directors to ease any school community concerns during the first stages of the new school director's employment.
- b. The board of directors is committed to supporting the new school director during the beginning stages of his or her new position and throughout his or her employment. The board will specifically show this by:
 - i. Budgeting for at least two memberships in professional organizations for the school director. Examples include principals' organizations and other academic leadership organizations.
 - ii. Budgeting for the school director's continuing professional development in the area of academic leadership, including workshops and conferences.
 - iii. Meeting with the school director as needed to discuss topics suggested by either the board of directors or the school director.
- c. The interim 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 of directors and staff equivalent to that of the school director.

VIII. COMMUNICATION

- a. The board of directors will communicate with school staff, parents, students, business service providers, bondholders, and other stakeholders about the succession and transition process, including:
 - i. How the search committee identifies candidates
 - ii. The importance of looking within our organization for potential leaders
 - iii. Promoting respect for the school director and the importance of that role in the overall school mission
 - iv. Promoting the board's commitment to the work outlined in this policy
 - v. How we involve the school community in the selection process

IX. EVALUATION

- a. The board of directors will evaluate and reflect on the succession process and its impact on the school as each phase is completed.
 - i. 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.