

Eight Phases for a Successful Head of School Search

Phase 1. Assessment and Plan Development for Head Search

School leadership and consultant meet to discuss timelines, anticipated assets and hurdles, and desired outcomes for the search.

Phase 2. Establishment of Groups and Roles

The school designates members and a chair of the:

- Search Committee: the drivers and decision-makers for the process
- Advisory Committee, if appropriate: people representing important constituencies who will meet and judge candidates and communicate preferences to the Search Committee.

Phase 3. Strategic Planning and Assessment

Drawing on diverse information sources such as national and local trend data, questionnaires, if desired, and group sessions of participants in the process, materials are developed to describe the position, the school, and the agreed-upon desired characteristics in the new leader. After discussion, reflection, and review, the school uses these materials as the basis for “The Profile for Candidates” and various announcements and purposes.

Phase 4. Advertising and Outreach

Distribution of appropriate announcements and materials to key bulletins/listings (i.e., “The Blue Sheet”) **and** a network of diverse personal contacts in the local and regional area to assure that numerous, diverse potential candidates are notified of the search and nature of the opportunity.

Dr. Jung and his associates have developed a broad base of potential candidate and candidate sources, identified through select mailings and extensive personal contacts with educators and other appropriate educational leaders.

Phase 5. Development of Candidate Pool

Personal emails and calls are extended to potential candidates identified earlier and persons responding to advertisements are briefed regarding the timing, steps, materials to be submitted, and desired outcomes of the search.

Phase 6. Assessment of Candidate Pool

Each candidate’s materials are compiled and copied for independent review by members of the Search Committee who record their impressions on a summary form. Their discussions winnow the pool to a reasonable number (typically, approximately six) of semi-finalists who will visit the school if possible, or participate in conference or tele-conferencing for interactions with members of the Search and Advisory committees.

Following these interactions, members of both groups rate each candidate on a standardized form custom-designed to reflect qualities and characteristics defined in Phase 3.

Phase 7. On-site Interactions with Finalists and Families

These multi-day visits allow more members of various constituencies to “meet and greet” the finalists and offer the finalists further opportunities to ask questions, pursue special interests, and investigate opportunities for family members. Frequently successful searches involve visits to schools, possible employment sites for spouses, and real estate assistance.

Phase 8. Selection, Negotiations, Announcement, and Plans

The Search Committee communicates the results of its deliberations about the finalists; Board members review contractual provisions; and, the school prepares announcements and next steps. Dr. Jung has helped some Heads-elect prepare “First 100 Days” plan as part of the consulting package.