

# The Wickenden Process

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## **Stage One: Defining the Opportunity**

- During a two-day visit to the school, we conduct an extensive series of interviews with members of all constituencies to collect information about the school's strengths, challenges, and leadership needs.
- Our web-based survey enables faculty, parents, students, trustees, and alumni/ae who are not on the interview schedule to share their thoughts with us as well. Our process at this stage is designed to be thorough and inclusive of the school family.
- During this initial visit, we also meet with the Search Committee to lay the groundwork for the search.
- Based on the results of our interviews, we draft an Opportunity Statement for review and approval by the Search Committee. We publish this recruitment document and disseminate it to prospective candidates and sources.

## **Stage Two: Building the Candidate Pool**

- Information about the position is posted on our website and in other appropriate publications and websites. If the Search Committee elects to advertise the position more broadly, we prepare and place those advertisements as well.
- In consultation with the Search Committee, we develop a targeted recruitment strategy, including mailings to appropriate affinity groups and/or advertisements in special-interest publications and websites.
- We mine our database of 10,000+ potential candidates to identify those whose interests and qualifications most closely match the school's requirements, and then actively recruit these individuals.
- We send the Opportunity Statement to all who express an interest in learning more about the position, then follow up with another round of telephone calls to encourage strong prospects to apply.
- Applicant folders – including résumés, cover letters, and supplementary materials – are assembled as they arrive. We conduct preliminary reference checks on candidates who are unfamiliar to us.

## **Stage Three: The Semifinalists**

- Once the application deadline has passed, we divide the applicants into groups based on our evaluation of their qualifications and our estimation of their suitability for the position. Search Committee members receive a folder review notebook that includes comprehensive materials on all recommended candidates as well as the list of applicants we are not recommending for consideration.

- Wickenden Associates joins the Search Committee for the Folder Review, during which the committee selects a group of semifinalists to be invited for interviews with the committee.
- We work with the school and the candidates to make semifinalist interview and travel arrangements.
- We attend the semifinalist interviews, which are generally held over a two- to three-day period. At the conclusion of those interviews, the Search Committee typically selects three or four finalists.

#### **Stage Four: The Finalists**

- Each finalist (and spouse, if applicable) is invited to the school for a two-day round of interviews with representatives of the various school constituencies. Those who meet with the finalists are requested to provide feedback to the Search Committee regarding their impressions of the finalists. Search Committee members and other members of the Board also have the opportunity to spend time with the candidates.
- Wickenden Associates continues the extensive reference-checking process, preparing written reports on our conversations with at least five sources for each finalist candidate, including sources not provided by the candidate. Search Committee members receive packets of reference reports as they are completed.
- Wickenden Associates also collects information from the finalist candidates about their current compensation packages in preparation for an eventual contract offer.

#### **Stage Five: The Decision**

- Armed with the results of the reference checks, feedback from the school community, and their own impressions, Search Committee members meet to select the candidate they wish to recommend to the Board of Trustees for appointment as the next Head of School.
- Once the successful candidate has indicated a willingness to accept an offer from the school, the Board of Trustees convenes to approve the hiring of the new Head.

#### **Stage Six: The Transition**

- We advise the Search Committee on steps the Board can take to help the new Head of School succeed.
- We advise the new appointee of steps he or she can take to get off to a good start.
- If requested, we return during the first year at no additional charge to assess the new Head's entry into the community.