Middle States Association

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

This policy sets forth the procedures to be followed in the event of the disability, death or departure of the President of the Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS). This policy serves as the succession plan when there is the need for a transition to either an Interim President or a new President.

Section 1: Succession for a Temporary, Unplanned Absence: Short Term. A temporary and unplanned absence is one of less than three months in which it is expected that the President will return to the position of President when the events precipitating his/her absence are resolved. A temporary, unplanned absence is one that arises unexpectedly, in contrast to a planned leave, such as a vacation or sabbatical.

The Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools authorize the Executive Committees of the Commissions to implement the plan for succession in the event of a temporary, unplanned absence of the President.

In the event of an temporary, unplanned absence of the President, the Directors of the Commissions will immediately inform the Chairs of the Commissions (or the Vice Chair/Chair Elect in a Chair's absence) of the absence. As soon as it is feasible, the Chairs will convene a meeting of the two Executive Committees to affirm the procedures prescribed in this plan and provide notification of such action immediately to the full Commissions and the office of the Middle States Association.

The Executive Committees will select a suitable interim replacement. The Executive Committees may also consider the option of the splitting the executive duties among several individuals.

The person appointed as the Acting President shall have the full authority to make decisions and take independent actions as authorized for the President. In the event that the responsibilities are divided among several members of the MSA-CESS staff, the ultimate responsibility for decision-making will rest with the Commissions' Chairs.

The Acting President and/or staff member selected to assume additional responsibilities may be offered a temporary salary increase.

The Executive Committees of the Commissions and/or the Chairs of the Commissions shall be responsible for monitoring the work of the Acting President. Neither the Executive Committees' members nor the Commissions' Chairs will be eligible for compensation for performing these duties.

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Immediately upon transferring the responsibilities to the Acting President, the Commissions' Chairs will notify the Commissions' staff members, members of both Commissions, the President of the Middle States Association Board of Trustees, and the Association Office.

The decision as to when the absent President will return to assume leadership of the Commissions will be determined by the Executive Committees in cooperation with the President. A reduced schedule for a set period of time may be approved with the intention of achieving a full-time commitment.

Section 2: Succession Plan for a Temporary, Unplanned Absence: Long-Term. A long-term absence is one that is expected to last three but not more than 12 months. The procedures and conditions set forth for a temporary, unplanned, short-term absence shall apply.

The decision regarding when the absent President returns to assume leadership of the Commissions will be determined by the Executive Committees in cooperation with the President. They will decide upon a mutually agreed upon schedule and start date. A reduced schedule for a set period of time may be approved with the intention of achieving a full-time commitment.

Section 3: Succession Plan for a Permanent Change in President. A permanent change is one in which it is firmly determined that the President will not be continuing in or returning to the position. The procedures and conditions should be the same for a long-term temporary absence with one addition:

The Executive Committees of both Commissions, or a subset of the Executive Committees as determined by the Chairs of the Commissions will:

a. Determine whether the Executive Committees as a whole will function as the Search and Transition Committee, or appoint a subset of Commissioners from both Commission to serve under the authority of the Executive Committees as the Search and Transition Committee;
b. Reaffirm the process for soliciting nominations for persons to be considered for the position of President;
c. Ensure that the provisions of the policy are followed;
d. Consider the need for outside consulting assistance depending on the circumstances of the transition and the Commissions' capacity to plan and manage the search and transition;
e. Determine the need for an Interim President and plan for recruiting and selecting an Interim President;
f. Review and revise, if necessary, the job description and responsibilities of the President;
g. Direct that position opening is advertised by such means that will ensure that the highest quality of candidates will be informed of and attracted to applying for this position;
h. Interview the finalists for the position recommended by the Search and Transition Committee;
i. Recommend to the Commissions at least two candidates for the Commission for election;
j. Recommend employment contract provisions for the successful candidate to the full Commissions; and
k. Negotiate and finalize contract provisions with the new President.

The Search and Transition Committee will:

a. Begin the search process within 30 days of the date on which the determination by the Executive Committees that the Commissions must undertake a search for a new President;
b. Obtain appropriate assistance by the Commissions' staff in preparing materials for the search and managing the administrative aspects of the search;
c. Screen applications, conduct interviews of applicants, and recommend at least two candidates to the Commissions' Executive Committees for interview and nomination for election at the next scheduled meetings of the Commissions; and
d. Resume the recruiting and selection process should the Commissions fail to elect either of the two candidates recommended by the Search and Transition Committee.

Guidelines for the Search and Transition Process.

a. The search process should combine a broad-based national search with a targeted search process;
b. The national search should be conducted primarily using advertisements for the position of President placed in appropriate national publications such as *Education Week* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* Letters of interest and resumes should be directed to the Chair of the Search Committee in care of the Middle States offices. The Chair of the Commission, the Chairs-Elect of the Commissions, the current President, and selected MSA-CESS staff should screen resumes and select potential eligible candidates to be presented to the full Search Committee. The full Search Committee will then identify three to five individuals to be invited for interviews;
c. The purpose of a national search is to ensure that no potential candidates are missed and that the broadest possible net is cast for the successful candidate. This will also guarantee that the process is transparent and that anyone interested in the position has the opportunity to apply;
d. A targeted search process should also be conducted and involve the solicitation of nominations from Commissioners of both Commissions and the MSA-CESS staff of specific individuals that have been actively involved in the Commissions' work and are known to meet the qualifications. Those individuals should be invited to apply for the position;
e. The purpose of the targeted search process is to ensure that individuals with the qualifications the Commissions seek will be in the pool of applicants. This is considered to be particularly important since employing a President who knows, understands, and actively supports accreditation is key to future growth and success of the Commissions; and

Timeline for Transition Activities. The following tentative timeline is provided as a potential guide for the scheduling of the transition activities in terms of months prior to the beginning of employment:

Actions Prior to the Next Scheduled Meetings of the Commissions	
Six Months	● Advertisements placed in appropriate national publications. ● Invitations to Apply and Qualifications Brochure mailed to potential applicants.
Four Months	● Deadline for applications ● Resumes reviewed and screened by Search and Transition Committee ● Screening interviews conducted

Two Months	● Interviews with the “short list of candidates” by the Executive Committees of the Commissions ● Selection of two candidates to be presented to the Commissions
Actions Following Election of the New President	
Prior to the beginning date of employment	● Contract provisions negotiated and finalized. ● Contract signed by the new President. ● Orientation conducted for the new President