GUIDELINES FOR PRINCIPAL SELECTION

Kentucky Department of Education

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This document was prepared by the Division Leadership and Instructional Support for school council members and others. If assistance is needed with any aspect of principal selection, please contact our office at the Kentucky Department of Education by calling 502-564-4201, or by email at "Orin.Simmerman@education.ky.gov".

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SECTION 1: LEGAL BASIS FOR PRINCIPAL SELECTION

From a list of applicants submitted by the local superintendent, the principal at the participating school shall select personnel to fill vacancies, after consultation with the school council, consistent with subsection (2) (i) 10. of this section. The superintendent may forward to the school council the names of qualified applicants who have pending certification from the Education Professional Standards Board based on recent completion of preparation requirements, out-of-state preparation, or alternative routes to certification pursuant to KRS 161.028 and 161.048. Requests for transfer shall conform to any employer-employee bargained contract which is in effect. If the vacancy to be filled is the position of principal, the school council shall select the new principal from among those persons recommended by the local superintendent. When a vacancy in the school principalship occurs, the school council shall receive training in recruitment and interviewing techniques prior to carrying out the process of selecting a principal. The council shall select the trainer to deliver the training. Personnel decisions made at the school level under the authority of this subsection shall be binding on the superintendent who completes the hiring process. Applicants subsequently employed shall provide evidence that they are certified prior to assuming the duties of a position in accordance with KRS 161.020. The superintendent shall provide additional applicants upon request when qualified applicants are available. KRS 160.345 (2)(h).

Training Required Prior to Carrying Out Principal Selection Process

When a vacancy in the school principalship occurs, the school council shall receive training in recruitment and interviewing techniques prior to carrying out the process of selecting a principal. The council shall select the trainer to deliver the training.

Statutory Requirements

- School councils must receive training in recruitment and interviewing techniques prior to carrying out the principal selection process.
- School councils must fill a vacancy for principal from a list of applicants recommended by the superintendent or from subsequent lists of qualified applicants
- If a school council is not satisfied with the initial list of applicants for principal, the council may ask for and will receive additional applicants until there are no more qualified applicants available.

The statute does not require that the outgoing principal remove him or herself from the process of selecting the new principal. It is recommended best practice for the outgoing principal to allow the five remaining council members to conduct the selection process without the involvement of the outgoing principal unless the council requests his or her assistance.

Qualified Applicants for Principal

“Qualified” means all applicants who are certified for the position or who have pending certification from the Education Professional Standards Board based on recent completion of preparation requirements, out-of-state preparation, or alternative routes to certification pursuant to KRS 161.028 and 161.048. Applicants must also have a clear criminal records check

Kentucky Supreme Court Opinion on Principal Selection

The Kentucky Supreme Court rendered an opinion on April 22, 2004 impacting the definition of "qualified applicants" for principal positions. The supreme court upheld the ruling of the Appellate court that the superintendent's recommendation is not a statutory requirement and that the superintendent must submit all applications for the position of principal to the school council if requested, as long as the applicants have met all the qualifications required by statute (e.g. a clear criminal records check and appropriate certification). This information should be used for all principal selection decisions beginning in April 2004.

- An applicant for principal is qualified based on the legal definition rendered by the KY Supreme Court that the applicant possesses appropriate certification and has a clear criminal records check.
- The district still may have personnel procedures that can include screening and ranking of all candidates. (Councils are not personnel offices, and should not be expected to do the initial screening of candidates.)
- Once screening is complete at the district office, the superintendent can provide the council with a list of the most highly qualified candidates for their consideration.
- If the council asks for more, and continues to ask for more, then the superintendent would eventually have to provide all candidates that are qualified.
- If the council asks for a principal candidate by name and the superintendent does not include them in the first list of candidates then the superintendent must include that person's name on a subsequent list sent to the council with the remaining legally qualified applicants.
- Board policy can no longer contain "objective criteria" in addition to other qualifying criteria.

2004 Supreme Court Conclusions

Young v. Hamilton and Back v. Robinson, 2003 SC-0397-I, rendered April 22, 2004

The Kentucky Supreme Court rendered an Opinion affirming the Kentucky Court of Appeals in the above styled cases on the issue of whether KRS 160.345(2)(h) requires a school based decision making council to select a school principal from among those applicants whom the local superintendent recommends or whether the council has the right to consider all applicants meeting statutory requirements (e.g. appropriately certified.) The Court concluded that the council has the right to consider all applicants meeting statutory requirements, and not just the ones recommended by the superintendent. **This occurs through a two-tiered process in that, after considering the applicants recommended by the superintendent, the council may ask for the remaining legally qualified applicants.**

The rationale for the conclusion is that the Kentucky Education Reform Act stressed the importance of decentralization of school management, "to remove opportunities for nepotism and political influence, and to disperse decision making authority among several interested parties." This is to reflect the importance of shared responsibility for purposes of accountability in creating an efficient system. The Court concluded that to hold otherwise would allow a superintendent totally to control selection of the principal in that he or she might recommend one candidate. The Court notes that the council right of selection is tempered by the council's lack of authority to do transfers or dismissals. The balance of authority is intended to create, the Court says, a meaningful dialogue between the council and superintendent. In the Russell

Independent Schools decision, the principal is to be removed, and the hiring process to be reopened. This is now the law of the Commonwealth.

Examples of Implementation in Kentucky Schools:

Some SBDM schools in Kentucky use a policy like this one when selecting a principal:

"The school council shall choose a trainer and receive training prior to carrying out the principal selection process.

The school council shall invite all teachers, parents, and school community members to suggest characteristics to consider in a new principal. After receiving a list or subsequent lists of qualified applicants from the superintendent, the school council will schedule a series of special meetings to review the applicants and conduct necessary interviews. All interviews and discussions of candidates will be conducted in closed session.

At the completion of interviews and discussions, the school council will choose a candidate in an open meeting and document this decision in the minutes, and the council chair shall report the council's selection to the superintendent. If the school council is unable to choose a principal and send a decision to the superintendent by August 1, the school council will ask the superintendent to appoint an interim administrator to serve a period of up to one year."

Questions and Answers Regarding the Training Requirement:

Q. Is there a minimum time requirement for this training?
A. No. The law does not specify a minimum time requirement. Trainers should ensure that council members are well informed about recruitment and interviewing. Council members are responsible for meeting this training requirement prior to carrying out the process of selecting a principal.

Q. At what point in the process, after a principal vacancy occurs, must the training occur?
A. Since recruitment is specified as a part of the training content, it is implied in statute that it should be early in the process. In order to recruit, the school council would have to be trained early in, or prior to, the posting of the position. The final selection of a principal cannot occur until this training is complete.

Q. Must trainers be endorsed by the KDE, like those who provide regular SBDM training?
A. KDE does not endorse, approve or recommend particular trainers or training programs in the area of principal selection

Q. Must the selection of the trainer be noted in school council minutes?
A. Yes. In order for a selection of a trainer to occur it must happen at a school council meeting. This must be reflected in the school council's minutes.

Q. If a school council member has already been trained in recruitment and interviewing, and a principal vacancy occurs, must the member repeat the training?
A. The statutory language requires this training to occur "when a vacancy in the principalship occurs." As a result, the council member would have to participate in the additional training.

Q. May this training count toward the mandatory annual training hours of school council members, pursuant to KRS 160.345 (6)?
A. No, this training must be in addition to that which is mandated under KRS 160.345(6). This training requirement is triggered by the phrase, "when a vacancy in the school principal position occurs." The language implies that it is topic specific training in addition to the general training that is mandated.

UNACCEPTABLE PRE-EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONS

In order to be fair and without bias to any applicant, you should not ask the questions relating to the following list. To do so is a violation of various state and federal laws concerning equal employment opportunity.

1. What is the nationality of your parents?
2. What is the maiden name of the applicant's wife or mother?
3. Do not ask whether applicant intends to become a citizen of the US or any other inquiry related to any aspect of citizenship.
4. Do not ask what language the applicant reads, speaks, or writes fluently.
5. Do not ask what language is commonly used by the applicant or in applicant's home.
6. Do not ask the name and/or address of spouse or any relative.
7. Any specific questioning of the applicant that would indicate linkage, ancestry, national origin, or descent is prohibited.
8. You cannot ask:
    1) Sex of applicant
    2) Marital status
    3) About dependents (children, etc…)
    4) Pregnancy status
    5) Sexual preference
9. You may not inquire about his/her age, date of birth, or year of graduation from high school and/or college.
10. Any inquiry into height and/or weight of applicant is prohibited.
11. Applicants may not be told that employees are required to work on religious holidays.
12. No inquiry may be made into the religion of the applicant.
13. You may not ask specifically the nationality, racial, or religious affiliation of a school they attended.
14. Do not ask about any possible physical handicaps, disabilities, workers' compensation claims, or anything about their general medical condition.
15. Do not ask about the financial status of the applicant. This would include any questions about the applicant's credit record or whether or not the applicant owns a car or home.
16. Do not inquire into membership in clubs, social fraternities, societies, lodges, or organizations that indicate the race, creed, color, religion, or national origin of its members.

SELECTING APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to test your council's knowledge regarding the legality of any questions you may ask potential employees. If the question may be asked in an interview, put a check mark beside the question.

1) How old are you?

2) Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

3) What are the ages of your children?

4) Frankly, we prefer a man for this job.

5) Do you wish to be addressed as Mrs., Miss, or Ms.?

6) Where were you born?

7) We're going to need a copy of your birth certificate with this application. You don't mind do you?

8) How long have you been a resident of this area?

9) You have such an unusual look. What country are you from originally?

10) Are you pregnant, or do you plan to increase your family in the near future?

11) Your name appears to be Jewish. If you are Jewish, can we count on you to be here on Jewish holidays?

12) Have you ever been or are you presently married?

13) Do you have small children at home?

14) Can you give us a small photo of yourself to accompany this application?

15) Are you currently a member of any branch of the armed services?

16) Who watches the little ones while you are at work?

17) What would you do if your husband/wife got a job in another state?

18) Our former principal kept the hours of 7:30 to 4:00 each workday. Would this cause any conflicts for you?

19) You say your parents were from Ireland. Were they from the North or South?

20) Do you live with your wife/husband?

21) Who suggested that you apply for the position of principal here?

22) What schools have you attended? When?

23) We'd really like to have a reference from your pastor. Would you arrange that?

24) You have an unusual name. Where is it from?

25) We can see from your application that you have 28 years experience in education. Do you have plans to retire anytime soon?

SECTION 2: INTERVIEW PROCESS

I. TRAINING IN THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

The Kentucky Department of Education recommends training for school councils in the process of principal selection through the SBDM Endorsed Trainer's Network. If formal training is not available, you can informally train your council in the interview process through simulation activities.

Simulation activities should be preceded by an explanation of the PRINCIPLES, PRACTICES, AND PROFILES OF MEASURING HUMAN PERFORMANCE. (see Appendix.)

Basic Training Issues:

1) The school council should develop or review their principal selection policy and process.
2) Each member of the council should be familiar with the specific methods employed to obtain reliable information about those being evaluated (i.e. the interview process, references, contents of the application process, etc.)
3) Public school systems in the Commonwealth of Kentucky are Equal Opportunity Employers. The school districts cannot discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, religion or national origin in their education activities or employment practices.
4) The council as a whole should engage in a practice session employing appropriate questioning and interviewing techniques with "live" volunteers if possible.

GENERAL PREPARATION TO CONSIDER WHEN CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

Step 1: Your school council will need to specifically define the criteria and standards of performance necessary to be effective as a principal in your school. Following are some general criteria your council may wish to consider.

This person demonstrates:

1) The ability to relate well to others - student body, school council, classified and certified staff, parents and community.
2) Effective communication skills
3) A sense of humor
4) Personal and professional integrity
5) Knowledge of school-based decision making

This person shows evidence of:

6) Strong instructional leadership through the understanding of appropriate instructional practices

7) Communicates the vision and mission of the school

8) Knowledge of KERA and positive educational change

9) Professional growth and responsibility

10) Involvement within the community

11) Knowledge of school-based decision making

This person has a past record of:

12) Effective and efficient day-to-day operation of a school (administration)

13) Establishing/maintaining appropriate discipline in a school

14) Effective organizational skills

15) Evaluation strategies oriented toward improving instruction

16) Promoting ongoing staff development

Step 2: Conduct a survey in the school and community regarding important criteria to be considered in hiring a principal. Incorporate the information received into the interview process.

Step 3: Craft your interview questions to elicit past performance related to the specific criteria you have chosen.

Step 4: Whenever possible, view and review the candidate's actual performance in similar circumstances.

Optional: When the council has narrowed the acceptable applicants to three or four, it may prove beneficial to have a reception for the purpose of letting the entire faculty, staff, and community meet them. They could be asked to speak briefly - perhaps 10 minutes. A poll might be taken soon afterward, as long as it was stated that although the poll would be one consideration, the final choice would still belong to the council. Some candidates may not want it known that they are applicants.

Pulling the Information Together:

1) Review school council policy on hiring a principal.

2) Use as many independent sources of information as possible to boost the reliability of your evaluation.

3) Remember, the reliability and validity of interview information is largely dependent on the accuracy and objectivity of the interviewers.

4) Choosing a principal is a serious business with long lasting effects. It should not be undertaken without due consideration of all factors, including the time element. Do not shortchange yourselves by setting an unreasonable deadline or time table within which to accomplish your purpose.

IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

1) Council members should meet as a team at least one-half hour before the candidate is expected to arrive. This will allow time for council members to decide on individual assignments - chairpersons, interviewers, etc. It would also be a good time to review any of the documentation previously received on this person prior to the interview.

2) The council should make the final decision as to what standard questions will be asked each applicant and what specific questions are needed to fill any "gaps" in information on this particular individual.

3) A conference room would be the ideal setting for the council's interviewing process. The conference table not only provides sufficient work space but also provides the right atmosphere for a more relaxed interview process.

4) At the close of the question period, the chairperson should allow the interviewee a chance to ask questions of the council.

5) Finally, the chairperson outlines the next steps and time frames, being careful to set realistic expectations, and thanks the applicant for his/her time.

Rule of Thumb: Plan for the interviews to last from one to three hours each in order to allow enough time for all parties to have their questions answered.

SECTION 3: CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

School council members should know how to conduct an unbiased job-related, stress-free, and predictive interview.

Interview Questions:

1) Be sure the questions are job-related. You will learn more from questions that are predictive of on-the-job performance. Your candidates will enjoy talking about what is important to them.

2) Plan your questions so you will be prepared to ask the next question without delaying the process.

3) As a general rule, it is best to ask stress-free questions. You do not need to ask questions that may be considered a personal attack to know how a candidate will act under stress. They will only become defensive. It is better to ask the candidate what he/she feels and does.

4) Ask open-ended questions. A "yes" or "no" answer will assist you little in predicting on-the-job performance.

Interview Techniques:

1) Move into the structured part of the interview as soon as you have developed rapport with the candidates. They know their purpose for being there and are eager to get on with the interview.

2) Save the tour of the building for last. The more you show and tell before you ask and listen, the more difficult it is for the candidate to tell you what he believes, and the more likely he is to know what you want him/her to say.

3) Don't ask similar questions too close together. Mix the questions so the candidate can approach the same theme from different angles. Asking similar questions in several ways reinforces the presence or absence of desirable qualities.

4) Ask the same questions in the same order for each candidate. You have no point of comparison if you don't ask everyone the same questions in the same order. This gives all candidates an equal opportunity. If more than one interviewer is to ask questions, it is helpful to allow that interview to ask those same questions of each candidate.

5) Don't interpret the questions for candidates. It is their interpretation that is important.

6) Don't probe or cross-examine. The questions on the interview should be straightforward, thought provoking and open-ended. They will reveal the candidate's thoughts and feelings. You may think of additional questions as you go through the interview. Write

questions down as you think of them and hold them until you have finished the initial interview.

7) Be a good listener. As you listen, be accepting, responsive (nonverbal) and nonjudgmental. Any frowning or negative body language on your part will add to the candidate's stress. Even an occasional "good" or "fine" or "I think so, too" will add to the stress -- not when you say it, but when you forget or choose not to say it after a response.

8) Know the responses you are listening for. What you like or what you think the outstanding candidate will say and what they do say are often different. Part of what makes them outstanding is that they don't think or act like the average or typical candidate. The answers you are listening for are the answers given by the very best candidates -- the ones we want "more of."

9) Tape record or video the interview if possible. You will often be surprised, upon playback, that what you thought you heard and what was said are not exactly the same. Be sure you have the candidate's permission to tape. If you are comfortable with its use and explain the benefit to the council, the candidate will usually be comfortable also.

10) Keep comprehensive notes on each candidate's interview to facilitate good discussion and assist with the final decision.

The Last Word:

During the interview, the most important person in the room is the candidate. Everything you do should be focused on helping that person relax and enjoy telling you who they really are. The interviewee should leave the session knowing they have been heard, understood and appreciated as a unique individual.

Making and Documenting Council Decisions

Once the interviews are completed, the council should use a process to make and document their decision that includes the following steps:

1. review all notes, applications, interview responses, etc. and compare to the criteria established by the SBDM council prior to the interviews.
2. ask each member to list the top three to five candidates in order of their preference, then compare lists to see which candidates are on each members list
3. facilitate discussion about the top three choices and attempt to come to a consensus about the top three candidates that everyone can agree upon
4. poll the council members to determine if everyone is ready to make the final decision and/or recommendation

Once the school council is prepared to take formal action in a public meeting, the council should go from the closed meeting into an open meeting. A council member should state for the record the motion to select the candidate.

Some SBDM councils prefer not to formally announce a candidate's name in an open meeting if they have not yet secured the candidate's commitment. This allows for the possibility that the council's first choice may not accept the position, and they may have to go to their second or third choice. In the event that this happens, the candidates and the community will not know who was first, second or third choice. If the council would prefer to keep candidate's names confidential until they have secured a commitment to the position, here is a process they may follow:

1) Council discussion in closed session concludes with a motion to go into open session.
2) Council vice chair recesses the meeting for the purpose of contacting the superintendent relative to the council's selection.
3) Council vice chair contacts the superintendent by telephone to inform the superintendent of the council's probable choice and ask the superintendent to contact the applicant and secure their acceptance of the position.
4) Superintendent contacts the candidate by telephone to secure their acceptance, then calls the council to inform them of the candidates decision.
5) If the candidates accepts the position, the vice chair will reconvene the council meeting and a formal motion and decision will be recorded.
6) If the candidate asks for time to think about the decision, the council may choose to announce a future special meeting in which to make the final decision.
7) If the candidate does not accept the position, the superintendent can contact the council's second choice, and so on.

Once a formal motion is made and seconded in an open meeting that states the name of the candidate selected by the council, the council secretary should record the motion as stated. A roll call vote or consensus decision should follow the motion. The council's vote or unanimous decision by consensus should be recorded in the meeting minutes. Once the council has made their decision, the vice chairperson should inform the superintendent of the school council's choice in writing within 24 hours. The vice chairperson should contact the candidate that was selected by the council as soon as possible following the council's decision to set a time for the new principal to meet with the council and the faculty.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Your council's interview questions should reflect the unique needs of your student body, faculty, staff, and community. These questions are intended only as a general guide.

Sample Questions for Principals

1) As an administrator/teacher/counselor, what do you see as your primary mission?
2) How would you develop the team concept with your staff? With the community?
3) Upon what basis do you believe school priorities should be established?
4) In dealing with conflict resolution, give two or three examples of strategies you have used.
5) What professional qualities would you particularly encourage in your staff?
6) How will you motivate teachers so they will try new ideas?
7) What is the most recent professional reading you have done and what did you draw from it?
8) Describe your feelings about and experiences with the Primary Program; or the restructuring at the high school or middle school level.
9) Upon what criteria would you base your assessment of a teacher?
10) Describe your personal decision making process.
11) Why are organizational skills important for a principal?
12) What long-term professional goals have you set for yourself? When do you expect to have accomplished these goals?
13) What do you see as the major role of the principal?
14) Describe the role of technology in the school system as you see it evolving in the next five years.
15) What do you consider to be your major strengths as an administrator?
16) What would be your first priority in this position?
17) How would you describe your leadership style?
18) What do you see as the first step in initiating successful change?
19) How do you see your role in working with the SBDM council?
20) Why are you interested in becoming the principal of this school?
21) How have you encouraged professional development for staff you have worked with in the past?
22) What provisions will you make to ensure total staff involvement with the SBDM council?
23) What do you consider to be examples of appropriate instructional practices within the Primary School? Middle School? High School?

24) What has been the most beneficial professional development training in which you have been involved in the last two years? Why?

25) What are your personal views regarding discipline? Corporal punishment?

26) In what ways would you encourage students who are not working up to their potential?

27) How would you help an inexperienced teacher become more effective in the classroom?

28) How will you work with the school counselor - or assistant principal - to improve student and staff relationships?

29) What experience have you had with diversity in student populations?

30) What evidence from your personal experience can you give that you support KERA?

31) What is your perception of shared decision making?

32) Give some examples of programs you have initiated that support change.

33) What method of communication do you feel is most effective in keeping the total staff/community informed as to council decisions?

34) How do you envision the incorporation of student support services in this school?

35) What specific steps would you take to build rapport with your staff?

36) What system would you initiate through which to delegate responsibilities to others?

37) What are the most important characteristics of an effective school?

38) Name three important functions of a principal.

39) How will you maintain staff morale when "the pressure is on?"

40) What provisions will you make for an awareness of community opinion?

41) Which area of school reform do you believe holds the greatest promise?

42) What role do you see the Family Resource/Youth Service Center playing for students in this school?

43) What about being a school principal has been, or will most likely be, most rewarding to you? Why?

44) How would you go about trying to resolve a dispute between opposing factions within a school?

45) Have you conducted "consultation" between council members and the principal when filling vacancies at the school in a previous job? Describe how you did it.

46) What is your vision for a school in Kentucky today?

47) Which aspect of school reform concerns you the most?

48) What do you feel are your personal and professional strengths? Weaknesses?

49) In what ways would you represent the council and school's interests with the board of education and superintendent?

50) Describe how you would establish positive relations within the school community.

51) What do you consider to be the most important areas of responsibility for a principal? Why?

52) What do you see as the main focus of any SBDM council?

53) What specific ideas do you have to facilitate change within this school?

54) How would you encourage a teacher who is discouraged? A student? A parent?

55) If you could choose only three areas in which the SBDM council would make policies this year, what would they be?

56) What important personal and professional qualities do you possess that qualify you for the role of principal?

57) If your views on curriculum differed from those of the rest of the council, how would you resolve those differences?

58) What professional development training of which you have personal knowledge would you want to make available to each teacher in this school?

59) Would you please share your method of dealing with a student who is continually disruptive in class?

60) What instructional strategies would you want new teachers to be sure to employ? How would you ensure this? How would you organize a school to support new teachers?

61) Are you familiar with the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement (SISI)? Describe how you might use this document to help improve a school.

62) Give your definition of:

a. Collaboration

b. School Climate

c. Shared Decision-Making

d. Mission Statement

63) Please complete these sentences:

a. Interpersonal skills I possess are:

b. My greatest liability is:

c. My greatest asset is:

NOTE: Do not forget to give the candidate time to ask questions of the council. This is not only common courtesy, but the kind of questions they ask may also give you even more insight into the person as a suitable candidate.

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERVIEW

1) Interviews should be evaluated one at a time with the council reviewing all accumulated data -- applications, interview responses, audio or video tapes, etc., from each source against each criterion being measured.

2) Remember to take all the time necessary to carefully consider each candidate's qualifications.

3) Do not set unrealistic deadlines for making a decision.

4) Once all differences are resolved, a final overall rating can be made, shared with council members in closed session, and confirmed.

5) The council should then do a self or group assessment, evaluating its effectiveness and identifying areas of the screening and interview process needing improvement.

APPENDIX

PRINCIPLES, PRACTICES AND PROFILES OF MEASURING HUMAN PERFORMANCE

When given the task of rating others on dimensions or competencies as part of any evaluation process, there is the potential for human error to occur. Though not intentional, rater error in the evaluation process can be detrimental and should be controlled as much as possible. An awareness of the most common errors made will help reduce much of the rater error. An error-free evaluation will enhance both the reliability and validity of the evaluation process.

The following is an overview of the most obvious errors that raters make in the evaluation process:

Halo Effect

Halo Effect occurs when a rater bases all of an individual's ratings on a general impression. The following are subcategories of the Halo Effect explain the basis of the "good" or "bad" impression.

1. Similar-to-Me Similar-to-Me error is the tendency of people to size others up by comparing and contrasting others to themselves. When rating an individual, it is human nature to compare them to you. It is also typical to assume that because someone is somewhat similar to you, they have all of your good qualities. The tendency is to score those individuals who raters perceive to be similar to themselves in personality, values, attitudes or background, higher across all dimensions. Conversely, the more dissimilar the individual is from the rater, the lower the rating.

2. First Impression Often our total evaluation of an individual is based on our first impression. It is often the case that in the first few minutes with an individual we will form an overall impression. This impression will be carried with us over time, even when an individual's behavior contradicts that impression. First impression error can be attributed to nonverbal, verbal or actual behavior; at first meeting an individual can be perceived as sloppy and languid, causing the rater to perceive them that way in the future, or an individual can have been efficient and organized on a past project and the rater will evaluate those same dimensions high in the future, regardless of actual performance.

3. Stereotype A stereotype error occurs when a rater has preconceived perceptions about a certain group of people and attributes these characteristics when rating a member of that group. A stereotype effect can also appear when the rater generalizes that the individual processes several traits based on one observed trait. Social characteristics such as ethnic group and sex, or traits such as attractiveness and extroversion may cause the evaluator to rate a person based on stereotyped traits and/or characteristics rather than actual behavior.

Rating Scale Error

Another type of rating error occurs in the assignment of a rating score, rather than the perception of the evaluator. The evaluator may accurately perceive the individual's behavior but fail to translate it accurately to the rating scale. The danger of this type of error is that with more than one evaluator, as in the case of school councils, there will be no consistent measurement of individuals. There are three types of rating scale errors which may occur: leniency, severity, and central tendency.

1. Leniency/Severity Leniency and Severity errors are defined as the tendency to use only one end of the rating scale. A lenient evaluator rates everyone above average. "Easy" raters typically inflate an individual's ratings on the average, while "hard" raters typically deflate an individual's ratings.

2. Central Tendency Another rating scale error is that of Central Tendency. An evaluator with this tendency would pile ratings up around the middle point of the range. There is an avoidance of the extremes when rating, so everybody is rated as average. The evaluator who seldom gives ratings of "1" or "5" on a scale of 1-5, may be committing the Central Tendency error.

Contrast Error

Contrast error occurs when an individual is rated in comparison to others instead of by a standard of performance. Frequently all individuals in a certain position, such as that of principal, are highly qualified on stated performance standards. Their rating should reflect that standard rather than their standing or rating within a group. In this way, an individual's ratings will remain accurate even when they are removed from that particular group.

Primacy-Recency Effects

Often when individuals are evaluated on speeches or presentations, an error can occur which is a reflection of the order in which the individual appears. Be particularly aware of this if you have asked the candidates to speak at a reception. A primary or recency effect often occurs as consecutive speeches are being given. A primacy effect occurs when the early speeches are rated more favorable and a recency effect occurs when the later speeches are rated more favorably. A primacy effect often occurs when the speakers give a persuasive talk, and a recency effect often occurs when the speakers give an informative talk on a relatively dry subject.

PROFILE OF SKILLS

This document can be mailed to references or used as an interview guide. If several people rate the candidate independently, an overall profile of skills can be compiled.

SKILL (Please indicate the level of skill by checking the appropriate box.)	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
1. Administrative Leadership				
2. Organizational Skills				
3. Planning and Initiating				
4. Instructional Strategies				
5. Child Development Knowledge				
6. Technological Knowledge				
7. Developing Curriculum				
8. Sense of Humor				
9. Supervisory Skills				
10. Written Communication Skills				
11. Oral Communication Skills				

12. Budgeting Skills

13. Team Functioning Skills

14. Problem Solving Ability

15. Professional Development Interest

16. Judgment - Anticipates Well

17. Ability to Handle Pressure

18. Interpersonal Skills

SAMPLE SCHOOL COUNCIL POLICY FORMAT

Selection of a Principal

Criteria

Once the superintendent has verified a vacancy, the council shall develop a set of criteria for selection of a principal and communicate in writing those criteria to the superintendent. The council shall obtain input from teachers, staff and parents into development of the criteria. If a minority applicant or applicants are submitted to the council by the superintendent, the council shall interview at least one qualified applicant who is a minority for the position of principal.

Role of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

If the principal's position is vacant, the vice chairperson shall chair all meetings or portions of meetings necessary during the council training and principal selection process.

Council Member Training

The school council vice chairperson should schedule training in recruitment and interviewing techniques prior to embarking upon the interview process for all council members.

Interview

The council shall review all written information and decide which applicants to interview for principal from those persons recommended by the superintendent. If the superintendent recommends no minority applicants, the school council shall request in writing additional applicants, at least one of which is a qualified minority applicant.

Plan & Tentative Timeline

The council shall develop a written plan and tentative timeline for selecting a principal and shall disseminate the plan to teachers and leaders of the parent organization. The plan shall include a description of selection criteria.

Selection

The council shall select a principal from among those persons or applicants recommended by the superintendent. The council may request additional applicants from the superintendent. In the event a person is selected to fill the vacancy, the council vice-chairperson will contact the applicant. The council shall report its choice of principal to the superintendent in writing within 24 hours of the decision.

Reporting

After the Superintendent has completed the hiring process, the chairperson will arrange for notification of faculty and parents.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PRINCIPAL

Problem Analysis

Ability to seek out relevant data and analyze complex information to determine the important elements of a problem.

Judgment

Skill in identifying educational needs and setting priorities; ability to reach logical conclusions and make high quality decisions based on available information; ability to critically evaluate written communications.

Organizational Ability

Ability to plan, schedule, and control the work of others; skill in using resources in an optimal fashion; ability to deal with a volume of paperwork and heavy demands on one's time.

Decisiveness

Ability to recognize when a decision is required and act quickly.

Leadership

Ability to recognize when a group requires direction, to get others involved in solving problems, to effectively interact with and guide a group.

Sensitivity

Ability to perceive the needs, concerns, and personal problems of students, teachers and parents from all backgrounds and ethnic groups; tact; skill in resolving conflicts; ability to deal effectively with people concerning emotional issues; knowing what information to communicate and to whom.

Range of Interest

Competence to discuss a variety of subjects - e.g. educational, political, economic; desire to actively participate in events.

Personal Motivation

Showing that work is important to personal satisfaction; ability to be self-policing.

Educational Values

Possession of well reasoned educational philosophy; receptiveness to change and new ideas.

Stress Tolerance

Ability to perform under pressure and in spite of opposition.

Oral Communication Skills

Ability to communicate clearly and effectively verbally.

Written Communication Skills

Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing.

TRAITS TO LOOK FOR IN A PRINCIPAL

Experience -- elementary, middle, high school

Supports school based decision-making and has positive attitude toward school based decisions

Strong disciplinarian

History of staying with job

Supports and works with staff

Open to ideas and input of staff and will listen to staff –flexible.

Interprets lesson plans as teacher tools not busy work

Good communicator, and will let staff know what is happening on a weekly agenda

Sense of humor

Flexibility

Deals with issues or problems instead of avoiding them

Loyal to staff and school -- will fight for them

Friendly to parents and community members

Able to communicate with students and parents from diverse backgrounds and ethnic groups.

Strong academician

Honest and straight forward

Allows flexibility within the school program

Develops and builds good public relations with community

Visionary -- looks to the future of education and supports implementation of more technology

Non-dictatorial

People person

Open-minded

Outside of district -- no leftover agenda with former district

Shows awareness of our particular community needs

Leader by example

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPAL INTERVIEWS

1) If you become principal of _____ School, what qualities would you bring to this position?

2) How do you view your role as the principal of a school-based decision making school?

3) What do you view as the role of technology in the school? How do you use technology?

4) What is your philosophy on student discipline in the regular classroom setting and in extracurricular activities such as athletics?

5) What will be your role towards getting to know the students, staff, and community and getting all of these different parent and student populations involved in the total school program?

6) How do you feel about parents, including minority parents, becoming actively involved in the school, and what roles could you see them filling for this school?

7) What methods or ways do you have to motivate the staff to work well together?

8) What are your guidelines and expectations as far as lesson plans and teacher evaluation?

9) What methods will you use to communicate with the staff?

10) What is the significance of athletics and academics in relationship to each other in the total program at school?

11) How do you view the special needs students, including gifted, in the regular program?

12) In what ways do you allow freedom in the classroom for teachers to teach according to their discretion, and how much freedom should be allowed?

13) What is your attitude towards assigning special duties and how is it determined who serves what duties?

14) Talk about the core content, Transformations, and the Program of Studies and their role in determining curriculum and instruction policy at the school.

15) How would you support the school's committee structure and organization to accomplish the school plan? What experience have you had with consolidated planning?

16) How do you think equity and diversity issues should be addressed in the school consolidated plan?

17) In past positions, have you been involved in the recruitment and hiring of minority teachers, instructional assistants, and other school personnel? Give details.

18) Do you have any other information you would like to share with us?

TENTATIVE TIMELINE FOR HIRING A PRINCIPAL

1) Formal resignation in writing by current principal
2) Required training for school council members
3) Survey of teachers and parents and establishment of criteria
4) Thirty-day advertisement in state publications (required by law).
5) Formulation of questions from teacher and parent input for interview
6) Submission of applications recommended by superintendent to council
7) Interviews may be conducted in closed session.
    a. Scheduled up to two weeks ahead due to some applicants employment
    b. Length of 45 minutes to one hour
    c. All applicants must be granted confidentiality since some are presently employed
    d. Allow time for council discussion in closed meeting before decision is made in open meeting
8) Offical council action
    a. Council meeting where an applicant is selected by council vote or consensus
    b. Council decision recorded in council minutes
    c. Candidate is informed of the council's decision and agrees to accept the position
    d. Letter to superintendent within 24 hours of council decision
    e. Superintendent completes the hiring process
9) Naming the new principal:
    a. Chair or vice chair of council should contact selected applicant and discuss announcement time
    b. Faculty should be informed as soon as possible after the applicant agrees to accept the position
    c. Press release from central office should follow faculty announcement

SAMPLE TEACHER OR PARENT SURVEY

Dear Teacher or Parent:

In the next few months the School-Based Decision Making Council will hire our next (ANYTOWN SCHOOL) principal. This is a critical decision for our school, and we need your input. On the attached page is a list of characteristics from our first faculty survey. Please place a checkmark beside the five characteristics you think are most important. If you wish to add a characteristic to the list, please write in your suggestions.

On the bottom of this page, please write no more than five questions you would ask if given a chance to interview potential candidates for principal.

Surveys must be returned to (SBDM Vice Chairperson) by (date). The results will be tabulated by the council and presented at the (date) meeting to which you are all invited.

Thank you for your assistance and interest in this important decision for our school.

Questions to be used in interviewing candidates for the position of principal:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.