



Selecting a Principal

A Guide for School-Based Decision Making Councils

Facilitator Notes

These training materials were developed by the Kentucky Department of Education *as a guide* during the process of selecting a principal. Principal selection training **cannot substitute for the annually required professional learning** for all SBDM members as cited in KRS 160.345(6).

Notes for the Facilitator

This training is required for school councils each time it must make the decision to select a principal. It is designed to be a conversation more than a professional development. As you work with the school council members, keep in mind their knowledge base and their anxiety during this time. Facilitation notes are included with each section; however, please make the training appropriate and applicable with the members of the school council. By statute, councils are required to be trained on candidate recruitment and an overview on interviewing techniques [KRS 160.345(2)(h)2].

The SBDM statute was amended as part of Senate Bill 1 (2017) and the new amendments took effect on April 10, 2017. This amendment allows councils to have **one of two** options when it comes to principal selection:

1. Councils opt for the alternative process and asks the superintendent to recommend a candidate and the council has the option to interview the candidate and accept him/her as principal **OR**
2. Superintendent and council consider applicants and the council selects the candidate by majority vote.

If the council selects the **alternative process**, KDE's *best practice guidance* is that the council would still need to be trained. Council members may be unaware that they have two options now regarding principal selection, so before the superintendent could recommend a candidate, the council would have to first initiate that alternative process. The amended statute states the following, "An alternative principal selection process may be used **by the council...**" So, to initiate the process, council members would need to have an awareness that two options exist and that could be highlighted during the training.

Training is also key to the alternative principal selection process, because if the council does not accept the recommended candidate, then they revert back to the original principal selection process, which does explicitly require the training. Additionally, since the council can opt to interview the recommended candidate in closed session during the alternative process, it is KDE's guidance that they have the standard principal selection training that covers recruitment and interview techniques. KDE recommends a council exercise its right to interview the recommended candidate (an exception to this could be if there has been an interim in place or if the assistant principal is the recommended candidate and the school/community has a working relationship with this person). In addition, all members shall sign a nondisclosure/confidentiality agreement forbidding the sharing of information shared and discussions held in the closed session.

As the facilitator, work with the school council on their specific needs during the training, which does include various stopping points for councils to gather their thoughts and make a decision. Those sections may be led by the chair (or vice chair).

Principal Selection Team Building Activity

Principal selection can be stressful for some school council members. They are in a meeting sitting across from a superintendent in which they may or may not know. It is important to start the process out on good footing. A team building activity may be the route to go. The one suggested in the manual is that- *a suggestion*. You, as the facilitator, may choose any team building activity as a starter.

The activity in the manual is one around unique characteristics. The goal is to have the school council members think of what they have that is unique. Have the school council members think and list their unique qualities (natural abilities). If comfort level is great, they can share out; if not, then sharing is not necessary. Remind them that they have an equal voice in this process and to bring their unique perspective to the discussion.

Legal Requirements for Principal Selection

Have the school council members skim/read the section of the statute and answer the questions on page 7 of the manual. Ensure that they have the correct answers. If needed, they can go back to the section of the statute and highlight that portion.

Meeting Requirements

Read and summarize the Open Meeting/Open Records requirements. Remind them that all of the principal selection process must adhere to these requirements. Depending on the level of knowledge of the school council members, thoroughly review each section.

Once they are comfortable with the requirements, have the school council determine who will be in charge of ensuring that special meetings are conducted properly. Have each member make this notation in the manual.

Recruitment Requirements

The amount of diversity in the community will determine how much time is spent on this section. However, discussing recruitment of a diverse candidate pool is required by statute.

Read and summarize the section. Most often recruitment is done at the district level and through the district's human resources division. If a school and/or a district is not diverse, discuss other aspects of diversity and the strategic plan to be inclusive. Have the superintendent share how they address the requirement of recruiting a diverse pool of candidates.

Interviewing Techniques

Most often the interviews provide the bulk of information that a school council receives from candidates. Therefore, knowing the ins-and-outs of interviewing is important. Unless a school

council member is a manager or supervisor, he/she probably has limited experience when it comes to interviewing.

Discuss the importance of doing face-to-face interviews even if they are aware of specific candidate's strengths (e.g., being internal to the school or district, previous staff member, etc....). Include with this (if/when appropriate) short role playing.

Interviewing Do's and Don'ts

Read through each comment as necessary and keep comments appropriate; however, add specific instances and humor as desired. The point is to remind the council members of their legal obligations and those questions they cannot ask as it may violate individual rights.

At the end, have the school council members begin brainstorming questions they would want to ask. These do not have to be formal questions, but their thoughts.

Note

The remaining sections of the training module may be used at your discretion and should complement the needs of the council being trained.