

Board Retreat Schedule

8:30 - 8:45 - Introductions

8:45 - 9:30 - Seminar

9:30 - 9:40 - Break

9:40 - 11:30

- Roles and reminders
 - What are the roles of the board, admin, Scott,
- Review of timeline for 2023-2025
- Discovery Phase Reporting
 - Themes - qualitative data summary
 - One-on-one interviews
 - Parent groups
 - Teacher groups
- Individual review time to reflect/digest information
- Small groups - discuss findings

11:30-12:15 - LUNCH

12:15 - 2:00

- Large group - discuss small group work
- Action planning
- Wrap up

2:00 - Adjourn

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Teacher board members	*Nicole Donnay	Deb Keyes	Angela Galati	*Rita Thorson
Parent/community board members	Kristen Denzer	Jeff Johnson	Bob Hajlo	Terri Gulbransen
Principals/AD	Keven Seim	Andrew Sachariason	Joann Karetov	Amy Kleinboehl
Administrative directors	Marianne Thole	*Chad Olson	*Terri Smith	Bill Blotske
Administrative directors	Susan Peterson	*Kelly Gutierrez		

*SPC members

Jon Gutierrez - Support as needed or join a group

ST CROIX PREP ACADEMY

Succession Plan - Discovery Phase
Board Report, Discussion, Action Planning.
October 7, 2023

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AGENDA PROPOSED FOR OCT 7 BOARD RETREAT

1. Roles
2. Review timeline
3. Discovery Phase Reporting
4. Discuss findings small groups
5. Discuss findings large group
6. Action Planning
7. Lunch
8. Summarize. Wrap up.

ROLE – A FEW REMINDERS

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ROLE – REBAR LEADERSHIP

1. To provide a structure and support system.
2. To make time for intentional conversations about the succession transition.
3. To assist Jon in his archival efforts (time study).
4. To support Jon's efforts to dream big for next chapter of his life.
5. To prepare the organization for the magnitude of change in Fall of 2025.
6. To encourage. To prod. To equip. To listen.
7. To make recommendations along the way.
8. To faithfully navigate the organization up to search firm handoff. Walk from there along the way until successor takes reigns.

ROLES - SUCCESSION COMMITTEE AND BOARD

1. First line of offense/defense
2. Solidify position description
3. Communication/marketing/recruiting plan
4. Selection of search firm
5. Screen candidates
6. Interview candidates
7. Conduct background checks
8. Recommend finalist to Board

ROLES - BOARD

1. Come to a consensus on vision for next executive director: skills, characteristics, values, background, intangibles.
2. Board effectiveness and readiness evaluation.
3. Decide successor.
4. Support an assimilation plan 2025 - 2026.
5. Conduct 90-day evaluation.

TIMELINE

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TIMELINE 2023

Discovery Stage

- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Observation
- Board report
- Board discussion and action planning

TIMELINE 2024 – SEE APPENDIX B
TIMELINE 2025 – SEE APPENDIX C

DISCOVERY PHASE REPORT

INTERVIEWS

22 interviews conducted on site or virtually between July – September 2023.

- Founders, Board, Administrators, Principals, Teachers and Staff. (Authorizer has not been interviewed.)
- Standard script of questions.
- Emergent questions emerged.
- 22 hours of interviews.

SCRIPTED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. *How have you interfaced with the current Executive Director, Jon Gutierrez? In what capacity have you worked with him? How has that worked for you?*
2. *What knowledge, skills and/or characteristics does Jon display that should be mirrored in a new executive director?*
3. *What knowledge, skills and/or characteristics does Jon display that should not be mirrored in a new executive director?*
4. *What professional background would you see vital for the next executive director? Meaning, an educational leadership role, business leadership role, non-profit leadership role, or other executive background?*
5. *What technical skills should the next executive director bring into the role? Be specific with your examples.*

SCRIPTED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

6. *What soft skills should the next executive director bring into the role? Be specific with your examples.*
7. *What leadership core values should the next executive director bring into the role?*
8. *How would you want to be led by the next executive director?*
9. *What is essential in building a positive educational climate that the next executive director should display?*
10. *Is there any question I have not asked that you'd like to comment on? Please do so here.*

PROBLEMS EXPRESSED MASKED AS POLARITIES

What I observed and heard were less about "traditional problems," and more about tensions, polarities or paradoxes.

POLARITIES

Mission & Money
Jon & Kelly
Classical Ed. & College Prep
Continuity & Change
Jon-Driven & Board-Driven
Governance & Education Policy
Emergent & Planning
Administration & Instruction
Core Ed & Extra-Curricular
Relationship & Systems
Participative & Directive decision-making
Transparent & Holds Confidence

DESCRIPTION OF FUTURE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- *Approachable*
- *Executive presence*
- *Objective*
- *Dedicated*
- *Visionary*
- *Long-term focus*
- *Rise about the muck*
- *Maintain accountability*
- *Results oriented*
- *Exemplary communicator*
- *Critical thinker*
- *Emotionally intelligent*
- *Keen negotiator*
- *Relates to kids, parents, educators, donors, government*
- *Responsive*
- *Skilled listener*
- *Achievement oriented*
- *Humble*
- *Sense of urgency*
- *Stimulates dialogue*

LEADERSHIP CORE VALUES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Integrity (mentioned most frequently)
- Honest (mentioned frequently)
- Inspire smart trust (mentioned frequently)
- Empathetic
- Accountability
- Respect
- Humility
- Compassionate
- Teamwork
- Wisdom is taught and shared broadly
- Champions innovation

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND FUTURE ED

Business Background

Education Background

50%

50%

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES NEEDED 1/2

- Historical appreciation. Inspires others with Prep's story.
- Act as protector of mission, teachers/staff and core content.
- Mn Charter School Law is known, referenced and taught.
- Discernment and proper judgment for delicate parent concerns that are escalated.
- Stimulates input and seek multiple perspectives.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES NEEDED 2/2

- Brings diplomacy to multiple stakeholder perspectives.
- Able to craft a clear and concise vision that others can resource, measure and bring to life.
- Delegates operational matters to subject-matter-experts. Maintains healthy check-ins and boundaries.
- Able to communicate clear role, responsibilities and communication systems.

FOCUS GROUPS

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FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS - PARENTS

1. *Why do you send your kids to Prep?*
2. *What concerns do you have about Jon's retirement and the future?*
3. *What leadership characteristics should the new ED display?*
4. *What changes, if any, should be made the first year of the new ED?*
5. *What is your biggest hope and greatest worry about a new ED?*

FOCUS GROUPS

1. Two parent focus groups conducted Sept 19.
2. Lower School – focus group Sept 20.
3. Middle School – focus group Sept 20.
4. Upper School – focus group Sept 20.

WHAT I HEARD FROM PARENT FOCUS GROUP

- Some have historical connection to founders and others do not have a sentimental connection.
- Academic rigor along with small campus activities/sports/special ed model was primary “buying” motive(s).
- Expressed desire to have future ED visible, approachable and trustworthy.
- Select successor who maintains classical emphasis while preparing learners for post-secondary life.
- A concern that a traditionally trained and experienced leader would over time change the classical emphasis resulting in an erosion of the academic quality.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS - TEACHERS

1. *Why do you teach at Prep?*
2. *What concerns do you have about Jon's retirement and the future?*
3. *What should the Succession Planning Committee be thinking about?*
4. *What leadership characteristics should the new ED display?*
5. *What changes, if any, should be made the first year of the new ED?*
6. *What is your biggest hope and greatest worry about a new ED?*

WHAT I HEARD FROM EDUCATOR FOCUS GROUPS

- We desire an executive director that understands, supports and advocates for teachers.
- Acknowledge innovation was needed to launch the school, now want superintendent-like backstop in a successor.
- The successor should protect us from unnecessary distractions from our core instructional mission
- The ED should be out front and behind supporting (goldilocks) teachers.
- Knows *Mn Charter School Law* and its implications for Prep.
- Build out the Foundation to increase teacher compensation.
- Build and maintain a positive school culture.

WHAT I HEARD FROM EDUCATOR FOCUS GROUPS

- A continued servant leadership philosophy and practice is welcomed.
- Life-long learner is positive characteristic to continue in new ED.
- Successor should watch and listen for year and then perhaps make subtle changes, where needed. Some expressed no changes while others want big change (i.e., dedicated special ed spaces and upper school building).
- Cultivates long-term vision into 2030.

EDUCATOR PARADOX

- Lower/Middle School identity is classical education.
 - *“It is so comforting knowing that our identity is assured year over year.”*
- Upper School identity is college preparatory.
 - *“We are not entirely sure what our school’s vision is year over year. It is really unsettling.”*

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION - COMMENTARY

- You're facing the departure of a co-founder, a highly entrepreneurial executive.
- The looming departure forecasts major change as the organization's culture, performance expectations, relationships, and perhaps even its structure are a reflection of the departing leader's thinking and personality.

BOARD COMMENTARY

- Resist the temptation to try to find someone just like Jon. Jon's skills, abilities, and attributes that got the organization where it is today may not be what it needs in the future.
- The board should be asking where the organization is headed and what kind of leadership it needs to get there.
- Take a hard look at the executive's responsibilities and workload. The board should make every effort to make sure the successor's executive job is doable.

BOARD - CHALLENGES 1/3

Ensure the organization is stable. Faced with the departure of a hard-to-follow leader, even the most stable organization can become vulnerable. The board should assess the situation carefully, identify vulnerabilities created by the departure. Sort out and reassign responsibilities as needed.

BOARD - CHALLENGES 2/3

A second challenge is to understand the departing executive's role and impact in the organization and reassign some of that person's accumulated responsibilities.

BOARD - CHALLENGES 3/3

Think anew about board and executive roles. The biggest challenge for the board in these situations may be to break out of its business-as-usual mentality, and to thoroughly rethink its governance role and the board-executive relationship with a new executive in place.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION PLANNING

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- What stands out to you from the information presented?
 - From admin, teachers and parents
- What is encouraging? Discouraging?
- What action steps should we take next?

**WHERE DO WE GO FROM
HERE?**

KNOWN NEXT STEPS

- Succession Committee to digest today's work/decisions.
- Jon to continue to record tasks and time in 2023 – 2024.
- Execute on 2024 plan.

OPEN QUESTIONS

1. What role will Jon play after official retirement?
2. What is Kelly's timeline?
3. What turnover will be realized first year of successor?

SUMMARY. WRAP UP.

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APPENDIX B -- PREPARATION

Timeline	Activity	Objective	Person(s)
January, 2024	Change Cycle training Part 1	To equip the organization for planned change	Groups to be formed
Feb-March, 2024	Survey Parents of current students	Survey details to be determined	Succession Planning Committee
TBD	Executive Coaching	Data shared, interpreted and decisions made	Reporting to Succession Planning Committee
TBD	Executive Coaching	To build bench of leaders to be identified	Executive Director
TBD	Executive Coaching	To build bench of leaders to be identified	CFO
TBD	Executive Coaching	To build bench of leaders to be identified	Principals
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024	Ex Director - Time and Task Study	To build bench of leaders to be identified Identify time and tasks month by month. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify time and tasks month by month. <input type="checkbox"/> Final inventory of the elements conducted by the executive director are shared and discussed. <input type="checkbox"/> Comparison of future state position description in light of time and task study findings.	Key Staff Jon Gutierrez - Executive Director Board Succession Planning Committee
January, 2024	Change Cycle training Part 1	To equip the organization for planned change	Groups to be formed
June, 2024	Change Cycle training Part 2	To equip the organization for planned change	Groups to be formed
July/August, 2024	Refine job description	Tighten up job description based on data gathered	Succession Planning Committee/Human Resources
	Decide method of search	Internal search vs external search	Succession Planning Committee/Human Resources
	Communication plan for org	Transparency and confidence building	Succession Planning Committee
Summer, 2024	Compensation and Benefits reviewed	Ensure alignment with market and search in 2025	Human Resources
Fall, 2024	Begin draft press release		Succession Planning Committee
	Begin draft recruitment plan		Succession Planning Committee
November, 2024	Change Cycle training Part 3	To equip the organization for planned change	Groups to be formed

APPENDIX C – SEARCH/SELECTION

Timeline	Activity	Objective	Person(s)
January, 2025	Develop draft recruitment plan	TBD	Search Committee
February, 2025	Press release ED retirement	TBD	Search Committee
March, 2025	Recruitment plan/Search finalized	TBD	Search Committee
April, 2025	Recruitment plan/Search executed	TBD	Search Committee
May, 2025	Recruitment plan/Search executed	TBD	Search Committee
June, 2025	Recruitment plan/Search executed	TBD	Search Committee
July, 2025	Review candidate profiles	TBD	Search Committee
	Selection of first round interview candidates	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiation of background checks <input type="checkbox"/> References called/interviewed	Search Committee
	First round	<input type="checkbox"/> In person? Virtual? <input type="checkbox"/> Campus tours <input type="checkbox"/> Standardize interview questions	Search Committee
	Second round	<input type="checkbox"/> Require in person, onsite. <input type="checkbox"/> Campus tour <input type="checkbox"/> Prescribed presentation required for candidates to give. <input type="checkbox"/> Meet faculty, principals, staff, students, families, key stakeholders	Search Committee
	Final candidate recommendation to board	Board discusses final candidate profile	Board/Search Committee
	Offer made	to be established	
	Negotiations	to be established	
	Acceptance	to be established	
	Start date determined	to be established	
August	Place holder in case needed		
September	Place holder in case needed		
October	Place holder in case needed		
November	Place holder in case needed		
December	Place holder in case needed		