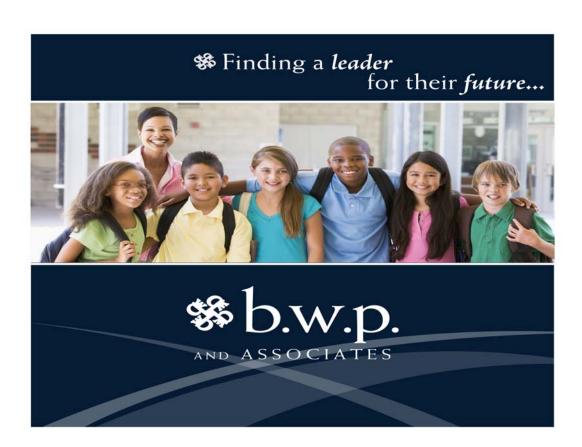# COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS

PROTOCOLS FOR INTERVIEWS
AND
OTHER PHASES OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

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Consultants

PROTOCOLS FOR INTERVIEWS
AND
OTHER PHASES OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

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THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

PLANNING THE INTERVIEW
Conducted effectively, the interview is the most useful tool in the hiring process. It produces information about the candidate's interpersonal and professional skills, which are difficult to obtain from applications, resumes, references or site visits. In preparation for the interview, each Board Member should be familiar with the Applicant Data Form. This practice communicates to the candidate the thoroughness with which the committee is undertaking its selection of a Superintendent. Candidates will feel complimented by your knowledge, and they will feel comfortable that they are communicating with members of a "professional "Board.

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW
Board Members should remember that the most natural interview setting would be one where a reasonable informality exists. The interview will be much more productive and effective if you establish a forum that will encourage interaction between the Board Members and the candidate, but with the calculated assurance that the candidate does most of the talking. We strongly encourage you not to assign one Board Member to pose all of your questions. What you might save in time and "careful listening," you will lose in several other respects from such a stilted unnatural setting. The person you are talking with could be your next Superintendent. Consequently, provide an opportunity for a natural exchange where individual and group "chemistry" can develop and be sensed.

Dates, location and any other arrangements for the interviews will have been tentatively made and should be confirmed. Someone should be assigned to greet each candidate at the interview location.

We recommend that the Board initially interview each candidate in closed session for a period of 1-1/4 to 2 hours. The schedule can include sometime around a conference table with a carefully planned, but informally conducted discussion.

Interviews are especially productive when the committee has agreed upon a set of questions before starting the interview. Based on your approved Leadership Profile, we have included a number of questions you may consider for use during the interview process. A candidate's response to a preplanned question often will give rise to spontaneous and important follow-up questions. Don't hesitate to ask such questions. (See Attachment 1). We have also provided an interview form for your convenience which may be modified if you so desire.

The Board also may desire to pose hypothetical problems or ask for specific experiences. The response to those will reveal the candidate's attitude, reasoning ability and judgment in areas of particular interest to the Board.

PROCESSING THE INTERVIEW INTERACTION
Board Members must do more than simply "hear" the responses. They should actively focus on the responses and give the candidate enough feedback to encourage more in-depth answers. Try to listen not only to <u>what</u> is said but <u>how</u> it is said.

While forming a "reading" of the candidate, Board Members will want to consider such things as:

- Depth and thoughtfulness of the responses

- Relevance and insight of the candidate's questions

- Level of mental and physical alertness

- Candidate's reaction when you probe for more specific answers

- Candidate's composure and comfort during the interview

- Degree of creativity in previous positions

- Evidence that the candidate has been successful in problem solving

- Candidate's ability to simplify complicated issues and problems

- Body language during the interview, especially eye contact

- Firmness of speaking voice

- Ability to communicate accomplishments without overusing the word "I"

- Evidence of steady career progress

- Ambitions expressed during the interview

- Willingness to be forthright rather than always providing safe, "middle of the road" responses

Board Members should recognize that the interview is a reciprocal process. Candidates will be sizing up the District at the same time the Board is evaluating the candidates. Consequently, the interviews should provide the opportunity for applicants to ask questions or make statements prior to the interview being concluded. Board Members should be prepared to answer questions. For example, a candidate might ask what criteria the Board would want to be used to evaluate a new educational program or strategy. Responses should be brief since the major purpose of the interview is to listen to the candidate.

IMPORTANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY
Board Members should agree not to discuss the candidates and to remain open-minded until all interviews are completed. No candidate is to be discussed in the presence of another candidate. Although media, staff and some members of the community may be curious about the candidates and the reaction of individual committee members to them, we strongly urge complete confidentiality in all matters relating to candidates. Breach of confidentiality in candidate materials can place the District and Board Members in jeopardy. Be guarded with your comments to others and keep all of your notes and the candidate files where only Board Members will have access to them.

SELECTING CANDIDATES
It is imperative that the Board make the final determination of which candidate will be recommended as a finalist. If the Board decides to involve staff and community in part of the interview process, the firm recommends allowing the community input in a manner that does not allow public comparison of candidates. A candidate vote by staff and public will always create dissension. People will never unanimously agree and the final candidate will **always** be considered a compromise Superintendent.

If the Board determines that they would like to conduct follow-up reference checks for their finalist candidates, it is suggested that Board members are assigned to a specific candidate and their references and a specific set of questions is prepared for this follow up to ensure that questions are consistent and appropriate.

THE CANDIDATES' SECOND VISIT
Following the initial interviews with the first group of candidates, the Board should reach a consensus on two but no more than three semi-finalist candidates who they wish to have return for a second visit. The second visit of a candidate to the District should include some formal orientation to the organization.

A day visiting the schools and meeting with selected members of the community is an effective process. These activities are usually hosted by members of the Board. "A Day in the District" typically includes: an introduction to faculty and staff; visiting specified school sites; participants of the previous focus groups being invited to attend short group sessions that include a presentation by the candidate and a Q & A period; an open community evening meeting with a similar structure as the group sessions; an informal social activity, i.e. dinner with one or two Board members and the candidate's spouse or other family member; a second round interview conducted with the entire Board completing the day's activity. By inviting focused community feedback the Board will receive insightful information about the candidates from those who interact with them during the daylong visit. Planning for this activity is critical and community members need to be advised that it is appropriate to attend the activity for only one candidate to avoid the appearance of community voting. The purpose of these activities is to help familiarize the candidate with the school district and to provide the Board with additional useful feedback for their deliberations. Community members do not vote for candidates.

IDENTIFYING THE FINALIST

After all of the interviews have been completed, the Board is to identify the finalist. The selection of the Superintendent should be a corporate decision, a matter of true consensus. Avoid starting the process with a Board Member championing a favorite candidate. This approach tends to close minds, cement allegiances at an early stage, overlook the alternatives and shut off discussion prematurely, making it unduly difficult to achieve unanimity. It also is important to be vigilant in keeping Board Member differences on other matters from intruding upon this decision.

First, narrow your selection by eliminating less suitable candidates. Discuss the relative strengths and possible weaknesses of each candidate and listen to other Board Members' perceptions of all candidates. Each Board Member should address the issue: With the best interest of Columbus City Schools in mind, which candidate appears to be most acceptable to the entire Board and most capable of working with the Board as a whole? This tends to be more productive than addressing the question: Which one is my favorite candidate?

Allow sufficient time for full discussion but try not to let differences delay the final decision too long. Some candidates may interpret a long delay as an indication that the committee is "hung" and may withdraw. The longer the decision is delayed, the greater the risk that a candidate may be lost. Again, experience has shown that it is desirable to identify finalists through a process of eliminating the least suitable candidates rather than voting for favorites.

PLANNING FOR VISIT TO FINALIST'S COMMUNITY

Prior to making a final decision on your next Superintendent, the Board may decide to visit the community where the candidate is currently employed. If this is a desired activity, this should be an agreed upon process. It is suggested that only 2 Board members participate in this site visit and report their findings to the rest of the Board. The activity is designed to validate the Board's selection of the finalist. Many Boards chose not to conduct a site visit and rely on the consultants' presentation, Board review of the application materials, follow up phone calls with selected references by Board members, community input and the second round interview process. If you do decide to conduct this activity, it is important to make these arrangements prior to your community visitation:

1. Inform the candidate by telephone of the impending visit and determine if the candidate's current employer is aware of his/her interest your Superintendent position.

2. Ask the candidate to make arrangements for the committee representatives to meet and/or telephone persons in some or all of the following categories:

   - Board members

   - Recognized leaders of the faculty

   - Recognized leaders of support staff or civil service associations

   - PTA, PTO or school council officers and/or leaders

- Local business and/or professional people

- The mayor, city manager and/or council members

- Media executives

- Leaders of special interest groups

- Management staff

- Other community or association leaders

3. Ask the candidate to supply:

   - Names and telephone numbers of Board members

   - Names of administrators in the District or organization with their current position noted

   - A map of the community to facilitate travel

4. Advise the candidate that contacts will not be limited to the names supplied by him/her. The delegation will use the list only as a starting point.

5. It is optional to indicate that the Board Members will be interested in meeting the candidate's spouse and family.

CONCLUDING THE SITE VISIT
Assuming that everything has gone well during the site visit, it is advantageous to have a time set aside where two Board Members could have approximately an hour to discuss with the candidate certain details related to filling this position. At this point ask the candidate if he/she would accept the position under mutually acceptable conditions. If you receive an affirmative response, you are ready to discuss items such as reporting time, living in the District, housing, general terms of salary and fringe benefits, etc. The candidate should also be notified that a complete physical examination is required with the cost being borne by the District and a through deep background check will also be conducted.

MAKING THE SELECTION
Board Members should feel comfortable that they all have fully deliberated the attributes of the candidate and that they, hopefully, can make the appointment with a unanimous vote. The committee should offer the position after a full Board vote and only after it is assured that the finalist is ready to sign a contract. The preliminary discussion on details should have provided a reasonable start for this stage.

Publicity about the appointment should be released only after the prospective Superintendent has signed a contract. A prepared news release should be provided simultaneously to the media in your community and the new Superintendent's community.

FINAL STEPS

After the Superintendent is under contract, candidates should be contacted to thank them for their interest in the position and informing them of the Board's selection. A Board Member or the BWP consultants should promptly call the candidates who were interviewed by the Board. BWP will send a letter to all other candidates.

Sample Interview Questions
First and Second Round
Columbus City Schools Superintendent Selection
(Based on the Leadership Profile)

General and Personal

1. Please tell us what you know about our organization.

2. Please tell us why you are interested in this position.

3. Why you are considering leaving your present position?

4. What specific capabilities do you bring to this position?

5. How would you describe yourself? What is your approach in handling interpersonal conflict?

6. What has been the most challenging task you have faced and how did you deal with it?

7. What are your long-term career objectives?

8. How do you spend your spare time? What activities or hobbies do you enjoy?

Student Achievement

1. Describe an instructional innovation that you have lead which improved student performance and achievement. Did this program reduced or eliminate the achievement gap for students of color, student in poverty or students from culturally diverse backgrounds?

2. What experiences have you had with alternative schools, schools for special needs individuals and gifted programs.

3. How would you conduct an assessment of the District's academic and extra-curricular programs to determine if the needs of all student groups are being addressed?

4. Discuss how you would ensure the relevance of a District or school educational program for students in the 21st century?

5. Describe your philosophy regarding utilization of data relative to review of student performance and achievement. When looking at outcomes, what are you looking for?

6. What do you see as the emerging role of technology as used in education?

7. What research-based educational trends do you see as having significant impact on education in the immediate future?

Diversity and Inclusion

1. Describe your experiences in working with culturally diverse student populations and communities.

2. Share with us your philosophy about students, their education and their wellbeing.

3. How do you work with staff to ensure cultural competency in their work with diverse student populations?

4. What successful activities and outreach approaches have you utilized to create a climate of collaboration with families from a variety of cultures and diverse backgrounds?

5. Share strategies and programs you have used with school staff to improve student safety and discipline across student populations in a variety of settings.

Human Resource Management

1. How would you implement short- and long-range district goals? How would you monitor and evaluate their implementation?

2. When, if ever, do you feel the use of faculty or citizen advisory committees is appropriate? How would you use them? What process would you use?

3. How do you foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff and administration?

4. Do you encourage participation of employees in any District decisions? If so, what process do you use? How are administrators, teachers, and staff recognized for their accomplishments?

5. What kind of decisions or responsibilities do you delegate to others? How do you monitor the performance of those who are responsible?

6. In what administrative effort have you failed? What did you learn from the experience?

7. What has been the most unpopular decision you have had to make and how did you handle the reaction to this decision?

8. What strategies do you utilize to recruit, employ and retain effective personnel at both the district and school level? What is your philosophy concerning the recruitment of personnel?

9. How do you maintain a collaborative relationship with the faculty, and/or the teachers' association?

10. What kind of authority do you delegate to program chairman/principals/administrative staff and how do you hold them accountable?

11. How would you go about evaluating the effectiveness of the administrative team. If you were to decide some re-alignment was necessary, how would you go about making a change?

12. What is your philosophy concerning human resource development?

Budget, Finance and Organizational Management

1. How would you describe your understanding of school finance?

2. Describe the budget-making process you have used.

3. What has been your experience with budget management, budgetary controls and budget reduction?

4. What financial responsibilities have been assigned to others in your district or current position?

5. How would you suggest establishing a reasonable balance between budgeting for needed District improvements and maintaining the fiscal integrity of the District?

6. How large of a budget have you managed?

7. Is there a difference between management and leadership? If so, what might that be? Can an individual be a manager and a leader?

8. How would you describe your management philosophy? What are your managerial strengths and weaknesses?

9. What is your concept of strategic visioning and planning?

10. How would you determine long-range and short-range goals for the District? Who would you involve in the planning process?

Communication and Outreach

1. Describe how you keep your Board fully informed between meetings.

2. Describe how you would prepare an agenda for the next Board meeting. What is your procedure for determining how items get on the agenda?

3. How would you prepare the Board to make a decision on a politically sensitive or controversial issue?

4. How do you believe the annual evaluation by the Board of the Superintendent's performance should be handled? What elements should be included in the evaluation?

5. What is the Superintendent's role in developing district policy?

6. What role should the Superintendent play in orienting new Board members? How should this be accomplished?

7. Which social media platforms are you familiar with and share how you use them as a component of your communication strategies. Share one or two successful communication strategies you have employed in working with staff, parents, community organizations and students.

8. Give some specific examples of ways you have successfully communicated with citizens about your districts' or organization's accomplishments and challenges.

9. How is the content of regular reports to the community determined?

10. What evidence can you cite which indicates your success in gaining Board/staff/ administrative and community support for educational programs?

11. How important do you believe it is for the Superintendent to be visible throughout the community? How would you decide what activities/organizations are worth the time and effort of active participation?

12. How would you handle complaints about staff performance?

13. What experiences have you had working with legislators, other superintendents, and other community leaders?

14. Describe your experience in working with other governmental agencies such as the legislature, executive offices or municipalities.

15. Provide examples of being visible, approachable, and engaging in staff and student Interactions.

16. Describe an example of your ability to simplify and communicate a complex matter to others.

17. Describe a project in which you were engaged that required a collaborative approach.

For the second round of interviews we suggest that the candidate make a brief presentation on a project of the Boards' choosing. Examples: A Board report on a completed project; student data report or analysis; communications plan or document; project initiative report; a document or project of the candidates own choosing.

Contract and Terms of Employment

1. If chosen, would you accept a multi-year contract with student and organizational performance criteria included or a single year contract?

2. How would you propose to have your performance evaluated? By whom? On what criteria? How often?

Legal Guidelines for Asking Questions

Finally, it is critical to keep in mind those questions that should <u>not</u> be asked. Questions relating directly or indirectly to the following aspects of the candidates' backgrounds are prohibited by federal and, in many instances, state law:

- Religion

- Race

- National origin

- Age

- Gender

- Marital or family status

- Lifestyles

- Disabilities

- Criminal record

- Financial affairs

Columbus City Schools Superintendent
Sample Interview Form 1

Candidate: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Descriptive Information:

_____

_____

_____

During the interview, you may wish to record your perceptions of the candidate's compatibility with the criteria.

Qualities Desired	Comments
Student Achievement	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
Diversity and Inclusion	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
Human Resource Management	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____

Budget, Finance, Organizational Management

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Communication and Outreach

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Overall Responses

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Other Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Overall Rating on a scale of   1 (Not Satisfactory)   2 (Good)   3 (Outstanding)

Other Notes:

Columbus City Schools Superintendent
Sample Interview Form 2
Scoring Rubric

Name						
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT (16)						
Strong ins. bkgrd. documented success student ach						
Reduce or eliminate achievement gaps - diverse						
Pass support for variety of student programming						
Integrity, honest, trustworthy with data						
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (20)						
Cares about children – education and well being						
Success in outreach to low income and diverse fm						
Creative and visionary						
Culturally competent						
Ability to work with school staff for dis & safety						
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (16)						
High level of expectations for all - accountability						
Fosters positive professional climate for all						
Recognizes accomplishments of staff						
Recruits, employs, retains staff						

BUDGET/FINAN/ ORG MANAGEMENT (20)						
Can analyze, plan address fund & fac. needs						
Understands compliance requirements						
Ability to influence financial decision makers						
Understanding of complex fin & plan issues						
Takes calculated risks - out the box thinking						
COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH (20)						
Success in collaboration with bus and elec. officials						
Examples of visible, approach, engaging w/ all						
Politically savvy – effect work with SB + others						
Strong communication across platforms						
Can simplify and communicate complex matters						
OTHER (8)						
Doctorate/Certification (1)						
Admin Experience (1)						
District Size (1)						
Overall Presentation (5)						
Total						
Percentage						

Columbus City Schools Superintendent
Sample Reference Contact Questions

Candidate: _____

Reference Contact Name: _____

Reference Contact Information: _____

Contact Date: _____

Interviewer: _____

Introduce yourself with your name and identification as a member of the Columbus City School Board seeking a reference check on _____ who is a candidate for the position of superintendent. Inquire if the contact has a few moments (usually 15-20 minutes) to share their knowledge and information regarding the candidate.

1. Please describe the number of years and the context relationship you have with _____.

2. What are strengths and skill sets this candidate possess?

3. Can you describe a project or initiative that you are aware of that was developed or undertaken by _____? What were the results or outcomes?

4. In what areas might _____ need more polish?

5. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about _____?

Thank you for sharing your insights and experiences with me.   The time you spent is really appreciated. Your comments about _____ will be shared with my fellow Board members as we deliberate on all the candidates.

Day in the District Sample Schedule

As suggested during our interview and discussed at our planning meeting, it is recommended that you invite each finalist to spend some time in the District, provide an opportunity for community interaction, meet with the candidate and possibly their spouse for an informal dinner, and conduct a second round interview which may include a formal project presentation to the Board. The following is a draft schedule that would accomplish this goal. The times and activities are for illustrative purposes and can be modified or altered. Focus group size should be limited to 25 or less except for the Community Forum when possible. Impressions Forms and formats would be used for all focus groups (See samples). We recommend that candidates are scheduled individually on the 2 or 3 consecutive days listed on the planning calendar, depending on the number of semi-finalist. BWP will notify the candidates on your behalf. Board members would serve as hosts /hostesses and facilitate the meetings either in full day or ½ day segments.

Date: _____ 9:00 am – 9:00 pm * (This schedule could start earlier in the day and end earlier in the evening or modified to accommodate travel time.) Each day would include different groups and visited locations.

Candidate A
 9:00 - 9:30   Meet at the Administrative Office – tour the facility
 9:30 - 10:15   Focus Group Meeting (District Office Administrators)
10:15 - 11:00   Focus Group Meeting (Building Administrators)
11:30 - 12:15   Visit a high school, one of the middle schools or an elementary school (rotate schools)
 12:30 - 1:30   Focus Group (Advisory Groups, Parent Groups)
 1:45 - 2:15   Break
 2:15 - 3:15   Focus Group Meeting (Student Reps, EME Reps. Certified & Non-Certified, Direct
                Partners)
 3:30 - 4:30   Focus Group Meeting (Indirect Partners, Community Groups, Political leaders)
 5:00 - 6:00   Community Meeting (Parents and Community Members)
 6:15 - 7:30   Informal Dinner with two Board members
 7:30 - 8:45   2nd interview with questions and a Candidate Presentation

- This schedule would require: 1 or 2 Board members to be available for the day to accompany the candidate. The day could be split in half by 2 Board members. One for am activities and one for pm activities. Board members would rotate this duty.

- Dinner could be with a two Board members and this schedule could be rotated for Board members or this could be a component of your "closed session meeting" for all Board Members.

- All Board members would need to be in attendance for the 2nd round interviews

Day in the District | Columbus City Schools

Date-   Candidate-
_____

Board Host/Hostess-

Time	Event	Location	Responsible
9-9:30 a.m.	Tour administrative facility		
9:30-10:15 a.m.	Focus group meeting (district office administrators)		
10:15-11 a.m.	Focus group meeting (building administrators)		
11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.	Visit a high school, middle school or elementary school (rotate schools)		
12:30-1:30 p.m.	Focus group meeting (advisory groups, parent groups)		
1:45-2:15 p.m.	Break		

Board Host/Hostess-

Time	Event	Location	Responsible
2:15-3:15 p.m.	Focus group meeting (student reps, EME reps, certified and non-certified, direct partners)		
3:30-4:30 p.m.	Focus group meeting (indirect partners, parent groups)		
5-6 p.m.	Community meeting (parents and community members)		
6:15-7:30 p.m.	Informal dinner with several board members		
7:30-8:45 p.m.	Second interview with questions and a candidate presentation		

Columbus City Schools
Columbus Board of Education
270 East State Street
Columbus, OH 43215
614.365.5790
www.ccsoh.us

September 7, 2018

To our valued community partners,

The Columbus Board of Education is looking for your input and insight as we move towards completion of our national search for the next innovative leader of Columbus City Schools.

During the summer, applications for the position were completed and screened by our search team BWP & Associates. A selected slate of candidates was presented to the Board on September 5, 2018. The Board conducted first round interviews with these candidates and selected semi-finalist for further screening. To provide the semi-finalist with an opportunity to get to know Columbus, "A Day in the District" has been organized for each candidate. To help provide feedback on our semi-finalist, as a previous participant in our focus groups, we would like one or two representatives from your organization to meet with one of the candidates in a short focus group session.

Your organizations' session would take place on (day,date)_____ at _____ and will be facilitated by _____. The agenda for the session is attached. As you may recall, the Board's previous search efforts led to the development of a Leadership Profile, which is attached to this letter for your review. Once the discussion session has concluded you will be asked to provide written feedback on your impressions of the candidate based on the Leadership Profile which will be shared with the Board during their final deliberations. We ask that you participate in only one session to enable opportunities for all community members to be engaged and to avoid the appearance of community "voting for" any particular candidate. **Please RSVP directly to our BWP team at bwp.columbuscs18.gmail.com to indicate your availability to participate and which identify the representatives who will be attending no later than _____.**

To update and gather additional input from the public, community forums have been established as a component of the "Day in the District" activities.

Feel free to share information about these public discussion with members of your constituent groups, so that we can continue to hear from everyone in our community.

Should you have any immediate questions regarding this invitation, please contact the Office of Board Services at 614-365-5790. Thank you for adding your voice and input to our search efforts.

Gary L. Baker, II	Michael Cole	Eric Brown	W. Shawna Gibbs
Board President	Vice President	Board Member	Board Member
Mary Jo Hudson	Dominic Paretti	Ramona R. Reyes	
Board Member	Board Member	Board Member	

Columbus City Schools New Superintendent Search
Leadership Profile
(Developed in Fall 2017)

Superintendent Desired Characteristics:

Student Achievement
- Has a strong instructional background and a track record of documented successes in improving student achievement, both overall and across student subgroups.
- Has the ability to reduce or eliminate achievement gaps involving students of color, students in poverty, and students from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Can demonstrate past support for a wide variety of student programming, both curricular and extracurricular, for college- and career-oriented graduates, along with special education and gifted students.
- Has integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness in analyzing and presenting student data.

Diversity and Inclusion
- Cares about children, their education and their well-being.
- Has demonstrated success in meaningful outreach to low-income and culturally-diverse families.
- Is creative, courageous, charismatic, and visionary in dealing with diversity and inclusion issues, and can cite past examples that illustrate these traits.
- Is culturally competent; understands and is sensitive to the needs of diverse student populations.
- Has demonstrated ability to work with school staff to improve student discipline and safety across student populations and in a variety of settings.

Human Resource Management
- Establishes a high level of expectations for students and all personnel; insists that staff and students are accountable.
- Fosters a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administration.
- Recognizes administrator, teacher, and support staff accomplishments.
- Recruits, employs, and retains effective personnel throughout the system and its schools, and can document previous successes in this area.

Budget, Finance, and Organizational Management
- Can analyze, plan for, and clearly address funding and facility needs.
- Understands the importance of district compliance with mandated requirements.
- Has proven ability to influence financial decision makers at the local and state level.
- Is able to demonstrate understanding of complex financial systems and financial planning issues; can identify past budget successes
- Takes calculated risks; able to think creatively and "outside the box" in order to solve complex problems

Communication and Outreach
- Has shown success in working collaboratively with business, community, and elected officials
- Can cite examples of being visible, approachable, and engaging in staff and student interactions
- Is politically savvy and is able to work collaboratively and effectively with the School Board, city officials, and state legislators
- Uses strong communication skills across a variety of media platforms
- Can simplify and communicate complex matters (such as school finance) to all audiences

For the latest information on the Columbus City Schools Superintendent Search,
visit www.ccsoh.us/SuperintendentSearch.

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Columbus City Schools Superintendent Search
Candidate Focus Group Forum
AGENDA (Template)

1. **Introductions, purpose and protocols**
2. **Confidentiality issues**
3. **Review of candidate vita**
4. **Process for asking questions**
5. **Things to avoid in the question/answer period**
6. **Impressions form – sharing with the Board of Education**
7. **Schedule – 5 – 10 minute candidate presentation; 30 -35 minutes for Q & A interaction with candidate followed by 15 minutes to debrief/ and complete the form**
8. **Timeline - everything should be completed by _____ pm**
9. **Questions – other**
10. **Collection of feedback forms and data materials.**

The Columbus City School Board offers a special thanks to each of you for giving up your personal time to provide feedback on this critically important decision. Your input continues a tradition of collaboration within our district and community. Thank you for your commitment to the students in our schools.

School District
Superintendent Search
Community Focus Group - Impressions

The purpose of this focus group forum is to provide members of the community with an opportunity to render impressions and give feedback to members of the Board of Education relative to the final candidate selection for the position of Superintendent of Schools. In order to engage as many members of the community as possible, we ask that you plan to attend only one focus group session. We would like participants to utilize the approved District profile listed below to list strengths and attributes *that you believe* the individual would bring to the position and the school district as a whole that reflect the identified profile characteristics and skills. (Provide Leadership Profile and Candidate 1 page vita to be returned at the conclusion of the meeting.)

Questions may be provided in advance and will be presented by a member or members of the Board or the process mediator who will facilitate the discussion. Finally, it is well to keep in mind those questions that should <u>not</u> be asked. Questions relating directly or indirectly to the following aspects of the candidates' backgrounds are prohibited by federal law and, in many instances, state law: Religion; Race; National origin; Age; Sex/ Sexual preferences; Marital or family status; Disabilities; Criminal record; Financial affairs.

In addition feel free in your comments to provide any questions that you recommend that Board Members ask of the candidates that will assist the Board during the final selection process. **Please refrain from choosing or ranking candidates. Community members are not voting on candidates. This is the exclusive responsibility of the Board of Education.**

Because of your interest and participation, we know that you will treat each candidate with respect The Columbus City School Board of Education thanks you for giving up your personal time to provide feedback on this critically important decision. Your input continues a tradition of collaboration within our district and community. Thank you for your commitment to the students in our schools.

Columbus City Schools
Superintendent Search
Community Focus Group Impressions Sample A

Candidate's name: _____ Date: _____

Brief Resume:

The candidate exhibited the following strengths:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

After hearing from the candidate, the following questions may be helpful to the Board of Education as they make their final selection:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Other:

_____

_____

_____

Community Feed Back Form SAMPLE Template B

CANDIDATE: Date:

RESUME SUMMARY (1 page written document)

- Successful years in Education
- Previous positions:
- Current Position:
- Education:
- Certification:
- Honors and Awards:

As a component of the Columbus City Schools process for identifying and selecting a superintendent for the organization, BWP and Associates utilized District information and conducted community engagement activities. The activities were used to reaffirm the approve profile that had been previously developed profile that highlighted specific desirable characteristics and skills that could be demonstrated by candidates who would be considered for the position. These characteristics for the individual included:

List or provide the leadership profile information

This candidate is a semi-finalist for the Board's consideration. Picture this candidate in the position of Superintendent of Columbus City Schools. For the purpose of providing input to the search committee, please write your impressions of how this person would operate, manage, lead and relate to the various constituencies of the school district.

_____
                                                        Signature (Optional)

Following your interaction with the candidate please complete this form at the conclusion of this session and return it to the facilitator for inclusion in the Boards discussions.

Articles for Superintendent Search Processes Columbus City Schools

(Excerpts from the Washington State School Directors Association Handbook 2011)

Washington State School Directors' Association 221 College Street NE Olympia, WA 98516-5313 Telephone: (360) 493-9231 Fax: (360) 493-9247 E-mail: mail@wssda.org Internet: www.wssda.org

Provided by the Washington State School Directors' Association, Michael R. Boring, Ed. D.

Confidentiality

"It is normal for the application materials submitted to a school district for a superintendent position to be accepted and handled in confidence. This would be the expectation of applicants; if for any reason the district chooses not to follow that pattern, it would be absolutely critical to make that known to potential applicants before they make application. The Association strongly recommends that these materials be treated confidentially. The application materials should be handled only be staff who are charged with and able to observe confidentiality…. If possible, the applications should be received by one person with secure filing space available. Any communications regarding the applicants should be handled carefully so as not to risk a breach of confidentiality. At the conclusion of the search process, the original application materials should be kept on file by the school district. …The application of the person selected as superintendent should be transferred to his or her official personnel file. The confidential materials which accompanied that application, such as a college placement file, should be destroyed."

Initial Interviews

"Prior to the initial interviews, the consultant should assist the board in developing questions and other activities that board members might wish to include (such as a written exercise). A typical interview time would be an hour and it is usual for there to be 10 to 15 questions for applicants. There should be time at the end preserved for applicants to summarize and/or ask something of the board. The time set for the interviews should be adhered to. It is helpful to the process for questions to be assigned to board members so that there is consistency in the way they are asked… Following the interviews of semi-finalists, the board must deliberate as to which applicants should be invited back for final interviews and other activities. The board now has the application materials to refer to as well as the performance of the applicants in the interview activities. As with the earlier deliberations in the initial screening, the major criteria identified for the position should provide the fundamental framework for a decision. The notes and reactions of board members to the applicants' performance in the interviews provides another dimension and the degree to which the applicants seem to 'fit' the board's expectations can be more fully explored... The consultant may be able to assist the board at this point in the process as in the earlier stages by helping provide decision making techniques or tools. It is prudent to identify one or two alternates to the list of selected finalists in case one or two of those invited to come to the district as a finalist decline."

Planning Finalist Interviews and Activities

"When the board has arrived at a decision, the consultant and the board should determine a schedule for finalist interviews and activities. The time gap between semi-finalist interviews and the finalist interviews and activities should be as short as possible. It is conceivable, of course, that the schedule as projected at the beginning of the search might have to be slightly different to accommodate that of board members and the actual finalists. There should be contact with the finalists to invite them to the district for the finalist activities.

The board should consider the following points and have agreement on the ones that apply to this stage of the search prior to contacting the candidates. This information can be conveyed to the candidate by phone and by other means as well:

• Dates available for the finalist activities;

• Time and place for arrival;

• General agenda anticipated for the day;

• Request to bring spouse/family/ or whether this is not expected; if family members will be invited, a description of what will be done by way of activities for them (e.g. dinner with the board);

• The district's willingness to pay expenses, how much;

• The materials to be made available to the candidate in advance; e.g. budget, collective bargaining agreements, publications, etc.;

• The board's intended timeline for arriving at a final decision; or

• A contact person or method for communication prior to the finalist day. The experience for finalists in the school district has evolved into a kind of "marathon" of activities. It is typical for the day to begin by 8:00 a.m. and conclude sometime after 9:00 p.m. in the evening. The superintendent candidates may be involved in meetings with individuals, groups, the board, interview settings, lunch and dinner meetings, etc. While the frenetic pace imposes a burden upon the school district, board members and the candidates themselves, there is merit in this combination of efforts. One of the values of this variety of activity is that people can observe the candidates in several different contexts; this is frequently helpful in gauging how an individual might function in the hectic pace of the superintendent role. This also gives the board members an additional opportunity to assess how they would feel in working with the candidate. There is normally a formal interview with the board during this day which gives time to follow up on questions generated from the initial interview. The candidate also can learn a great deal during this day since there is exposure to a cross section of staff members, citizens, students, board members, the media, etc. "

Community Feedback

"The board gains major insights during this day from the perceptions of individuals and groups who meet the candidate. It is wise to design some method of feedback to the board which is uniform and easily analyzed so that board members can quickly profit from the perceptions of others regarding the candidates. A simple written feedback form can be utilized in each setting and collected for the board's perusal. It will be tempting for people to want to indicate their 'top choice.' It is advisable to structure the feedback form and to counsel them to report relative strengths. It is unrealistic to expect that people will not have favorites, but in general it is best to try to avoid the popularity contest syndrome so the board's decision is as unfettered by interest group expectations as possible. The flavor of people's perceptions, however, should be of great interest to the board. It may be a helpful factor in an otherwise very close deliberation. The size of the school district, the timing of the search, the availability of staff and other factors

The size of the school district, the timing of the search, the availability of staff and other factors certainly play a part in determining how to structure a day for finalists in the district. It would be impractical to try to carry out a tour W 26 WSSDA Superintendent Search Handbook of schools in a large district for example. In such a case, a virtual or sample tour might substitute. The same is true of the community. The school district should also

expect that finalists would gain familiarity with the district and community on an independent basis, given the importance of the job for them personally.

The Association suggests the schedule below as a sample to consider when making plans in a local school district: Morning The finalist reports to the school district office and is welcomed by at least one board member, the incumbent superintendent if possible and appropriate and/or other administrators. The agenda for the day is reviewed and some time allowed to discuss what will occur. It is assumed that the finalist would have been given some prior notice of what to expect. Frequently some tour is provided to help the candidate become oriented. Since the school district office is the working home for the superintendent, it is wise to provide an introduction to the staff and the facility itself. A tour of schools, maintenance, transportation and food service facilities is certainly helpful if practical in terms of the schedule. One of the guiding principles for organizing this day should be to provide representative contact with all elements of the staff — teachers, administrative and supervisory staff, office staff, custodians, maintenance employees, food service employees, transportation employees, etc. In most cases, this will involve meeting with representatives of these employee groups, but it is important to send a message to both the candidate and staff that the district recognizes and values all of those who contribute to helping students learn.

A meeting with the central administrators/supervisors is normally very helpful. These staff members are crucial to the school district's success and their perceptions of the candidate are very important. And, the candidate would find this opportunity of great interest since these people form the closest part of the superintendent's partnership with the staff. It is also wise to provide a meeting with principals since it is unlikely that touring buildings will provide a meaningful chance to form accurate impressions. The principals are another critical element in the work of the superintendent; their impressions are important to the district and board and the candidate will welcome the chance for a meeting as well. It is common to combine lunch with some other objective for the day — perhaps a meeting with the incumbent superintendent, business leaders, community officials, etc.

Afternoon and Evening if there is time in the schedule and it is considered of enough importance, the candidate can be given time to peruse a variety of documents that can contribute to a more complete understanding of the district. Board minutes, policies, organization charts, job descriptions, collective bargaining history, fiscal information, etc. all may be of interest. If the schedule is too full to allow this kind of activity, it may be possible to provide summary information or direct the candidate to electronic files that could be examined. One of the major decisions the board must make is whether some representative group will be offered the opportunity to 'interview' the finalists. This is frequently requested by people in the community and is a delicate issue to decide upon. The positive aspects of providing this opportunity include reinforcing to the community that the board welcomes involvement.   The positive aspects of providing this opportunity include reinforcing to the community that the board welcomes involvement. Another positive element is that the feedback from the interview can be truly helpful to the board's deliberations. A potential question is that the board is the legal entity charged with the selection/employment of the superintendent. There should be no abrogation of that authority either real or perceived. If the board chooses to provide this additional interview setting, there should be orientation for the participants, a clear statement of their role of providing feedback and not a decision, and a simple, uniform way to gain the feedback of the group regarding the finalists. It is also helpful to provide a chance for representatives of the various unions to meet with the finalists. This can be done in a group setting in order to expedite the schedule for the day. A meeting with community/business leaders, public officials might be considered… Parent leaders from the PTA, PTO, Booster Club, Foundation, etc. might also form a group with interest in being involved.

There should be a structured interview with the board as well that provides for asking different questions from the initial interviews if they were conducted, for follow up questions and for more questions from the candidate. The style of boards and consultants vary significantly at this stage. If there is not another scheduled point for a general discussion of the range of salary, benefits and length of contract, it would be appropriate to include it here.

It is common for the board to have dinner with the candidate and spouse. This provides a more relaxed setting than other meetings and the opportunity for the various people to get a chance to know each other informally. The final activity for the day is frequently some kind of 'community forum' at which the candidate is introduced to a group of citizens. Usually this has been a well-publicized meeting with an open invitation to attend. Some districts have found it helpful to provide special encouragement to attend to key people to ensure a reasonable turnout. It is appreciated by those attending if there is some mechanism for providing feedback to the board about their impressions. This can be done through a written form, turned in at the end of the meeting or by various other devices including use of technology in various forms. The arrangements that make sense are associated with the size of the school system, timing, facilities and other factors. Finally, some boards choose to set aside one day for each finalist, others have several finalists cycling through each phase of the day's activities at different points, so that the work can be accomplished more quickly. There is no right or wrong answer, the choice depends on the circumstances in that specific district."

Gathering and Evaluating Information about Finalists

"The activity of gathering information about the finalists occurs throughout the search process. The application materials themselves provide a foundation upon which to build, telephone and personal contacts with references or other informed individuals make a contribution, independent contacts between the consultant and the applicants may yield information, the interview process and finalist activities will produce further data, visitations to the district/community of the finalists also provide help. Some of these resources should be sought in a structured fashion to assist in reliability. A few points are listed below:

• The assessment of the application materials should, as mentioned earlier in this document, be carried out with an analytical and systematic approach that produces a comprehensive summary for the board that treats each candidate fairly.

• Telephone contacts should be undertaken in a careful, uniform way with notes or a report of the results for the consultant and board to utilize.

• Interviews should be planned so that questions are selected with care, there is a set pattern for questioning, there is provision for taking notes and that spontaneous or follow-up questions are presented appropriately.

• There are a number of legal constraints that bear upon interviews of job applicants... Board members should be provided with orientation to interviewing protocols. If the board has provided opportunity for other groups to conduct a structured 'interview' of candidates, then orientation to these interviewing guidelines should be provided for individuals involved in that process as well.

• Visitations by board members to the home districts or communities of finalists are important to help with a final selection. The candidate should assist with the general organization of the visit, but there should be opportunity to reach out to people not suggested by the candidate as well. Community officials, business persons, staff members, students, all may be possible ad hoc references during the visitation. As with other parts of the search, the information should be gathered in a simple, uniform way to share with other board

members. Typically, the visitations are carried out by individual board members or two board members working as a team. There are a number of legal constraints that bear upon interviews of job applicants."

Deliberations

"The process of deliberating upon the finalists is very important, but also somewhat cumbersome… The board should schedule a meeting with an announced executive session to deliberate about the qualifications of the finalists. This is frequently a session with an unpredictable time length; it should be estimated and then corrected during the process as required by law. The board may use many ways of evaluating the qualifications of the finalists and may be assisted by the consultant in the work. The board is expected to deliberate fully as to the finalists and to come to a point of readiness to make a final decision in open session to offer the position. The board should refrain from coming to that selection until back in regular open session. Thus, it is advisable to avoid polling the board or asking for a 'straw vote' prior to going back into regular session. It is, of course, advisable to ask for the readiness of each individual to come to a vote on the final selection. In most cases, if board members have already indicated readiness to make a decision, it is likely that there will emerge a natural consensus once the board is in regular session. Should there be hesitancy, the board should be careful to limit the discussion to non-confidential information and avoid polarization of the board if possible. If the board is ready to vote then the chair/president should proceed. If not, it would be possible to go back into executive session following appropriate legal notice to try to satisfy any need for further discussion of finalists. A candidate will feel best if the decision to offer the position is unanimous.

Interviewing Tips

The following tips may be helpful to board members in the interview process.

• Think about what you most need to know and what the answers to each question will reveal. Do not spend time probing for answers that are not important.

• Usually, the best questions are open-ended, requiring a thoughtful and detailed response. It is helpful to avoid framing the questions in a way that signals the preferred answers, values, etc.

• Allow candidates the opportunity to raise questions based on board questions. This creates a conversational atmosphere which is much less sterile than a "question/answer" format. Candidates should be given leeway to raise questions that are important to them.

• Allow each board member enough time to ask a follow up question if a response seems unclear or incomplete.

• Although the planned questions are important, the art of listening has an important role as well. Attentive listening will help candidates feel their thoughts have been truly communicated.

• Interview questions tend to prompt a response from the "I" perspective. Try to see if the candidate truly involves others in his or her style of work.

• Ask candidates to elaborate on answers and demonstrate their experiences. (What did that involve? How many people assisted you? What responsibilities did you carry out on a weekly/monthly basis?)

• Decide who will ask each question and use the same format throughout. Let the candidates know how many questions there are and the time allotted for the interview. Be sure to ask all of the identified questions of each candidate unless a candidate fails to use the interview time wisely.

• Questions should be straight forward and asked the same way of each candidate. Those giving the questions should do so in a neutral way and respond without obvious judgment about the responses.

• Allow some silence to ensue following a candidate's initial response to help stimulate further thought and information."

Things to Watch for During Interviews

"The overall perspective for judging the responses of candidates should be directly related to the major criteria for the position as decided upon by the board at the inception of the search. These should be applied as equally to the candidates as possible. There are some factors to be aware of in the interview that are of some special help:

1. Does the candidate answer the questions or reword the questions and answer something else?

2. Does the candidate talk a question to death? Does the candidate give too many examples or draw so many variables into the situation that no real answer was given?

3. Does the candidate display a sense of humor and humility? Does the candidate seem to be knowledgeable without appearing to be a 'know it all'?

4. Does the candidate deal realistically with questions? Does the candidate know enough about your school district and community's power groups to answer from an informed perspective?

5. Does the candidate seem more liberal or conservative than what might be typical for the community?

6. Does the candidate listen and watch for board cues before answering?

7. How does the candidate sell, or not sell, himself or herself to you?

8. Does the candidate really answer the questions well or is personality the most persuasive characteristic of the candidate's performance?

9. When provided an opportunity to ask questions, are the candidate's questions reasonable and helpful or superficial?

10. Do the candidate's questions and answers reflect a serious amount of preparation and study of the position, district and community?

11. Do board members feel that the interview has accurately portrayed this candidate's answers, personality and administrative leadership? Does the candidate fit the board's perception of the kind of leader who is needed?

12. If the candidate has not yet been a superintendent, do responses seem practical to the actual district setting and not too theoretical?

13. Do the candidate's responses reveal an interest in students and if so how? Is there a sense of honest, strong commitment to public education?"

Questions You May Be Asked by the Applicants at the End of an Interview

"It is customary to invite the candidate to ask questions of the board. It is usually helpful if all board members feel free to respond or participate in the answers. In many respects, the candidate is also interviewing the board. The questions below are illustrative of those that may occur:

1. Are there any issues below the surface that I should know about?

2. Are there serious personnel problems? Staff members on probation? If so, what is the status?

3. What does the board do in terms of professional development for board members and as a unit?

4. What is the pattern for board voting on significant issues? (5-0, 4-1, 3-2) Is this a consistent pattern with the same alignment?

5. How involved is the community in support of school and district activities?

6. What is the tenure of the current board members and are there plans to run again?

7. How many and what kind of grievances have occurred in the past three years?

8. If I were selected as superintendent, how would you help me become familiar with and involved in the district and the community?

9. Using the standard grading system of A, B, C, D, F, how would you rate each school and the district as a whole?

10. Using the same grading system, how would you rate the effectiveness of this board?

11. How would you grade the district office?

12. What are the top two or three priorities for the board members?

13. Why are you on the board?

14. What do you like most about being a board member? What do you like least?

15. Please describe the ideal superintendent for this school district?

16. Please define board micro-management and to what degree it is evident in the school district?

17. When do an individual board members activities become intrusive in the school district?"

Tips on Telephone Reference Checks

"Frequently the board members as well as the consultant are involved in performing telephone reference checks. Normally, this occurs only in the final stages of the search when finalists have been identified. While the calls may be made to a variety of people, experience has demonstrated that board members and others in a finalist's district may feel particularly responsible for candor when talking to a board member from the searching district. Some tips may help:

1. Have questions written out. They should be pertinent, job related.

2. Call former employers as well as current employers.

3. Try to make the calls at a time and place that will be free of interruptions.

4. Be sure to clarify that you are talking to the appropriate person.

5. Try to establish a friendly atmosphere in beginning the conversation.

6. Ask open ended questions.

7. Ask for more than one example of the candidate's job performance across several dimensions of administration.

8. Be ready to probe for more information if a response seems incomplete or unclear.

9. Be alert to responses that seem deliberately vague; try to follow up with that person or someone else regarding the topic.

10. Ask if the person would hire or recommend the candidate again and why or why not? 11. Ask about areas of weakness or areas in which growth is needed.

12. Ask about relationships with other people and groups (secretaries, teachers, administrators, custodians, etc.).

13. Ask for examples of the candidate's common sense, wisdom, leadership.

14. BE WELL PREPARED TO MAKE NOTES AS YOU TALK."

Considerations Regarding Board-Superintendent Relations

"The philosophical views of the board regarding the nature of board-superintendent relations are critical to the superintendent search process, the type of person who will best fit the school district and the performance of the superintendent following selection. While much of the relationship will be dynamic and developed over time, there are principles that should considered along the way. Effective public education requires strong school boards and strong superintendents who willing assume leadership roles. In a very real sense, the success of students is directly related to the positive nature of the board-superintendent partnership. The board and superintendent are a team; its strength is dependent upon informed, intelligent and balanced cooperation. It is important for the board and superintendent to have a clear understanding of their respective roles, to agree on them and to carry them out. "

Strategies for Reaching Consensus

Consensus Building
By Heidi Burgess, Brad Spangler - September 2003

What is Consensus Building?

Consensus building (also known as collaborative problem solving or collaboration) is a conflict-resolution process used mainly to settle complex, multiparty disputes. Since the 1980s, it has become widely used in the environmental and public policy arena in the United States, but is useful whenever multiple parties are involved in a complex dispute or conflict. The process allows various stakeholders (parties with an interest in the problem or issue) to work together to develop a mutually acceptable solution.

Like a town meeting, consensus building is based on the principles of local participation and ownership of decisions. Ideally, the consensus reached will meet all of the relevant interests of stakeholders, who thereby come to a unanimous agreement. While everyone may not get everything they initially wanted, "consensus has been reached when everyone agrees they can live with whatever is proposed after every effort has been made to meet the interests of all stake holding parties."[1]

Defining Success

It is critical that the definition of success is made clear from the beginning of any consensus-building process. Most consensus-building efforts set out to achieve unanimity. However, sometimes there are "holdouts" who believe their interests will be better served by resisting the proposed agreement. In such cases, it is acceptable for a consensus-building effort to settle for overwhelming agreement that gets as close as possible to meeting the interests of every stakeholder. If some people are not in agreement and might be excluded from the final solution, participants have a duty to make sure that every effort has been made to meet the interests of the holdouts. (This is to their advantage as well, as holdouts may become "spoilers," -- people who try to "spoil" or block implementation of any agreement that is reached.)

Why is Consensus Building Important?

Consensus building is important in today's interconnected society because many problems exist that affect diverse groups of people with different interests. As problems mount, the organizations that deal with society's problems come to rely on each other for help -- they are interdependent. The parties affected by decisions are often interdependent as well. Therefore it is extremely difficult and often ineffective for organizations to try to solve controversial problems on their own. Consensus building offers a way for individual citizens and organizations to collaborate on solving complex problems in ways that are acceptable to all.

Possible Decision Making Strategies

Rank Order Elimination

Participants rank order their choices from top to bottom with the most favored listed at the top. Comparisons are made to see how many individuals have similar rank ordered their choices.   Those with the lowest ranking are reviewed and eliminated from the pool. Those that remain can be rank ordered again.

Pairwise Comparison. Each voter gives a complete ranking of the candidates. For each pair of candidates, the number of voters preferring each are compared. The candidate receiving more votes (just like in Plurality) receives one point.

Fist-to-Five Consensus-Building

Whenever a group is discussing a possible solution or coming to a decision on any matter, Fist-To-Five is a good tool to determine what each person's opinion is at any given time.

**COMBINING YOUR TEAM'S IDEAS:
BUILDING CONSENSUS USING FIST-TO-
FIVE**

To use this technique the Team Leader restates a decision the group may make and asks everyone to show their level of support. Each person responds by showing a fist or a number of fingers that corresponds to their opinion.

Fist
A no vote - a way to block consensus. I need to talk more on the proposal and require changes for it to pass.

1 Finger
  I still need to discuss certain issues and suggest changes that should be made.

2 Fingers
  I am more comfortable with the proposal but would like to discuss some minor issues.

3 Fingers
  I'm not in total agreement but feel comfortable to let this decision or a proposal pass without further discussion.

4 Fingers
   I think it's a good idea/decision and will work for it.

5 Fingers
  It's a great idea and I will be one of the leaders in implementing it.

If anyone holds up fewer than three fingers, they should be given the opportunity to state their objections and the team should address their concerns. Teams continue the Fist-to-Five process until they achieve consensus (a minimum of three fingers or higher) or determine they must move on to the next issue.)

Suggested Citation
Fletcher, A. (2002). *FireStarter Youth Power Curriculum: Participant Guidebook*. Olympia, WA: Freechild Project

The Scoring System. This is a way to reduce your decision down to a game of numbers. Assign positive or negative points to each quality associated with each of your decisions, and keep a total score running for each one.