

Board Operating Guidelines for Board of Education Employment of the Superintendent (Attachment for Policy 003.3)

Purpose

The purpose of the Board Operating Guidelines is to effectuate Policy 003.3: Employment of the Superintendent, which sets forth the Board of Education's ("Board") recruitment, pre-employment, employment, renewal, removal/severance, and succession/transition planning of the Superintendent of The School District of Philadelphia ("District").

Procedures

Search Preparation

Successfully managing the departure of a Superintendent and the recruitment, hiring and onboarding of a new Superintendent requires substantial planning from the Board. Given the Board is composed entirely of volunteers, it is best practice to procure the services of a search firm to assist with all recruitment, hiring, and onboarding project phases. As such, the Board is authorized through policy to procure such services.

A successful succession plan will account for two different scenarios:

- **A planned transition**

In a planned transition, the Superintendent remains until the end of their contract and a search for their successor would take place while they are still in the role. This allows for a seamless transition between Superintendents.

- **An emergency transition**

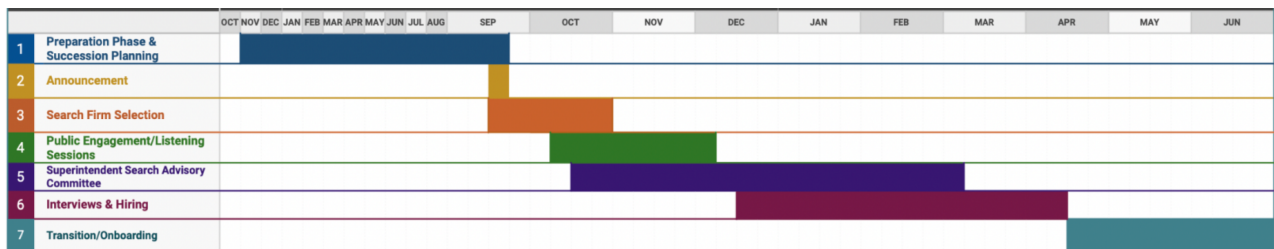
In an emergency transition, the Superintendent does not remain until the end of their contract and a search for their replacement would have to take place with an acting Superintendent appointed to fill the gap in leadership.

In the event that a Superintendent resigns or indicates an impending resignation, the Board President will immediately designate one or two Board Members to lead a Superintendent Transition Team to replace the Superintendent. These designated Board Members will work alongside Board staff, the Office of General Counsel, and any procured search firm to plan for and conduct the search.

A strong succession plan has multiple phases of which some may or may not happen simultaneously depending on the timing of the transition. These phases, to be guided by the designated Board Member-led Transition Team, are as follows:

1. Preparation phase and succession planning
2. Announcement
3. Search firm selection, if needed
4. Public engagement/listening sessions
5. Superintendent Search Advisory Committee
6. Interviews/hiring
7. Transition/onboarding

A sample detailed timeline of the above 7 phases can be found below. This sample Superintendent search was completed over the course of 21 months.



In order to inform the job description and search process for a new superintendent, the Board will engage with external stakeholders by partnering with community organizations to host listening sessions as well as releasing a survey for those unable to attend a listening session. In these engagements, the Board will ask individuals to describe the attributes and skills that they seek in the next Superintendent for the District.

The listening sessions will be held both virtually and in-person at locations across the City that include several sessions at schools. The Board will also hold sessions with employee groups in addition to the sessions held with external organizations. These should include sessions with District leadership, assistant superintendents, central office staff, and any collective bargaining unit whose leadership is interested in participating.

This phase of the search will culminate in a public report documenting what was heard through the engagement process as well as with the publishing of a final job description. The job description should align to and clearly state the expectations of the Board’s Goals and Guardrails and the qualifications and requirements established by the Public School Code and Pennsylvania Department of Education regulations.

A Superintendent Search Advisory Committee will be created to bring together diverse stakeholders across the city of Philadelphia to aid the Board in selecting Superintendent candidates. The Superintendent Search Advisory Committee will meet multiple times under the guidance of a search firm and/or Board Members/staff in order to design and prepare for the interview process.

Members of the Committee shall:

- Demonstrate passion for the success of public education in Philadelphia
- Have a connection to the District in multiple ways (parent/guardian, caregiver, educator, volunteer, graduate, etc.) and with schools that reflect the many neighborhoods and types of schools that exist across the City
- Have experiences with multiple school settings in Philadelphia including charter schools
- Be current Philadelphia residents

The Committee will include individuals such as: teachers; principals; labor partners; members of the business, educational advocacy, and higher education communities; parents, guardians, and caregivers; and students.

The Board will work with key partners such as the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (“PFT”) and Commonwealth Association of School Administrators (“CASA”) in order to invite individuals who fit these descriptions to apply for the Committee.

Recruitment and Assessment of Candidates

All individuals engaged in the search process will sign nondisclosure agreements committing them to confidentiality regarding the identity of all superintendent candidates.

The Board will provide all candidates with professional, sensitive, and timely communication about the search process. Candidates, regardless of their status within the search, will receive regular and professional updates about the search process and their own status and advancement within the process.

The Board or its designee will review candidate applicant files and identify a subset of the applications to receive a first round virtual or in-person interview.

The Board may also conduct other checks on the candidate/s including, but not limited to, social media vetting and notable press mentions.

The Board or its designee will then conduct first round virtual or in-person interviews with candidates and select a group of semi-finalist candidates who will travel to Philadelphia for in-person interviews with the Superintendent Search Advisory Committee.

The Superintendent Search Advisory Committee will then conduct in-person interviews with the semi-finalist candidates, debrief each candidate as a committee, and submit notes and feedback on each of the semi-finalist candidates to the Board for its review. The Board will use these notes and feedback to make its selection of finalist candidates.

The Board will select finalist candidates to participate in additional interviews in Philadelphia before making a final decision on the next Superintendent. If any public interviews are carried out, they shall be conducted in a way that allows individuals who speak a language other than English to meaningfully participate, including live interpretation where appropriate.

Employment Contracts

Preparing for the contracting process will take significant time in advance of the final hiring process. In order to be prepared to quickly and efficiently negotiate a contract, the designated Board Member Transition Team will spend time researching contracts across the country and identifying the key provisions they would like to see in a new contract. The District's Office of General Counsel will be involved in the drafting of all contract drafts and will review and vet all final contract offers before they are presented to the candidate for consideration.

Contract negotiations with the Board's final chosen candidate should be conducted prior to a public announcement. Following the public announcement of the new Superintendent, a special meeting will be held by the Board of Education to authorize the contract with the new Superintendent.

Transition and On-Boarding Planning

To ease preparation, the search, and onboarding in both of the succession scenarios, the current Superintendent will always have at least two other executives on their leadership team sufficiently familiar with the Board and District matters and processes to enable either or both in combination to take over with reasonable proficiency as an acting Superintendent. Upon request by the Board, the Superintendent shall provide this succession plan to the Board in writing.

The transition and onboarding process is intended to support the new Superintendent in a smooth entry into the organization by providing them with the support and independence needed to establish a strong Administration.

Core goals for every transition should include:

- As needed, identifying an individual to serve as acting Superintendent between the current Superintendent's departure and new superintendent's arrival
- Working with the administration to identify and catalog all materials needed to onboard a new Superintendent
- Introducing the new Superintendent to key stakeholders
- Working with the new Superintendent to prepare for submission of a 30-60-90 day plan
- Planning for clear communications to employees and stakeholders before and during the transition
- Providing the new Superintendent with the supports needed for a successful transition and on-boarding

Evaluation of the Superintendent

The Board's Goals and Guardrails [policy](#) and its related [Board Operating Guidelines](#) specify the process, timeline, and components of the Superintendent's annual evaluation. As outlined in those documents, the Superintendent's evaluation is directly aligned to the Board's adopted Goals and Guardrails.