

# **A Process for Hiring Principals**



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**DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT**  
**2015-2016**

## **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

It is the policy of the Diocese of Davenport to provide equal employment and educational opportunities and not to discriminate.

The educational system of the Diocese of Davenport is committed to equal opportunities to the extent required by law, and does not discriminate on the basis on age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status in educational programs or activities which it operates. As a religious institution, we affirm the right to consider creed a bona fide qualification in certain cases. The educational system policy is not to discriminate in educational programs and activities extends to the employment in, and admission to, such programs, activities, and services. It does not discriminate in the administration of its educational policies, employment policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school and parish administered programs.

Further, the Board affirms the right of all persons to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm and harassment, thereby meeting the requirements of Title VI and VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Code of Iowa.

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## INTRODUCTION

Standard six (6) of *The National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* states that an excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision. The principal's position is that of the "qualified leader" in the Diocese of Davenport Catholic Schools. Thus the recruitment and selection of a new principal is a very important function of any Board of Education/Faith Formation Committee when faced with this challenge.

Each of the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Davenport has an elected board of education/faith formation committee which includes the pastor, representative of the community, which has the responsibility to hire competent administrators. Therefore the Board of Education must approve any contract with a potential new hire as principal before it is official.

The hiring process will be guided and monitored by the Office of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Davenport with the Superintendent participating in each step of the hiring process for an administrator. The process itself is detailed in the Policies for Faith Formation and Education Programs in the Diocese of Davenport, policy 310.

The minimal requirement for school administrators in the Diocese is a Master's Degree in Administration or a Master's Degree with the additional graduate credits necessary for certification as principal by the Iowa State Department of Education.

This manual is to be used as a working instrument with parish and regional boards when there is a need to search for a new administrator.

## **PRIOR TO THE SEARCH**

When a local board of education has accepted an administrator's resignation, the administrator does not accept a new contract or the board plans not to offer the administrator a contract, the Board President shall contact the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools immediately so that the search process can begin.

As soon as possible, a meeting of the full board and the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools is scheduled to discuss the following:

1. What qualifications beyond the Master's Degree in elementary or secondary administration do we require (i.e. educational experience, etc.)?
2. The Diocese of Davenport would prefer that the individual hired for the position of principal be a practicing Catholic in full communion with the Church. Individual boards may opt to hire a non-Catholic if he/she proves to be a well-qualified candidate and the pastor gives his approval.
3. The Board of Education will develop a principal –profile outlining the qualities and skill set they seek in the new principal? The board may seek input from parents and staff members as to what type of leader they would like to see the board hire for in the next principal.
4. Does the present Diocesan job description for a principal accurately reflect our needs and expectations? If necessary, make changes with the approval of the board. (Pg. 25)
5. Do we have a good profile of our school and present programs?
6. What financial package are we prepared to offer (i.e. minimum salary, maximum salary, fringe benefits)? The entire board should decide the parameters of the financial package which will be offered to the candidates. The maximum should be known by the Search Committee. If there is a candidate who is asking for more than the maximum and the Search Committee sees the candidate as the one it believes to be potentially most effective, the Search Committee must return to the board for further direction on salary.
7. Will we offer a one-year contract or multi-year contract?
8. Will the board as a whole serve as the Search Committee or do we want to have a sub- committee of the board serve as the search committee?
9. The Board chairperson shall serve as chair of the Search Committee.
10. What is the projected timeline for the search process?
11. What are the costs involved in the search process?

## SEARCH COMMITTEE

### I. Composition

- A. Superintendent of Schools:  
Diocesan Board of Education Approved Policy 310 which states that the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools be involved in the hiring of new administrators from the initial stage of the process. (Pg. 31)
- B. Regional or Local Board of Education Members:  
Members of the regional or local board of education are to be involved with the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools at every stage of the process. The board may make a decision to have the board serve as a committee of the whole or they may decide to form a smaller search committee of the board.
- C. Pastor:  
In the case of parish boards of education, the pastor must be involved and approve the final candidate for hire. Where there are regional boards, at least one priest moderator shall serve on the search committee.
- D. Teachers:  
The board may choose to utilize input from staff members in the interview process. They may choose to select a staff member to serve on the actual search committee or they may select a committee of staff members to interview the candidate separately. The input from staff will identify strengths and areas of concern for each candidate. They are not to establish a first or second choice and will be reminded that the Board and Pastor have the final say in the selection.
- E. Parents:  
The board may choose to utilize the input from parents in the search process. They may select a parent to serve on the search committee or they may choose a committee of parents to conduct an interview session separately. The input from parents is designed to elicit strengths and potential concerns for each candidate. They must be reminded that the Board and Pastor will make the final selection.
- F. Parish Director of Religious Education:  
The board may wish to include the director of religious education on the search committee. The board should utilize the religious education coordinator representative as a source of information and insight regarding major strengths and weaknesses seen and their impressions concerning the candidate. This person has no vote on the final decision.
- G. Chairperson of Search Committee:  
The board president shall serve as chairperson of the Search committee.
- H. Secretary:  
One of the members of the search committee should serve as secretary with the responsibility for the clerical work involved.

I. Present Administrator:

The present administrator does not serve on the committee. This person will usually be asked to be available to the candidates who wish to visit the school, to discuss the program, and to give the candidates pertinent school materials to study.

II. **Responsibilities**

A. Review materials and forms to be used.

1. Diocesan professional application form (Pg. 9)
2. Diocesan job description for administrator (Pg. 25)
3. Questions to be used for the interview. A list of questions has been included in this manual. (Pg. 21) The Search Committee is encouraged to review these questions and add some if they see the need. The Superintendent of Schools or Board of Education should approve these questions and questions from the parent and staff groups if utilized. The committee will usually assign certain questions to each member in order to be certain that no important area is neglected during the interview.
4. Form letters  
Boards are encouraged to use the sample form letters provided in this manual:
  - a. Letter sent to prospective candidate with the following enclosures: the professional application form, and job description
  - b. Letter to be sent to those who have been interviewed to indicate that the interviews have been completed and a decision reached. (Pg. 30)

B. Advertise.

A sample advertisement are included in this manual. (Pg. 8) The search committee should approve the composition of the advertisement as well as its circulation. The school will pay the costs of advertisement.

C. Person to Receive Applications.

Applications and all materials must be sent to the Board Chair at the school's official address for school positions and to the Pastor at the parish official address for parish positons.

D. Maintain Files of Applicant.

Individual file folders are made for each potential candidate; as his/her materials arrive, they are be inserted in the file.

## **TIME-LINE**

The entire Board/Faith Formation Committee should develop a projected time-line for the search process. The following questions will help determine the time-line:

1. When will the position be advertised?
2. Who will be involved in developing a profile of the principal needed for our school?
2. How much time will be provided for applicants to respond? (A minimum of three weeks is recommended.)
3. When will the search committee come together to review all applications?
4. When will interviews be scheduled?
5. When will a decision be made?

## **THE APPLICATION**

An application is completed only when the following materials have been uploaded electronically to Teach Iowa or sent to the BOE President at the school address. They should include:

1. Diocesan Professional Application Form (Pg. 9)
2. Official transcript of grades/credits
3. Copy of Iowa certification (if available)
4. Three recent letters of recommendation.

## **ADVERTISEMENT**

### **SAMPLE**

**Principal** St. Stephen the Witness Catholic School in Davenport, Iowa, Grades K-8 with an enrollment of 546 students is seeking a principal. Excellent opportunity with strong support from pastor, parents, staff, and parish. Deadline for applications is \_\_\_\_\_.

M. A. and Iowa Certification required. Contact (Board President or Chairperson of Search Committee) (address of the school). Equal Opportunity Employer.



## Application for Principal

**Instructions:** Complete all four pages of application. Attach an original copy of official transcripts and licenses documenting qualifications shown in Item II. Upon completion please send to the Search Committee or BOE President at the school address you are applying too.

Date of Application: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

## PERSONAL

Name \_\_\_\_\_

(Last) (First) (Middle)

Permanent Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Number & Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Mailing Address (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

**Employment:**

Are you presently under contract? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, can you secure a release? \_\_\_\_\_

Earliest possible start date? \_\_\_\_\_

## EDUCATION

*Institutions Attended Including High School*

Dates of Attendance	Name of Institution	Location (City/State)	Major Area of Concentration	Degree Received

## *Iowa Certificate*

Folder #	Class	Expiration Date
Approvals	Endorsement	

### Other Professional Certificates/Licenses Issued to You

State/Folder #	Subject or Area of Responsibility

**Professional Memberships:**

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**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE****Teaching Experience**

Dates	School/Parish/City	Role	Responsibilities

**Administrative Experience** (Principal, Diocesan Office, DRE etc.)

Dates	School/City/Diocese	Role

**Present Personal Professional Growth**

List professional growth experiences during last 2 years (seminars, courses, professional reading, etc.)

Dates	Title

**Work Experience** (Any position held in fields other than education)

Dates	Position	Comments

**Community Activities and Leisure Interests:**

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**REFERENCES** (Give recent *professional* references. At least one must be an immediate supervisor.)

	Name	Address	Telephone	Role
1.				
2.				
3.				

Local Boards of Education may choose to have candidates respond to these or other narrative questions if they choose.

**Regarding your philosophy of education:** All those involved in a Catholic education must earnestly desire to make the parish a community of faith, which is, indeed, “living, conscious and active”. The faculty is the crucial group if the school is to function as a unit. By answering the questions below, you will demonstrate your ability and willingness to meet the school’s goals and objectives.

1. Why are you interested in administration of or teaching in a Catholic school program?
2. What are the unique attributes of Catholic education-how would a visitor know they had entered a Catholic school?
3. How would you communicate with staff, students, and parents in a Catholic school?
4. What do you consider as your greatest asset as administrator?
5. What role does technology play in instruction in a Catholic school setting classroom?
6. Where would you look for information about the Catholic faith or who would you consult if questions about the Catholic Faith arise to which you do not know the correct answer?
7. What evidence would you look for in the school or individual classrooms to assure that students are learning?
8. How would you describe or management/leadership style as it regards decision-making, problem-solving, and staff involvement?

I certify that answers given in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I authorize investigation into all statements I have made on this application as may be necessary for reaching an employment decision. In the event I am employed, I understand that any false or misleading information I knowingly provided in my application or interview(s) may result in discharge and/or legal action. I understand also that if employed, I am required to abide by all rules and regulations of the employer and any special agreements reached between the employer and me.

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Signature of Applicant

Applicants may upload this application to Teach Iowa or mail directly to the Search Committee or BOE President at the school address you are applying.

## SAMPLE LETTER ACKNOWLEDGING RECEIPT OF APPLICATION

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for contacting us regarding the principal's position at \_\_\_\_\_ School.

A job description and application form is enclosed which must be completed and returned to me along with your transcripts of credits, three recent letters of recommendation, and a copy of your Iowa certificate (if you currently have one).

We hope to make a decision by \_\_\_\_\_ about possible interviews. Applicants will be considered for interview only if all items listed above are received prior to the date.

Please feel free to call me at \_\_\_\_\_ if you have any questions.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Very sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Search Committee or Board of Education President

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosures

## **PRINCIPAL PROFILE**

Developed by the board based on Input From, Staff, parents, and Individual members of the Board of Education.

- A. What do you consider the strongest aspects of this school?
- B. What areas (Catholic identity, managerial, curricular, environment, etc.) need the most attention?
- C. What type of personality would best serve the needs of this school? Why?
- D. What expertise should the principal have in the area of religious education?
- E. What expectations do you have of a principal as a spiritual leader?
- F. Is there any specific area of expertise or experience need in the area of curriculum? (Assessment, special needs programs, bilingual programs?)
- G. What style of leadership do you think works best in this school and why?
- H. Is there someone you would like to recommend for the position?
- I. Additional comments concerning the skill set needed for the position of principal in this school?

## **INPUT TO THE SEARCH COMMITTEE**

Keeping in mind the role of the Principal in a Catholic school; please list below in priority order; the strengths you feel are necessary and most desirable in a person who will become the principal at our school:

This form can be adapted for use with faculty, parents, and stake holders input claims.

1.

2.

3.

4.

## **SCREENING AND REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS**

### **I. Review of Applications and Credentials:**

The entire Search Committee and the Superintendent of Schools must meet to review the applications and credentials and to determine any additional information which is needed. A criminal background check will be performed for the candidate selected for the position. Each member of the Search Committee shall take time at this meeting to review all of the materials for each applicant. The form for screening applications (Pg. 14) will be helpful in the meeting. The committee must decide who will pursue necessary additional information and what procedure should be used to gain it (i.e., telephone call to present employer, etc.).

### **II. Letters of Recommendation:**

Letters of recommendation should be read carefully. Persons who wrote the letters should be called if:

- A. there are any questions or any need for clarification or elaboration,
- B. there is no letter of recommendation from the present employer; or
- C. the committee perceives the need to gain additional information to supplement an apparently good recommendation.

### **III. Selection of Candidates for Interview:**

A decision is made by the Search Committee in regard to those candidates to be interviewed, as well as the time and location of such interviews. Review (Pg. 14) for observance guidelines and Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ).

### **IV. Number of Candidates to be Interviewed:**

There is no magic number regarding the number of candidates to be interviewed. This decision obviously depends on the quality of the applicants.

## **SCREENING APPLICATIONS**

### **Things for the Search Committee to Consider**

Has the applicant:

- Had any experience in a Catholic school setting?
- Had any gaps in the applicants work history which are not well explained.
- Been employed in several short term positions with no explanation as to why he/she left the position?
- Had inconsistencies in the application?
- Provided reference letters fairly recent and written by someone who had close contact with the candidate in a similar work situation?
- In reading the letter of reference are there any phrases that suggest or signal that you should get more information?
- References speak to specific job qualifications or just peripheral talents and abilities?
- Provided an application with professional material in presentation and are narrative well thought out?

## SCREENING APPLICATIONS

**As you review applicant materials ask yourself some of these questions as you decide who to interview.**

Candidate Name\_\_\_\_\_

1. Are there any gaps in the applicant's work history which are not explained?
2. Has the applicant been employed in several short term positions with no explanation of why he/she left the position?
3. Are the candidate's college grades average or better?
4. Are there inconsistencies in the application?
5. Are the reference letters fairly recent and written by someone who had close contact with the candidate in a similar work situation?
6. Is the reference written for a closed or open file? (Most are open)
7. If the reference is written for an open file, are there any phrases, which suggest that the source is, signaling you to get more information?
8. Does the reference speak to the important qualifications for this job or just too peripheral talents and abilities?
9. What is lacking in the reference --- What is not commented upon?
10. Do the reference letters describe specific abilities and precise job success indicators or are they general and non-specific?

## THE INTERVIEW LOGISTICS

**I. Location:**

Usually interviews will be in an area in the school or a location with easy access to the school. The room should be comfortable but arranged for a formal interview to be conducted around a table.

**II. Number:**

It is recommended that candidates be interviewed on the same day or on two consecutive days. This will provide the Search Committee with a better picture of how each candidate is perceived in relation to the others, as well as how well the individuals will meet the expectations of the position. Depending on the schedule of the Search Committee it is possible to plan four interviews in one day.

**III. Length:**

The interview will usually last approximately one hour. It is recommended that the Search Committee devote about forty-five minutes to questions and allow the candidate about fifteen minutes to ask questions of them.

**IV. Interview Tips/Pitfalls:**

A list of interview tips is included in this manual (Pg. 17-20) to be used as a checklist for those involved in the interview process.

**V. Spouse:**

It would be wise to invite spouses of the candidates from outside the community to accompany them. Support of family is very important as an educator considers a new position. However, the spouse is not included in the formal interview.



## **LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL INTERVIEW INQUIRES**

### **Lawful**

- Asking the applicants if they have ever worked under another name.
- Asking the applicant for his/her religious affiliation, name of church, or religious holidays observed
- Asking the applicants if they are citizens of the U.S. their citizenship
- Asking the applicants if they have ever been arrested for any crimes and to indicate when and where
- Asking the applicants to indicate what foreign languages they can read, write, or speak fluently
- Asking the applicants about their past work experience.
- Asking the applicant is there any belief or reason why they could not work in a position that required them to publicly support the decisions of the office of the bishop?

### **Unlawful**

- Asking the applicants to name their birthplace.
- Asking for the birthplace of the applicant's parents, spouse, or other close relative.
- Asking the applicants to submit proof of age by supplying birth certificate or baptismal record.
- Asking the applicants if they are naturalized citizens.
- Asking the applicants how they acquired their ability to read, write, or speak a foreign language.
- Requesting the applicant to provide names of three relatives other than one's father, husband or wife, or minor-age dependent children.
- Asking the applicant for wife's maiden name.
- Asking for the maiden name of the applicant's mother.
- Asking for full names of the applicant's brothers/sisters.
- Asking the applicant for a list of all clubs, societies, and lodges to which s/he belongs
- Asking the applicant to include a photograph with the application for employment.
- Asking the applicant to supply addresses of relatives (cousins, uncles, aunts, nephew, and grandparents) who can be contacted for reference.
- Asking about marital status, ages of children, and spouses occupation.

## **THE INTERVIEW PROCESS**

### **Prior to the Interview**

The interview is probably the single most important phase of the principal selection process and is generally the decisive step. The candidates to be interviewed have been chosen on the basis of information from his/her application materials. The interview will supplement the written materials and give the committees a chance to better know the candidate personally and envision whether or not this person is the right fit to be the leader of this school. Before you begin an interview, you must decide what you are looking for in each candidate. These characteristics must be firmly fixed in your mind before the interview begins.

Be looking for Faith and vision, initiative and perseverance, reliability, stability, willingness to work hard, willingness to absorb pressure, and tolerance for discouragement.

### **Opening the Interview**

The first few moments of the interview should be devoted to establishing a warm, friendly risk free environment where the applicant feels comfortable to openly share their thoughts and ideas. Remember even if you do not plan to hire the individual, you want them leaving the interview feeling they were given a fair shot and a good candidate must have received the final offer.

- Plan your interview ahead of time. Base questions on established criteria.
- Ask all candidates the same questions.
- You may ask a follow-up question to clarify a previous response.
- If you want specific information and it is legal, ask them.

### **How do We Ask Questions**

- Never argue with the applicant or badger them in any way.
- Determine who asks what questions.
- Don't ask similar questions too close together. Mix up questions so the interviewee can come at the same issue with different angles.
- Ask your questions then listen. If you talk more than 10 percent of the time, you are probably talking more than is necessary.
- As you listen, be accepting, responsive (non-verbal), and non-judgmental.
- Do not interpret the terms in your questions to the interviewee. It's their interpretation that is important.
- Do not probe or cross-examine. If you have developed good job specific, straightforward, thought provoking, open-ended questions, they will reveal the interviewee's thoughts and feelings.

### **How do I Listen?**

- With both ears intently.
- Know what you are listening for.

### **Summary**

- In evaluating the applicant's replies, try to be objective and unbiased. If you have a personal prejudice, don't allow that feeling alone to be the cause or reason for rejecting an applicant.
- After the interview is completed, immediately record your impressions. Avoid hiring on the first interview if the committee feels the need to clarify issues or further interact with the applicant.
- Never hire without checking and verifying the references. In most cases, the best source of information is the prior employer. The least revealing sources are personal friends.

**Stay on schedule!**

## INTERVIEW PITFALLS

1. **ALLOWING INTERRUPTIONS:** If at all possible, avoid interruptions. Failure to do so will generally tell the candidate that he or she is not as important as the interruption that interfered with the interview.
2. **NOT TREATING INTERVIEWEES AS INDIVIDUALS:** A natural tendency when interviewing a number of candidates for a given job is to begin treating everyone as if they were the same. No two people have ever been found to be alike. Each is distinctly unique in many ways.
3. **NOT PROVIDING A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION:** Someone once said: "No one has ever found a successful way of getting a second chance at making a good first impression." Your promptness will indicate the importance of being on time to your candidates. Your being late will indicate that things are hectic, or that being late for work might be all right too. Try to provide a neat, quiet, and orderly environment for the interview. Be friendly and warm. Provide a good first impression of your parish to each candidate you interview.
4. **NOT LISTENING PROPERLY:** Avoid the temptation to frequently introduce your own thoughts during the interview. The applicant is not there to hear about your experiences. Remember, you have a limited period of time to learn as much as you can about each candidate, and you won't get as much information if you are doing all of the talking.
5. **USING NON-JOB-RELATED QUESTIONS:** Not only can asking these questions be unlawful, but it wastes time and won't provide you with much in the way of useful, selection/decision information.
6. **ARGUING:** An effective employment interview is not a contest. It is an important job. The interviewer who allows his own pride to get in the way of getting the relevant information will have to unlearn the trait.
7. **MAKING PROMISES YOU CAN'T KEEP:** If you know what the exact salary will be, or what benefits your parish will offer, you might want to discuss these. But never make a promise you or your parish can't keep. Also, it is generally a good idea never to make a job offer during or at the end of the first interview with any candidate. Give yourself some time to think it over; to study what you've learned. A hurried job offer can backfire on you quickly.
8. **LACK OF PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:** A closed door, a private or quiet environment, your own sensitivity will all go a long way to assuring the candidate that you will treat information he or she is sharing with you confidentially.
9. **INSUFFICIENT TIME FOR EACH INTERVIEW:** Don't try to squeeze too many interviews into a limited period of time. The time you allot should be governed primarily by the complexity of the job. An hour and a half is considered about right for an average job of average complexity.
10. **USING DIRECT QUESTIONS ON CANDIDATE'S ATTITUDE:** Using the phrase "your attitude" can be potentially negative or caustic. Use substitute terms like "What is your philosophy about..." or "Describe some of your specific behaviors that..." (making certain that these are always job-related questions), rather than asking, "What is your attitude about..." The candidate will feel more fairly treated if you do this.
11. **TAKING NOTES:** Some find it helpful to take brief notes during an interview. It is of value in re-constructing information after the interview. But avoid the temptation to appear as if you are taking exceptionally careful notes when a candidate is discussing something sensitive or personal. Doing so can discourage the candidate from opening up during the remainder of the interview.
12. **LIMITING YOURSELF ONLY TO QUESTIONS:** Use comments too. A well-placed comment can "echo" or appear to provide support for something an applicant has just said – thus encouraging him or her to further amplify on that or other issues in the interview. Using only questions to get needed information will give the candidates the impression they are under "interrogation."
13. **IMPROPER LANGUAGE LEVEL:** This is a judgmental area, at best. But in general, try to pitch your language, your questions, your comments at the level of the candidate, and the appropriate level of the job being filled. Don't speak down; don't speak up. Be natural.

14. THE HALO AFFECT: The halo affect causes us to feel generally good or generally bad about a candidate, usually because of one thing we've observed early in the interview. It can be damaging if we don't give the candidate a chance to change that impression. Strive to keep from making judgments too quickly – especially in areas where we generally have strong, personal biases – such as with a person's appearance.
15. IMPATIENCE: Sometimes a candidate won't go in the direction you want immediately. Be patient. Through proper use of open-ended questions, silence and listening on your part, the interviewee will come around. Your impatience will inevitably lead to the applicant's anxiety and tenseness – as well as your own failure to get the relevant information.

**DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT  
OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

**SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE ADMINISTRATORS**

**The interview should last about an hour. Select 20 or so questions that will elicit or clear picture of the individual applicant against the job description and the type individual or skill set you desire for your school. You may choose questions from the Question Bank.**

1. Share with us briefly about your current position (type and size of school personnel programs, parish involvement).
2. Tell us about your experience in working with a board of education?
3. Please share how you have been involved in your parish community?
4. How do you provide for your own spiritual growth?
5. What are the unique attributes of Catholic education?
6. How would you provide leadership for the building of a faith community within our school?
7. Give an example of how you would implement a change or utilize the change process in your school.
8. How would you respond to an instance of conflict (i.e. teacher - teacher, parent - teacher, parent administrator)?
9. What are the components of an effective public relations program?
10. What steps would you take to build and maintain relationships between the school and a. civic community; b. parish community, c. parents?
11. Describe your experience in the supervision and evaluation of faculty.
12. How would you plan and implement a staff development process?
13. What is your philosophy of student discipline? What is the principal's role in this regard?
14. Describe your experience in the formation and monitoring of a budget.
15. What role does technology play in a Catholic school today?
16. In what ways do you provide for your own professional growth?
17. What are your areas of professional strength?
18. In what professional areas do you especially need to grow?
19. Reflect on principals you have known and what it is you admire most in them.
20. What is the unique contribution you can make to Catholic schools education?
21. What are your long - term professional goals?
22. Do you have any questions about the job description or this position specifically? Or here are some other sample last questions:
  - Is there anything else that would help us to know you better and contribute to our decision?
  - Is there anything else about us or our school that you would like to know that might prevent you from considering an offer for this position?
  - As you know, this is a significant leadership position in the Diocese of Davenport. Given the public nature of this position, is there anything the Bishop and the superintendent need to know about you personally or professionally that. If known, would compromise your ability to successfully serve in this position?

### **Sample Situational Questions**

1. Situation: We have a number of special needs students in our school ( both below grade level and gifted students) and funds are not available to set up special education classrooms and gifted classrooms in the building. How will you assure these students' needs are met?
2. Situation: In your school, you find that Science scores are not meeting expectations. You find some teachers are not teaching comprehensions skills at their grade level and others are using supplementary books that do not provide sequential order between grade levels. Where would you begin to rectify this situation?
3. Situation: Some parents call you saying their child does not get enough homework. Other parents are calling you complaining of too much homework. How would you address the faculty on this matter?
4. Situation: At some point in your tenure, a teacher is reported by parents to be teaching unorthodox religious doctrine not in conformity with the Catholic Church teachings. How would you proceed?
5. Situation: As you begin your first year, the Pastor tells you that he thinks the school is weak in fostering its Catholic identity. He wants you to make this one of your priorities this year. What will you do?
6. Situation: You are receiving pressure from several parents who want you to terminate a teacher. You have observed the teacher in the classroom and as the teacher supervised the children, and in your judgment the teacher is generally competent. The person is in their sixties, is careless about personal appearance and lacks professional zeal and enthusiasm is waning. How would you proceed?
7. Situation: the Board of Education approves a change in school uniforms and several parents object to the change. What would you do?

## CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT FORM

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Based on your review of the application material and personal contact (interview) with the candidate, place a mark on the continuum for each item, marks that will reflect your assessment of the candidate's qualifications for this position. This is an individual assessment – thus, it is suggested the forms not be completed cooperatively. Please return the form to the search committee chairperson as soon as possible after completion. Although your signature is not required, such would facilitate follow-up when necessary. Thank you.

- |     |                          |                          |   |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 1.  | Leadership Qualities     | <u>1</u> _____ <u>10</u> | Be particularly concerned with candidate's perception of team management.   |
| 2.  | Public Relations Skills  | <u>1</u> _____ <u>10</u> | Relationships within a community, with Board, school staff, and faculty. Participation in community organizations and activities.   |
| 3.  | Professional Involvement | <u>1</u> _____ <u>10</u> | Membership and participation in professional organizations, leadership positions held, regency of professional education/in-service.  |
| 4.  | Communication Skills     | <u>1</u> _____ <u>10</u> | For most you will have to rely on oral skills, but you may want to review application material for minor evidence of writing skills.  |
| 5.  | Personal Appearance      | <u>1</u> _____ <u>10</u> | In addition to the obvious, observe how the candidate conducts him/herself during the interview – eye contact, at ease, confidence, etc.  |
| 6.  | Professional Experience  | <u>1</u> _____ <u>10</u> | The quantity is a given – be alert to unique experiences that may have specific applicability to your school. Also, be alert to potential or promise, even though some experience may be absent.  |
| 7.  | Fiscal Responsibility    | <u>1</u> _____ <u>10</u> | Unless you have unusual problems/concerns in this area, it is usually safe to assume competence with your candidates.   |
| 8.  | Curriculum               | <u>1</u> _____ <u>10</u> | Each candidate will be stronger in one aspect of the curriculum than others – try to determine their attitude toward and understanding of total process.  |
| 9.  | Religious Leadership     | <u>1</u> _____ <u>10</u> | Refer to evidence of experience within Catholic school setting as well as personal involvement as a member of a parish, etc. Awareness of current developments within the Church. Demonstrates a knowledge and appreciation of Catholic faith life. |
| 10. | General Impression       | <u>1</u> _____ <u>10</u> | Don't be afraid to express some "gut level" reactions – they can be quite reliable.   |

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **POST-INTERVIEW PROCESS**

### **I. After Each Interview:**

Allow time for the Search Committee members to list the apparent strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.

- A. The Candidate Assessment Form (Pg. 23) should be completed by each member of the Search Committee after each interview. It will be used to assist in determining the most suitable candidate only after the field has been narrowed to two or three finalists.

### **II. After All Interviews:**

- A. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate as perceived by the members of the Search Committee.
- B. Each member of the Search Committee should then indicate their choice of candidate for the position and the reasons supporting that choice.
- C. If there is no consensus within the Search Committee in regard to the choice of candidate to fill the position, the Search Committee may:
  1. Decide to schedule a follow-up interview with one or more candidates; or
  2. Decide to advertise the position again and begin the search process again.

## **THE CONTRACT**

### **I. Process**

- A. The Search Committee makes its recommendation of the candidate to the entire Board of Education.
- B. The Board of Education votes on the recommendation of the Search Committee.
- C. The candidate is called immediately regarding the decision of the Board of Education.

### **II. Contract Form:**

- A. The Diocesan Contract form is to be used (Pg. 27)
- B. Three copies of the contract should be prepared immediately and forwarded to the candidate.
- C. The candidate should be given a maximum of one week (preferably shorter) to sign the contract and return all three copies to the Board of Education. You do not want to lose other good candidates which has great potential if the candidate selected takes too much time deciding to accept or reject the board's offer.
- D. Designated representatives of the Board of Education sign the contracts after the contracts are returned by the candidate. One copy is sent to the new administrator; one is, sent to the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools; one is maintained on file by the Board of Education.



## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

The following job description is a result of a process involving all of the principals of the Diocese, teachers and local board members. While the principal accepts responsibility for each of these tasks, others also have a role in accomplishing them. Pastors, teachers, local boards, central office staff, parish director of religious education, non-certified staff and secretaries all share with the principal the responsibility for the accomplishment of many of the tasks listed below. When boards and principals discuss the job description, it would be well to identify the role of the principal in each task

### **JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE PRINCIPAL**

The principal is the chief administrator and spiritual leader of the school. Supervision of instruction, spiritual leadership, curriculum development, and professional development for the staff through in-service programs are key responsibilities of the principal. The principal also maintains good public relations with the pastor, the parish community, the Board of Education, the parents, the neighboring public schools and the community at large.

The Catholic school principal administers the policies of the Iowa Department of Education, and the Policies for Faith Formation and Education Programs in the Diocese of Davenport.

#### **I. Principal as Spiritual Leader**

- a. Develops and implements a statement of school philosophy and mission which are consistent with the Vision Statement for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Davenport.
- b. Nurtures the Faith development of faculty and staff by providing opportunities for spiritual growth.
- c. Ensures the quality of Catholic religious education and provides for the certification of catechists.
- d. Provides opportunities for liturgical celebrations.
- e. Supports and fosters Christian service activities among students.
- f. Fosters collaboration between the parish (es) and the school.
- g. Creates a school climate conducive to growth in moral and spiritual values.
- h. Organizes effective ways of facilitating the role of parents and families as primary educators.
- i. Works toward the creation of a Christian community within the school.
- j. Integrates Gospel values and Christian ethics into the curriculum, policies, and life of the school.
- k. Provides leadership for achieving the goals of Catholic education and demonstrates the knowledge of the history and purpose of Catholic education in the United States.
- l. Practices in the principles of justice in all decision-making.

#### **II. Human Relations Leader**

- a. Recruits, interviews, selects, assigns and organizes staff in a way that assures the greatest potential for accomplishing the school's mission.
- b. Maintain open channels for two-way communication with all members of the school community; establishes and makes know the procedures for hearing complaints and resolving conflicts.
- c. Develops and facilitates the use of all appropriate means of communication including employee handbook, parent-student handbook, regularly scheduled bulletins or newsletters, and parent conferences.
- d. Provides for an orderly school environment and promotes student self-discipline.
- e. Provides for development in the broadest sense, including an effective public relations program and a school marketing programs.
- f. Creates an open and honest climate conducive to personal and social growth of staff and students.

### **III. Principal as Instructional and Curriculum Leader**

- a. Provides leadership in curriculum development, especially for the integration of Christian values.
- b. Supervises instruction effectively, visits classrooms regularly, and requires systematic, well-developed lesson plans.
- c. Engages staff in the study and use of effective teaching practices.
- d. Provides support strategies such as mentors, research and support teams.
- e. Encourages staff to create professional networks both within and outside the school.
- f. Plans for effective integration of technology into the curriculum.
- g. Assists teachers in professional growth through staff development opportunities, faculty meetings, classroom observations and conferences.
- h. Assists the faculty in implementing effective procedures for assessing student learning and in appropriately using standardized test results.
- i. Plans, directs and actively supports the extracurricular program to meet students' needs.
- j. Plans for the continuous improvement of instruction in the school.

### **IV. Principal as a Managerial Leader**

- a. Demonstrates competency in general administration of the school.
- b. Participates in development and implementation of annual budget.
- c. Provides leadership for local board of education.
- d. Plans, conducts, and reports fire and safety drills in accordance with adopted policies and local codes.
- e. Enforces immunization and other health requirements and see that health records and emergency information cards are maintained and kept up-to date.
- f. Ensures that the physical plant is adequate, safe, clean, and conducive to learning.
- g. Seeks financial support and resources beyond the school and parish.
- h. Approves and supervises all fund-raising initiatives.
- i. Keeps abreast of developments in education law.
- j. Develops plans to apply technology to management activities.
- k. Maintains a continuous program of supervision and evaluation of the faculty and staff.
- l. Works collaboratively with the local board of education in decision making, development of the budget and long range planning.
- m. Provides for effective management of the school office including submitting reports in an accurate and timely manner, keeping records up to date, publishing the calendar and providing for office and phone coverage.

### **V. Principal Accountability to the Pastor**

- a. Works with the pastor on matters pertaining to religious education, religious policies, Catholic Identity of the school, liturgical celebrations and parent education programs.
- b. Fosters understanding of the school as a ministry of the parish.
- c. Represents the school or the parish on committees and parish events as requested by the pastor.
- d. Maintains a collaborative relationship between the school and all other ministries of the parish.
- e. Gives consideration to programs recommended by the pastor.
- f. Keep the pastor informed of important matters concerning the school, the faculty, staff and students.

### **VI. Principal Accountability to the Office of Catholic Schools**

- a. Implements Diocesan policies.
- b. Attends and participates in diocesan-sponsored meetings and professional development programs.
- c. Keeps the superintendent informed of changes in the school program.
- d. Communicates to the superintendent in a timely manner any extraordinary events (i.e. legal issues, media inquiries etc.).
- e. Cooperates with governmental programs.
- f. Maintains appropriate records and submits required reports in a timely manner.

**Probationary Principal Contract**

This agreement is entered into between \_\_\_\_\_ (hereafter designated as the employer) and \_\_\_\_\_ (hereafter designated as the employee).

**IT IS HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:**

1. **RESPONSIBILITY.** The employee represents that the employee is qualified to fulfill the professional services required in this contract, and that a copy of certificates, qualifications, transcripts, or other required documents are on file in employer's administrative offices.
2. **TERM.** The term of this contract shall begin on \_\_\_\_\_ and terminate on \_\_\_\_\_ and includes \_\_\_\_\_ days of service. Specifically, the agreement is for services rendered from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ with payments from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. **DUTIES.** The employee promises to support and model the Catholic mission and philosophy of the school, the policies and regulations of said employer and the Board of Education of the Diocese of Davenport, and will faithfully perform the duties of \_\_\_\_\_ as stated in the job description. Employee will observe the policies, regulations and directives of the Diocese, the local Board of Education, the State Department of Education (with the understanding that when applicable the Faith Formation Guidelines is overriding), and abide by the policies and procedures specified in the Diocesan and local school/parish **handbooks**.
4. **COMPENSATION.** The employer shall pay the employee a salary of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ a year, payable in equal (semi-monthly, monthly) installments, less the deductions which are either required by law or authorized under the terms of this contract. Compensation for less than a full year of service will be based on the percentage of days served less any allowed deductions. Unauthorized or leave exceeding that allowed by contract and benefits attachment shall be without pay and may affect job performance reviews.
5. **BENEFITS.** The following benefits shall be provided by the employer: (If using an attachment note that here e.g. see Attachment 1).
6. **DISCHARGE.** The employer shall have the right to discharge, or temporarily suspend the employee during the term of this contract for reason, which may include, but not limited to:
  - a. inefficiency or incompetence;
  - b. insubordination;
  - c. disability, as shown by medical evidence resulting in an inability to teach effectively;
  - d. immoral conduct as identified in Policies for Faith Formation and Education Programs series 365.
7. **BREACH OF CONTRACT.** If principal terminates this agreement prior to the expiration date, the teacher maybe required to pay an amount not to exceed \_\_\_\_\_ for associated costs. Principal recognizes the disruptive effect of this breach and will make every effort to continue administrative duties until a suitable replacement is obtained.

**8. AGREEMENT.** This contract is the entire agreement between the employer and the employee and extends for only this term. Issues and timelines related to future contracts are governed by Policies for Faith Formation and Education Programs. This contract supersedes all prior written or oral agreements; there are no agreements outside of the contract other than those as specifically set forth herein; and this contract may not be amended, changed, modified or altered without the written consent of both the employer and the employee.

This contract must be signed and returned by \_\_\_\_\_.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the parties hereto have affixed their signatures on the date set forth opposite their signatures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Official title of corporation (parish/school institution)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Pastor or Canonical Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Board of Education President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Superintendent of Schools

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Policy Adopted: March 15, 1989  
Policy Revised: June 5, 2002  
Policy Reviewed: May 17, 2010  
Policy Revised: December 2015

**Principal Contract**

This agreement is entered into between \_\_\_\_\_ (hereafter designated as the employer) and \_\_\_\_\_ (hereafter designated as the employee).

**IT IS HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:**

1. **RESPONSIBILITY.** The employee represents that the employee is qualified to fulfill the professional services required in this contract, and that a copy of certificates, qualifications, transcripts, or other required documents are on file in employer's administrative offices.
2. **TERM.** The term of this contract shall begin on \_\_\_\_\_ and terminate on \_\_\_\_\_ and includes \_\_\_\_\_ days of service. Specifically, the agreement is for services rendered from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ with payments from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. **DUTIES.** The employee promises to support and model the Catholic mission and philosophy of the school, the policies and regulations of said employer and the Board of Education of the Diocese of Davenport, and will faithfully perform the duties of \_\_\_\_\_ as stated in the job description. Employee will observe the policies, regulations and directives of the Diocese, the local Board of Education, the State Department of Education (with the understanding that when applicable the Diocesan Handbook is overriding), and abide by the policies and procedures specified in the Diocesan and local school/parish handbooks.
4. **COMPENSATION.** The employer shall pay the employee a salary of \$\_\_\_\_\_ a year, payable in equal (semi-monthly, monthly) installments, less the deductions which are either required by law or authorized under the terms of this contract. Compensation for less than a full year of service will be based on the percentage of days served less any allowed deductions.
5. **BENEFITS.** The following benefits shall be provided by the employer: (If using an attachment note that here (e.g. see Attachment A).
6. **DISCHARGE FOR CAUSE.** The employer shall have the right to discharge, or temporarily suspend the employee during the term of this contract, for just cause as defined and provided for in the Diocesan Educators' Handbook and Local Handbook or policies of the employer. In the absence of such definition, "just cause" shall mean violations of the terms and conditions of this employment contract (which would include Diocesan and Local Handbooks and policies), or performance, conduct or behavior on the part of the employee which, in the opinion of the employer, adversely affects the desirability of continued employment in a Catholic School. The employee shall be entitled to earn salary to the termination date on a per diem basis.
7. **BREACH OF CONTRACT.** If teacher terminates this agreement prior to the expiration date, the teacher maybe required to pay an amount not to exceed \_\_\_\_\_ for associated costs. Teacher recognizes the disruptive effect of this breach and will make every effort to continue teaching until a suitable replacement is obtained.

**8. AGREEMENT.** This contract is the entire agreement between the employer and the employee and extends for only this term. Issues and timelines related to future contracts are governed by Policies for Faith Formation and Education Programs. This contract supersedes all prior written or oral agreements; there are no agreements outside of the contract other than those as specifically set forth herein; and this contract may not be amended, changed, modified or altered without the written consent of both the employer and the employee.

This contract must be signed and returned by \_\_\_\_\_.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the parties hereto have affixed their signatures on the date set forth opposite their signatures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Official title of corporation (parish/school institution)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Pastor or Canonical Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Board of Education President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Superintendent of Schools

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Policy Adopted: March 15, 1989  
Policy Revised: June 5, 2002  
Policy Reviewed: May 17, 2010  
Policy Revised: December 2015

**Sample Letter of Regret for Individuals not selected for the position.**

Date

Full Name

Address

Dear

We have completed our selection for the position of principal at \_\_\_\_\_ School. We want you to know that your interview responses and background materials were carefully considered. We have hired a person whom we believe will best meet the needs at this time.

I speak for the Search Committee in extending appreciation for your interest shown in the position at our school. I know with your background you will be called to service elsewhere and I offer you every good wish as you search for the next phase of your ministry.

Very sincerely,

---

Chari, Search Committee or Board of Education President

**DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**POLICY 310**

**PERSONNEL - ADMINISTRATIVE**

**Recruitment, Interview, and Selection**

**Principal, Director/Coordinator of Religious Education (DFF/C) or Coordinator of Youth Ministry (DYM/C)**

Procedures for recruiting, interviewing, and hiring a principal, DFF/C, DYM/C, RCIA Director or Adult Faith Formation Director.

1. The local Board of Education/ Faith Formation Committee will notify the Diocesan Director of Faith Formation and Coordinator of Young/Young Adult Ministry or Lifelong Faith and Lay Ministry Formation Coordinator or Superintendent of Schools as soon as it is known that a new principal, DFF/C, DYM/C, RCIA Director or Adult Faith Formation Coordinator will be needed. The Director of Faith Formation and/or Superintendent of Schools will assist the Board/Faith Formation Committee in the search for a principal, DFF/C, DYM/C, RCIA Director or Adult Faith Formation Coordinator.
2. The first step in the hiring process is that local Boards/Faith Formation Committees will review the principal's, DFF/C's, DYM/C, RCIA Director or Adult Faith Formation Coordinator's job description to assure that expectations are reflected in that description.
3. Each Local Board of Education or Faith Formation Committee will be responsible for recruitment and interviewing candidates. The Diocesan Director of the Office of Faith Formation or Superintendent of Schools will assist the Board/Faith Formation Committee with each step of the process. The Board/Faith Formation Committee may establish sub committees to review recruits and select applicants to interview.
4. Recruitment and Interviews
  - a. The Board/Faith Committee Chair will decide to advertise in such places as The Catholic Messenger, Teach Iowa for principals and teachers and the NCEA website. They may choose to advertise in other Diocesan newspapers
  - b. All applicants for school positions will be directed to the Board Chair's attention at the school's address. Applicants for Faith Formation positions will be directed to the Pastor at the parish address.
  - c. The Board Chair or Pastor will respond to those interested applicants by sending a job description and application form.
  - d. Request transcript of credits, resume and references for each applicant for a principal position or resumes and references for DFF/C, DYM/C, RCIA Director or Adult Faith Formation Coordinator positions.
  - e. A sub-committee of the Board or Faith Formation Committee may be used to study materials received and conduct personal interviews with promising candidates or the Board/Faith Formation Committee as a whole may select candidates for interview and interview candidates for the position.
  - f. The Pastor, Board Chair, Director of the Office of Faith Formation or Superintendent of Schools will follow up written references with telephone contacts.
  - g. The Board /Faith Formation Committee Chair and pastor will establish and interview schedule to conduct interviews for the qualified applicants. The Superintendent of Schools or the Director of the Office of Faith Formation will be present at interviews where their schedule permits.



- h. The Board/Faith Formation Committee will decide who or what groups will be invited to participate in the interview process mindful that the final decision is up to the Faith Formation/ Board Committee and the Pastor.
  - i. If an interview subcommittee is used they will recommend candidate(s) to the Board of Education/Faith Formation Committee.
- 5. The local Board/Committee should strive for consensus among members in choosing the principal, DFF/C DYM/C, RCIA Director or Adult Faith Formation Coordinator. A vote of the majority of Board/Committee is required for board approval. Local by-laws may also require pastoral council approval. These approvals are recommendations to the final decision-maker which may be the pastor, canonical administrator or corporate board.
- 6. Adherence to the Diocesan Policies Relating to Sexuality and Personal Behavior, including requirements for background checks must be ensured.