

DRAFT Executive Leadership Succession Plan

The Leadership School Charter School

Normandy, Missouri

Adopted by the Board of Directors: [Date]

Effective Date: [Date]

Next Scheduled Review: [Date, one year from the adoption date]

I. Purpose of This Plan

The purpose of this Succession Plan is to ensure leadership continuity, operational stability, and fidelity to The Leadership School's mission in the event of either a **planned or unplanned transition** of the Executive Director (ED).

This plan:

- Establishes **clear interim leadership authority**.
- Defines **emergency response protocols**.
- Provides a **structured, transparent process** for planned leadership transitions.
- Clarifies the **role of the Board versus the outgoing Executive Director**.
- Protects the integrity of the hiring and selection process.

II. Guiding Principles

1. Leadership continuity is essential to student success and organizational health.
2. The Board of Directors bears ultimate responsibility for Executive Director succession.
3. Emergency transitions require **speed, clarity, and decisiveness**.
4. Planned transitions require **intentional timelines, transparency, and overlap**.
5. The outgoing Executive Director shall **not participate in candidate selection or evaluation** to preserve fairness and independence.

III. Key Roles Covered by This Plan

- Executive Director (Primary focus)
- Principal
- Director of Students

This plan focuses primarily on the Executive Director role, with interim authority cascading to other senior leaders as outlined below.

IV. Emergency Succession Plan (Unplanned or Immediate Departure)

A. Definition of Emergency Succession

An emergency succession occurs when the Executive Director is unable to fulfill their duties due to:

- Sudden resignation
- Medical emergency
- Termination
- Death or incapacity

- Any unexpected absence exceeding **ten (10) consecutive school days**

B. Interim Executive Director Designation

Upon confirmation of an emergency transition, the Board shall immediately appoint an **Interim Executive Director** according to the following order of succession:

1. **Director of Student Success**
 - Assumes interim authority if available and in good standing
 - Oversees academic, culture, and student-facing operations
2. **Principal**
 - Assumes interim authority if the Director of Student Success is unavailable
 - Focuses on instructional leadership and daily school operations
3. **[Board-Designated Senior Administrator]**
 - Identified annually by the Board as a contingency option

The Board may bypass the order of succession if circumstances warrant and must record justification in meeting minutes.

C. Authority of Interim Executive Director

The Interim Executive Director shall:

- Exercise full operational authority of the charter school
- Maintain continuity of academic programming
- Serve as the primary liaison to the Board
- Initiate Family & Staff Communications
- Execute existing strategic priorities without initiating major new initiatives unless approved by the Board

The Interim ED **may not**:

- Make permanent staffing changes at the senior leadership level
- Enter into long-term contracts without Board approval

D. Immediate Board Actions (Within 48 Hours)

1. Convene an emergency Board meeting
2. Formally appoint the Interim Executive Director
3. Approve internal and external communications
4. Notify the school's authorizer and key partners
5. Establish a Succession Search Committee (if needed)

E. Communication Protocol

- **Staff** notified first (same or next business day)
- **Families and community** notified within 72 hours
- **Authorizer** notified within required timeframe

V. Planned Succession Plan for an Anticipated Departure

A. Notice Period Expectations

The Executive Director is strongly encouraged to provide **at least 6 months' written notice** for a planned transition.

B. Succession Timeline Overview

Timeline	Action
6 months prior	ED notifies Board Chair
5–6 months	Board reviews strategic priorities and leadership profile
4–5 months	Search Committee formed
3–4 months	Candidate recruitment and screening
2–3 months	Finalist interviews
2 months	Board selection and contract approval
1–2 months	Leadership overlap and transition

C. Search Committee Composition

The Board shall appoint a Search Committee consisting of:

- Board members only (preferred)
- Optional external consultant
- No current school employees to avoid any biases
- No outgoing Executive Director to avoid any biases

VI. Role of the Outgoing Executive Director

A. Permitted Responsibilities

The outgoing Executive Director may:

- Prepare organizational documentation and transition materials
- Provide written institutional knowledge summaries
- Support onboarding during and after final selection of candidate by the Board
- Participate in a limited overlap period focused on knowledge transfer

B. Explicit Exclusions

The outgoing Executive Director **shall not**:

- Participate in candidate screening or interviews
- Develop or suggest interview questions
- Evaluate or rank candidates
- Advocate for or against any candidate
- Communicate with candidates regarding selection
- Serve on or advise the Search Committee

This separation is intentional and mandatory to ensure:

- Objectivity
- Equity
- Governance integrity
- Candidate confidence

VII. Interview & Selection Process

A. Candidate Engagement with the School

Candidates may:

- Tour the school
- Observe classrooms
- Meet with Board-designated representatives
- Review publicly available materials

Candidates **may not**:

- Meet privately with the outgoing Executive Director
- Receive informal coaching or insight from the ED beyond publicly available information

B. Interview Structure

1. First-Round Interviews

- Conducted by Search Committee
- Focus on leadership competencies and mission alignment

2. Finalist Interviews

- Conducted by full Board
- Include scenario-based and strategic questions

3. Final Decision

- Made by Board vote
- Documented in meeting minutes

VIII. Overlap & Transition Period

A. Duration

If feasible, a **30–60 day overlap period** will occur between the outgoing and incoming Executive Director.

B. Focus of Overlap

- Financial systems and reporting
- Authorizer relationships
- Strategic priorities
- Staff structure and culture
- Key partnerships
- Documents and TLS Asset Handoff
- Security and Crisis processes

The outgoing ED shall act strictly as a **transition advisor**, not a decision-maker.

IX. Internal Leadership Development

The Executive Director shall maintain and annually update:

- A list of potential internal leaders
- Professional development plans for senior staff
- Emergency delegation protocols

[ED to complete annually and submit to Board]

X. Plan Review & Approval

This Succession Plan shall be:

- Reviewed annually by the Board
- Updated as leadership structure evolves
- Stored securely and accessible to Board leadership

Signatures

Board Chair: _____

Executive Director: _____

Date: _____

Sample Communication for Staff:

Subject: Leadership Update and Continuity Plan

Dear Team,

We are writing to inform you of a leadership update at The Leadership School.

Effective immediately, [Name], our [Title], has been appointed by the Board of Directors to serve as Interim Executive Director following the unexpected departure of [Former ED Name].

The Board has activated its Emergency Succession Plan to ensure continuity, stability, and uninterrupted support for our students and staff. Day-to-day operations will continue as scheduled, and our academic program, school culture, and strategic priorities remain unchanged.

The Interim Executive Director has full authority to lead school operations during this transition and will work closely with the Board to maintain clarity and consistency. No immediate changes to staffing, roles, or expectations are planned.

We recognize that leadership transitions can raise questions. We are committed to keeping staff informed and will share additional updates as appropriate. In the meantime, please continue to direct operational questions to your current supervisors.

Thank you for your professionalism, dedication, and continued focus on our students.

With appreciation,

[Name]
[Title – Board Chair or Interim Executive Director]
The Leadership School Charter School

Sample Communication for Families:

Subject: Important School Leadership Update

Dear The Leadership School Families,

We want to share an important update regarding school leadership.

The Board of Directors has appointed [Name] as Interim Executive Director, effective immediately, following the unexpected departure of [Former ED Name]. This action was taken in accordance with the school's Emergency Succession Plan to ensure continuity and stability.

Please be assured that:

- School operations will continue as normal
- Instruction, student supports, and daily routines are unchanged
- The Board is providing active oversight during this transition

Our focus remains on delivering a safe, supportive, and high-quality educational experience for all students. We appreciate your trust and partnership and will communicate further updates as needed.

If you have questions, please contact [designated email or office].

Thank you for your continued support of The Leadership School.

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Title – Board Chair or Interim Executive Director]
The Leadership School Charter School

Resources Used to outline this document:

Succession Planning Principles

The Board adopts the following core principles:

- Leadership transitions are **inevitable** and should be prepared for proactively. (mocharterschools.org)
- Continuity of leadership maintains academic quality and community trust. ([IndySchool Consultancy](#))
- Succession planning is a **shared responsibility** between the Board and the Executive Director. ([BoardSource](#))
- Plans should be **reviewed annually** and updated as needed.