

HEAD SEARCHES

PREAMBLE

The following principles provide common ground for interaction between independent school professionals and their many constituents (parents, students, colleagues at other schools, and the public). The NAIS Principles of Good Practice for member schools define high standards and ethical behavior in key areas of school operations to guide schools in becoming the best education communities they can be, to embed the expectation of professionalism, and to further our sector's core values of transparency, excellence, and inclusivity. Accordingly, membership in NAIS is contingent upon agreement to abide by the spirit of the PGP.

OVERVIEW

The following principles of good practice are designed to help independent schools and their search committees as they embark upon the task of selecting a school head. They are intended to further the likelihood of a professional and fair process that is the foundation for the successful hiring of a new head of school.

SCHOOL SEARCH COMMITTEES

- 1 Prior to the formation of the search committee, the board chair appoints a small subcommittee of trustees for gathering information and resources (such as the *NAIS Head Search Handbook* and these NAIS Principles of Good Practice) to identify properly the appropriate approach to the head of school search in light of the school's finances, culture, and other characteristics, paying particular attention to forming a search committee, hiring a search consultant, and diversifying the pool of candidates it seeks.
- 2 Using the background resources, the search committee devises a search process, communicated to the community at large, that is fair, inclusive, and orderly and that adheres to local, state, and federal laws and regulations, including those regarding nondiscrimination in employment. The board of trustees examines the plan's addressing of sensitive issues related to confidentiality, inclusivity, and the school's receptivity to change when approving the process recommended by the search committee.
- 3 The search committee communicates to candidates its protocols, process, and schedule and the care it will take to ensure a search process that is viewed by candidates as fair, orderly, inclusive, and confidential.
- 4 While assuming a search consultant or subset of the committee will screen files for appropriateness and will make every effort to present the school with a finalist pool that is both highly qualified in terms of the search committee's criteria and diverse in makeup and attributes, the entire search committee is informed about all candidates who have applied.
- 5 Because candidates have sometimes found their positions in their own schools jeopardized by being candidates at another school, the early stages of a search are conducted in a manner that ensures complete confidentiality, and the finalist stages of reference checking by the search committee are executed with great care, sensitivity, and consideration of each candidate's wishes.
- 6 Contracting with a head of school follows IRS rebuttable presumption protocols, ensuring that the school is compensating the new school leader fairly and appropriately.

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HEAD SEARCH CONSULTANTS

The following principles of good practice for search consultants and search firms establish the principled standards for the process and the expectations of professionalism from the search consultants and search firms.

- 1 The search consultant (or the search committee chair in the absence of a consultant) incorporates into the process, as appropriate, search committee training recommended in the *NAIS Head Search Handbook* and facilitates the search committee's adherence to NAIS Principles of Good Practice.
- 2 In outlining procedures to the search committee prior to entering a written agreement for the services being rendered, the search consultant provides a full, written description of services offered, including estimated expenses and fees, makes known the names of other schools for which he or she actively is performing a search for persons to fill a similar position, and limits searches during any given period to a number that will assure service of high quality to each client school.
- 3 The search consultant makes every effort to understand the school, its mission, its culture, its tolerance for change, its preferred leadership style, and the nature of the position to be filled.
- 4 The search consultant makes every effort to present the school with a diverse group of highly qualified candidates. All principles associated with providing equal opportunity are observed in the process.
- 5 The search consultant sees the school, not the individual candidate, as the primary client.
- 6 The search consultant respects the confidentiality of each candidate and impresses upon both search committee and candidates the importance of discretion.
- 7 Both the search consultant and the search committee check candidates' references with great care.
- 8 The search consultant keeps the search committee fully informed about the progress of the assignment throughout the search and ensures that each candidate is informed appropriately, promptly, and frequently about the status of his or her candidacy.