

Presentation Notes
Head Searches and Transitions
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Introduction

No right way to conduct a search
No formula
School is a greatest risk when a head leaves

School Assessment

What is your school culture?
How will school constituencies deal with change?
What are the current issues facing the school?
Why is the current head leaving?
How long and how successful is the current head's tenure?

Search Consultants

Schools may or may not need a traditional search consultant

Questions to ask and data to receive when making the decision:

- How much will the search cost, including all expenses?
- Has the consultant had training in issues of change?
- What other training or experience (other than headship!) has the consultant had in aspects of leadership change?
- Obtain a list of all searches conducted in the past three years
- Is the consultant knowledgeable about the community in which the school resides? (Marin/Oakland, Pasadena/West Los Angeles)
- Details of the search process

Alternatives to Traditional Search Consultants

Ready the school for the search and for change by:

- Engaging a consultant knowledgeable about change issues to work with board and other constituencies
- Conduct a strategic plan with a consultant to inform the board, candidates and constituencies about current needs and future directions for the school

Conduct the search using board and search committees augmented with sufficient administrative assistance

Consider non-traditional candidates

Internal Candidates: Is the Best New Head Already in Your School?

- In Fortune 1000 companies 2/3 of CEOs are promoted from within
 - The one-third that come from outside the company are twice as likely to be unsuccessful as those from inside
- Independent school culture holds that hiring a head from outside is better than promoting from within
- “Succession planning in our industry entails grooming a successor for someone else.” Pat Bassett
- Should the school conduct a search in the presence of a strong internal candidate?

Interim Heads

Schools may want to plan for an interim when:

- A long term successful head is leaving
- The school has experienced disruption, discord, strife
- Special expertise is needed

Or, when the search committee is divided or hasn't fallen in love

Common Pitfalls

1. Boards tend to hire someone whose skills compliment those of the former head.
2. Consultants and boards don't describe the community in which the school resides.
3. The board hires a new head to make certain changes, but is not visible and active in supporting those changes.
4. The board seeks a strong decision-maker but expects a consensus-builder.
5. When there are no strong candidates, the board “settles” so that the search can be concluded and a head installed.