BEST PRACTICES FOR PRINCIPAL SELECTION

This is a guide for legal requirements and best practices for the principal selection process. The steps are written with the expectation that the SBDM council and the superintendent (or designee) will follow the spirit and letter of the law and act in the best interest of students.

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| **Originally developed in 2011 with input from the following groups:** | | |
| Kentucky Association of School Administrators | Kentucky Department of Education | Kentucky School Boards Association |
| Kentucky Association of School Councils | Kentucky Education Association | Jefferson County Teachers Association |
| Kentucky Association of School Superintendents | Kentucky Parent Teacher Association |  |

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PRINCIPAL SELECTION

**for all SBDM Schools (except Jefferson County)**

The principal selection process is set out in **KRS 160.345 (2)(h).** The relevant parts of the statute read as follows:

2(h) Personnel decisions at the school level shall be as follows:

…

2. If the vacancy to be filled is the position of principal:

a. The superintendent shall fill the vacancy after consultation with the school council consistent with paragraph (i)11. of this subsection; (see below)

b. Prior to consultation with the school council, each member shall sign a nondisclosure agreement forbidding the disclosure of information shared and discussions held during consultation;

c. A person who believes a violation of the nondisclosure agreement referred to in subdivision b. of this subparagraph has occurred may file a written complaint with the Kentucky Board of Education; and

d. A school council member found to have violated the nondisclosure agreement referred to in subdivision b. of this subparagraph may be subject to removal from the school council by the Kentucky Board of Education under subsection (9)(e) of this section;

2(i) The school council shall adopt a policy that shall be consistent with local board policy and shall be implemented by the principal in the following additional areas:

…

(i)11. Procedures to assist the council with consultation in the selection of the principal by the superintendent, and the selection of personnel by the principal, including but not limited to meetings, timelines, interviews, review of written applications, and review of references. Procedures shall address situations in which members of the council are not 9 available for consultation; and

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| BEST PRACTICES FOR PRINCIPAL SELECTION | | |
| This document represents best practices for the principal selection process. These suggested steps are written with the expectation that all involved parties are following the spirit and the letter of the law and are committed to doing what is in the best interest of the students.***If a step is required by law, it is marked in bold italics.*** | | |
| **Action** | **Person Responsible** | **Date** |
| **1. Declare Principal Vacancy** | Supt |  |
| The ***superintendent declares a principal vacancy*** at a school as a result of a principal retirement, resignation, termination, or other reason. | | |
| **2. Post the Vacancy** | Supt |  |
| ***Post vacancy according to KRS 160.380(2)(b) and (c).*** This requires a 15-day posting of the vacancy prior to employing someone. The position must be posted at the district central office for public viewing and must also be listed in a statewide registry maintained by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE).  The superintendent may, with the council’s agreement and in emergency circumstances, ask for KDE’s approval of a waiver to permit employing before the 15 days elapse. | | |
| **3. Hold initial meeting (open meeting)** | Council and Supt |  |
| The council meets in an **open meeting** to discuss the following:  * A review of the SBDM law related to principal selection. * The desire to work collaboratively and cooperatively to select a principal who meets the unique needs of the school, based on council criteria. * District recruiting strategies/activities. * ***Each council member signs a nondisclosure agreement forbidding the disclosure of information shared and discussions held during consultation****;* ***KRS 160.345 (2)(h) 2b.*** * Training and/or support needed for the principal selection process. | | |

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| **4. Provide Principal Selection Training/Support for the Council and Advertise It as an Open Meeting** | Council and Supt |  |
| Depending on the needs of the council and superintendent, the following are suggested topics to request the trainer to address:   * How to review applications and resumes. * How to use the Internet search to gather information about the candidates. * How to conduct in-person interviews — Develop interview questions based on criteria. Review what questions a council can legally ask a candidate and which questions or topics to avoid. * How to conduct reference and work experience checks. * How to prepare, conduct, and evaluate open response or written interviews. * How to review the candidates’ portfolios and resumes. * How to prepare, conduct, and review a performance event. * What the ***nondisclosure rules and consequences are; KRS 160.345 (2)(h) 2b-d*.** * When and how to discuss employment issues in open or closed session. ***Be sure your council follows open meetings laws for open and closed sessions. KRS 61.810-61.815*** | | |
| **5. Establish Council Timeline and Plan for Principal Selection Process (open meeting); Decide the Screening Process**  *These decisions can also be made during the training session.* | Council and Supt |  |
| Start with the target date for selecting a principal and work backwards to decide a timeline and plan for your work.  * Discuss the type of screening process that will be used. | | |
| **6. Recruit Principal Candidates** | Supt |  |
| Beyond posting the position with KDE and at the school and district level, then:   * Advertise broadly using multiple media sources. * **Recruit minority applicants according to KRS 160.380(2)(d).** Recruit minority applicants according to KRS 160.380(2)(d), which states, "When a vacancy occurs in a local district, the superintendent shall conduct a search to locate minority teachers to be considered for the position. The superintendent shall, pursuant to administrative regulations of the Kentucky Board of Education, report annually the district's recruitment process and the activities used to increase the percentage of minority teachers in the district;”   *Source:  KDE’s SBDM School Personnel Selection Guide, 2014* | | |

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| **7. Draft Principal Candidate Criteria (open meeting)** | Council and Supt | |  |
| * Review attributes and needs of the school. * Gather input from stakeholders (parents, faculty, staff, students, and community). | | | |
| **8. Establish Final Principal Candidate Criteria (open meeting)** | Council and Supt | |  |
| Based on stakeholder input and needs of the school, decide final written criteria for the position. | | | |
| **9. Decide Information-Gathering Process (open meeting)** | Council and Supt | |  |
| The council should meet and establish the procedures they will follow for the principal selection process and create required documents.  How the council will:   * Review applications, resumes, portfolios, and other relevant materials. * Use electronic search to gather additional information about the candidates. * Develop interview questions based on criteria. * Call listed references and others who have worked with the candidates — decide standard and follow-up questions to ask. * Conduct interviews*. (The council is deciding the procedure for the interviews in open session, not conducting the actual interviews.)* * Prepare performance events. Performance events could include, but not be limited to, response to scenarios or open-ended questions about pertinent topics for the school. Having the candidates respond on a computer also gives the council some insight about basic technology and written communication skills. | | | |
| **10. Review the Applicants and Decide Whom to Interview (closed session)** | Council and Supt |  | |
| * Review the applicants to decide who best meets established criteria and select the applicants to interview. * Send letters notifying applicants who were not selected for an interview. Thank them for their interest in the school. This is an important courtesy and good public relations for your school/district. | | | |
| **11. Interview the Candidates (closed session)** | Council and Supt | |  |
| At the end of the interview:   * Share employee salary/benefits, job description, etc., with applicants. * Ask candidate if he/she has any questions. * Let the candidate know the timeline for completing the principal selection process. | | | |

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| **12. Evaluate the Candidates Using the Agreed-Upon Selection Process (closed session)** | | Council and Supt | |  |
| **13. Consult on the Selection of the Principal *(Consultation with the council is legally required before the superintendent selects the candidate to hire as principal.)***  (Includes both open and closed session) | Council and Supt | |  | |
| * After the interviews, reference checks, and information gathering process is complete, the council should ***call a special meeting*** for discussion of the candidates and for the ***superintendent to consult with the council on selecting the principal****.* * Go into ***closed session to discuss the candidates*** and determine the best person to lead the school as principal. * If the superintendent is ready to make his/her selection at this point, contact the candidate while in closed session to see if he/she will take the job. * *(If the candidate is willing to take the job)* ***Go into open session***, read a statement that best fits the situation and announce the superintendent’s choice for principal. Some examples include:   + *“Based on the criteria established by the council and the superintendent, with significant input from stakeholders and following an in-depth process, we have found the best fit for our school. We are proud to announce that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will serve as the new principal of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School.”*   + *“After an in-depth, collaborative process, Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has officially selected \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to serve as the new principal of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School.”* * *(If the candidate is NOT willing to take the job)* Stay in closed session and discuss whether another candidate meets the group’s criteria and whether the superintendent wants to select that candidate as the principal.   + If another candidate is selected, repeat the process above.   + If the superintendent is not ready to make that decision, ***go into open session*** and announce something like, *“As of now, no candidate can be selected for the principal position. The council/superintendent will announce the next steps for the process as soon as possible.” selecting a principal from the current candidate pool.”* The council and superintendent might want to gather more information about the candidates, repost the position, or have an interim principal until a suitable applicant is found. | | | | |

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| **14. Follow-Up After the Principal Selection Meeting** | Supt and/or designated council member |  |
| If a principal is selected, proceed with the steps below. (If no candidate is selected, request that the superintendent repost the position and seek additional candidates; or for an interim, go to the steps in the section on *Interim Principal Selection*.)   * Notify the applicants who were interviewed but not selected. * Notify the school staff of the candidate selected. * Communicate to full school community through an all-call system. * Post information about the new principal on the school and district website. * Publish a press release to announce the selection. | | |
| **15. Complete the Hiring Process** | Supt |  |
| Have the new principal sign the contract and proceed with the usual steps for new administrators. | | |

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| INTERIM PRINCIPAL SELECTION | | |
| **Action** | **Person Responsible** | **Date** |
| **Discuss Appointing an Interim Principal with the Council** | **Supt** |  |
| While not specified in law, it is a general practice, in the event of an unfilled vacancy, that an interim principal is selected by the superintendent to serve until the council selects a new principal. The principal position remains vacant, and the hiring process proceeds according to the method established by the council. When the council selects a principal and the superintendent completes the hiring process, the interim principal is relieved of his/her duties.  If the council has a suggestion for an interim principal, it can make the recommendation to the superintendent, who may consider the request.  While not specified in law, it is best practice that a candidate for the permanent principal position not serve as interim principal. | | |
| Notify the Council of the Interim Principal | Supt |  |
| Communicate the Selection of the Interim Principal | Council |  |
| * Notify the school staff of the interim principal. * Communicate information about the interim principal to full school community. | | |