Human Resources Study

KCKPS USD 500

November 2021

This report was prepared at the request of the Kansas City USD 500 administration, by the Kansas Association of School Boards

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USD 500 Kansas City
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Executive Summary

Kansas City district office staff contacted the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) to review the human resources processes and policies related to hiring practices. The areas of the human resources reviewed included:

Current board policies related to hiring practices

Hiring process review

- Review how positions are prioritized, timelines established
- Analyze how training is conducted for staff carrying out hiring processes and procedures
- Analyze internal expectations related to reference checks, credential verification
- Review current processes and procedures utilized by individuals conducting interviews, and making recommendations to the board of education

Job descriptions and roles associated with Human Resources department review

- Review current job descriptions for positions associated with human resources
- Identify key roles and job duties associated with positions

The process KASB utilized to conduct this review included on site interviews with district level staff that are directly involved with the human resources processes, along with building level administrators that carry out phases of the hiring process. These interviews along with a review of the shared documents utilized by the personnel department are the basis for the conclusions and recommendations put forth in this report.

This report includes a section related to the core function areas of human resources. Each section will include an outline of key questions for the given function of human resources, these key questions should serve as a guide as district administration works to implementation the recommendations found within the report. There are also several items in appendices that can be used by the district as a starting point as they revise processes and procedures.

General Recommendations

The following general recommendations address broad themes that emerged during the interviewing of staff and document review. Further details related to the recommendations are included within each section of this report.

1. Establish and document key processes for all core functions of the human resources department.
2. Extensive work must be done with the employee information database, sub-finding system, and application systems to reduce the redundancy of information being manually entered into these systems.
3. Bolster support around securing substitute staff.
4. Adjust the internal transfer policies, timelines, and communication.
5. Establish consistent expectations regarding the checking and documenting of references.
6. Review interview procedures to ensure consistent processes are utilized between buildings as it relates conducting interviews of candidates.
7. Establish systemwide process to reduce competition between hiring managers.
8. Development of common communication expectations when an offer is extended to a desired candidate.
9. Develop common consistent training and support in employee evaluation/improvement process and procedures.
10. Establish clear pathways for initial training of staff, and ongoing professional development.

The recommendations within this study are intended to provide guidance to Kansas City district administration as they consider the design and structure of the human resources to best serve the students within the Kansas City Schools.

In the review of the Human Resources department for Kansas City Kansas Public Schools there was a general theme of great people committed to doing their job, but a great deal of frustration about the overall functioning of the department. The frustration stemmed from a lack of efficient use of systems, disjointed processes, siloed work, and a basic lack of knowledge or skills due to minimal training and support for the staff. These challenges can be overcome by intentionally focusing on training, collaboration, and communication of a clear vision for the department. The work of Human Resources for an organization the size of Kansas City Kansas Public Schools, never stops, however the old saying of "going slow to go fast" applies to the needed training for staff and establishing clear processes. As shared by the employees of the Human Resources department, they are often the target of much criticism from the board, staff and community, these employees want it to be better, however that will not be possible unless intentional time and attention is given to the recommendations that follow in this report.

Respectfully,

Dr. Brian C. Jordan
Executive Director
Kansas Association of School Boards

Recommendations

1. Establish and document key processes for all core functions of the human resources department.

Summary of Findings:

A consistent theme that emerged when interviewing staff, is there has been a tremendous amount of turnover and change within the Human Resource department over the last few years. This had led to historic knowledge about certain processes and procedures being lost. This has also created an environment where individuals caring out specific roles within the department do not have a general understanding of what others do and how other functions get accomplished. This is troubling, in the event of an untimely illness or death of one of the Human Resource staff there could be severe consequences on the department's ability to perform their core functions. Consideration should be given to providing additional support in some of these areas such as employee benefits, substitute staff acquisition, to name a couple.

Next Steps:

- Review the Core Functions document found within the **Appendix A** of this report.
- Establish weekly or biweekly opportunities to collaborate, and train staff. A result of these sessions would be clear checklists related to the core functions that could be used to cross train staff, and train new staff around the various roles of the department.

2. Extensive work must be done with the employee information database, sub-finding system, and application systems to reduce the redundancy of information being manually entered into these systems.

Summary of Findings:

100% of the employees interviewed expressed a great deal of frustration with the lack of compatibility between the systems used between the Finance department and Human resources. There were consistent examples given where employees were entering the same exact data multiple times in different systems. There were also many examples given related to the use of multiple "shared spreadsheets" to track and keep information related to new employees, training completed, etc. Another common concern shared that indicates systems are not being synced in an efficient manner is the amount of time multiple interviewees shared that they spend doing payroll, or adjustments to employees' payroll. The use of work arounds, and the manual adjusting of information within multiple systems are an indicator that the information infrastructure of the district is not functioning efficiently, or there is a lack of training for the employees to effectively utilize the information infrastructure. In this study it appears to be combination of the two.

Improving this area would allow for improvements in customer service, as there are too many opportunities for misinformation to be entered within the multiple systems.

Next Steps:

- Assemble a guiding committee consisting of key decision makers from Finance and Human Resources to explore systems that address these inefficiencies, **<u>and</u>** that maximize the use of human capital for both departments.
- Once system has been selected establish consistent training for getting staff up to speed with system.
- Establish standing collaboration time for those individuals most engaged with the system to cross train and support one another on the use of the systems.

3. Bolster support around securing substitute staff.

Summary of Findings:

In conversation with district staff and building level staff on the topic of securing substitute staff, there were some troubling discoveries. It was communicated that instead of using the “sub-finder” system as intended employees will just call or email their request. This again is an area of inefficiency, these systems are designed to reduce paperwork by syncing with the employee management system to document leave, changes in pay, pay substitutes, etc. Staffing in this area has been strained and reduced over the last several months, even though the needs for substitute staffing is on the rise.

Next Steps:

- Add additional staffing within this area.
- Get employees trained on how to use the “sub-finder” system.
- Look at staggering schedules for staff in the substitute staffing area so there is staff available prior to the traditional workday and after.

4. Adjust the internal transfer policies, timelines, and communication.

Summary of Findings:

In conversation with district staff and building level staff on the topic of in district transfers there were concerns around a lack of communication and timing. The current window of transfers happens in mid to late spring. This is too late for building hiring managers to really know when and or where their openings, are going to be as it relates to securing outside the district candidates. There was also frustration from building hiring managers about the lack of communication if one of their employees was looking to transfer. It was mentioned that often the first time they hear about one of the employees being is transferred is when they received notice that someone is being transferred.

Next Steps:

- Implement an early notification incentive for employees that tell the district they are retiring by December 1. This would allow of a better sense of where people might be seeking to transfer.

- Establish a three-pronged approval process for transfers, sending supervisor, receiving supervisor and district level human resources. There must be oversight at the district level to ensure that certain buildings are not constantly serving as just training grounds for new employees before their transfer to other buildings. There is an example process in **Appendix B.**
- Make sure the online application system is being utilized to notify, apply, and process the transfer request.

5. Establish consistent expectations regarding the checking and documenting of references.

Summary of Findings:

There were inconsistent responses given in the interviews when visiting with district level and building level staff on the topic of checking references on employees. There seemed to be an assumption the other entity was checking and documenting the references. Checking three references was consistently given as the expectation but it was never clear who was responsible to check and document the three references, district or building level staff. Additionally, there was never any clear responses given as to the type of references that must be checked.

Next Steps:

- Establish consistent expectations related to checking references, see suggested changes on Reference Checking Template in **Appendix C**.
- Utilize a consistent framework for checking the references that can be shared within the online application system**.**

6. Review interview procedures to ensure consistent processes are utilized between buildings as it relates conducting interviews of candidates.

Summary of Findings:

In conversations with staff related to interview processes, there were inconsistent practices mentioned. Most of the hiring managers interviewed mentioned the use of an interview team, and the sharing of candidates resumes prior to the interview. There was mention of a consistent interview framework being utilized or training given to hiring managers prior to the interview process

Next Steps:

- Establish a short annual training with administrators that are conducting interviews with the district. This training should include the following:
  - Common candidate qualities that are expected for all positions within district (**Appendix D**)

- Questions that cannot be asked during the interview process (**Appendix E)**
- Guidelines for identifying key characteristics desired for the position, this will assist in gathering objective feedback when hiring. (**Appendix F**)
- Practices that will be utilized to ensure confidentiality, *e.g.*, confidentiality agreement and shredding of personal notes from team members
- How to assemble the interview team and considerations for getting the proper people involved
- Where and how to access district vetted interview questions. These serve as a starting point, with building administrators adding position specific questions if necessary.
- Expectations related to interview process;
  Tour of the building?
  Who leads the tour?
  How are questions asked during interview; one person versus each person has specific questions?
  Expected timeline for following up with individuals post interview?
  One interview versus multiple?
- Use of and content included on the Interview Recommendation Form

- Establish process for the vetting of the appropriateness and alignment to desired districtwide characteristics.

7. Establish systemwide process to reduce competition between hiring managers.

Summary of Findings:

There was frustration from hiring managers about the lack of coordination around the establishment of interviews and offers being extended to candidates. There was mention that a candidate may have multiple interviews within a 24-hour window, and then pit one building against another when it came time for the candidate to make a decision about where they wanted to work. Hiring managers indicated they have no idea if the individual has other interviews scheduled or the timing of those, and worried that if the process of offering positions to the applicants could be confusing for the candidate if they are receiving multiple offers within a short window of time. Concerns were shared that if the building managers are new and not up to speed on the informal processes they may miss out on candidates, and other concerns were shared about some buildings being "less desirable" so candidates would wait for an offer from a "more desirable" building within the district. These two concerns can potentially create buildings with higher than acceptable turnover rates or make it extremely difficult to staff certain buildings.

Next Steps:

- Individuals at the district office should be designated to review completed applicants' files that have been submitted for openings. They would then flag or note within the online system any concerns related to improper license for the position that they applied for, or missing application materials. This would decrease the opportunity an applicant is interviewed for a position that they are not qualified to fill.

- Consider utilizing communication methods within the online application system to flag or identify concerns with applicants as they are vetted at the district and building level. This will improve communication and efficiency when vetting candidates. Both district and building level staff should be trained in how to use the online application system to note concerns.
- As candidates are scheduled for interviews, interviews should be noted in the online application system, and interview notes or feedback should be submitted within the system. This will again improve communication between buildings and potentially save time during the vetting and interviewing process.
- At the elementary level, the district should consider utilizing a system wide interview/screening process to assist with aligning candidate strengths to building needs. See example interview process, **Appendix G**

8. Development of common communication expectations when an offer is extended to a desired candidate.

Summary of Findings:

In the current process hiring managers extend an informal offer to the candidate, then email the district office to notify them to "hire" a certain individual. It is a very informal process that raised concerns from both district and building level staff. Timing and consistency were the two biggest concerns raised. If the email was not noticed by someone at the district office immediately it could delay the formal offer being extended. In this area there seems to be many opportunities to do more research and verification during the application process, that would streamline the hiring process after interviews have been conducted. This is also an area where the district office should look at roles that staff are performing so they are not stretched too thin to do ensure that applications are complete, licensure is accurate for positions of interest, and other necessary information is readily available to expeditiously finish the hiring process once the offer has been given and accepted by the candidate. This come back to ensuring staff at both the district and building level are able utilize a well-managed online application system that syncs with other information systems within the district and state.

Next Steps:

- Extending the offer to the candidate should be done by the person that will have direct supervision of person that is being hired. This offer can only be extended after verification of experience, degree, salary, and benefits come from the district office.
- The district should consider developing a recommendation to hire form within the online application system, to expedite this communication. Once the individual accepts the offer the newly hired person then works with the point person at the district office to complete necessary paperwork.
- Formal state and federal background checks should be conducted on any candidate who has a Kansas license that has been issued for more than one calendar year. There are background checks conducted with the issuing of a new license, but there is no mechanism of warning if an individual has committed an offense after the license was issued.

- When extending an offer some consistent contingencies should be communicated to the candidate, such as;
    - "This offer is contingent on the board's approval of your hire "
    - If background checks have not come back yet, "This offer is contingent on clear state and federal background checks, and the board's approval of your hire."
- Upon the candidate accepting the offer, the district should consider sending a formal "Letter of Intent to Hire," that outlines the contingencies that must be met for their hire. This can be facilitated through the online application system. See example in **Appendix G**
- After the board has approved the hiring of the candidate a preliminary contract should be issued to the candidate with the expectation that the candidate signs and returns the contract. This contract outlines official start date and date the candidate was formally hired. This can be facilitated through the online application system. See example in **Appendix H**
- Communication to unsuccessful candidates should occur after the board has acted and approved the personnel report that includes the individual that is being recommended for hire. There is a small chance that a board could reject the recommendation to hire, waiting to communicate with these individuals would allow the hiring administrator to look at their second choice.
- Notification of unsuccessful candidates should be done using the emailing feature within the online application system. This letter can be personalized using template letters.
- Applicant files and materials should be maintained for 180 days then destroyed; this covers the period that an applicant could file formal complaint with the Office of Civil Rights.

9. Develop common consistent training and support in employee evaluation/improvement process and procedures.

Summary of Findings:

When questions were asked around staff evaluation processes and procedures, the building leaders that had been there for an extended period indicated that they had received training around how to access the system and process. The newer building leaders indicated that they had not received training in this area, but also acknowledge this was likely due to COVID. There were inconsistencies stated when asked about the level of support received when seeking to put an employee on an improvement plan. Additionally, the use of investigations seemed disjointed from the other processes and procedures established around employee evaluation and improvement. Investigations seemed to all land on individuals at the district level, with very little guidance on criteria that establish whom is the lead person that should be leading the investigation, building or district level staff.

The area of employee evaluation, and improvement processes area critical to the district understanding the needs of future training and determining areas to adjust within the system to reduce employee underperformance. This area of human resources should be closely aligned to the ongoing professional development of staff to ensure that system is responsive to the current needs of staff.

Next Steps:

- Establish annual training for building leaders around evaluation procedures and processes. Included in the training:
  - Information related to evaluation laws, timelines, and systems
  - Established district performance expectations
  - Best practices in providing useable feedback to the employees
  - Procedures for placing staff on improvement plans
  - Guidelines and criteria for conducting investigations
- Establish district expectations around best practices related to staff evaluation. **Appendix J**

10. Establish clear pathways for initial training of staff, and ongoing professional development.

Summary of Findings:

When discussing training of staff there emerged two distinctions that need to be made. There is the need to onboard new staff around all the legally mandated trainings and accessing the system to take time off, check their paychecks, etc. The other area of training is within establishing district expectations of performance with the roles for which individuals were hired. Currently these are all completed by a couple people within human resources.

Next Steps:

- Utilize technology for employees to access the legally mandated training requirements. Use an online system for them to complete the training and monitor their completion.
- Move the certified training that establishes district expectations around to the curriculum, instruction, and assessments to the department of the district that oversees those areas of the district.
- Establish training pathway for those individuals that are in supervisor roles over classified staff, such as head custodians, directors, etc. This could be done within human resources.

Appendices

Appendix A

Human Resources Core Functions

Core Function	Actions	Steps to Complete Action	Questions to address	Persons Responsible
Recruiting				
	Identification of openings			
		Approval of openings		
			Is it new or replacement?	
			Who has final say on the posting of the opening?	
			Does this position fit with the broader goals and priorities of the district and buildings?	
		Defining qualities required within openings		
			What licenses are legally required of candidate?	
			What specific skills or qualities must they possess to be successful in this role?	
			What are the preferred skills or experiences related to this opening?	
			Who will they directly report to within the position?	
			What are the terms of the position, certified vs classified, full time vs part time?	

	Connecting with potential candidates			
		Identifying pools of candidates		
			Where do candidates exist that fit the above defined qualities?	
			Who within our community can help with us accessing quality candidates?	
			What are ways that we can build a sustainable candidate pool?	
		Informing Transfer Candidates		
			How are openings internally communicated?	
		Communication channels		
			Which channels of communication best align with the types of candidates we hope to attract for the defined openings?	
		Marketing openings		
			Why would candidates look at us?	
			What message is resonating with the candidates that we desire?	

Core Function	**Actions**	**Steps to Complete Action**	**Questions to address**	**Persons Responsible**
Applying				
	Accessing the application			
		Aligning application to opening		

		How is the application used for the position aligned to the necessary information that must be collected for the opening? How does the application for certified, administration, and classified differ?
Completing the application	Access to application	Where can candidates find the application? What are potential barriers that candidates may be experiencing when trying to access the application?
	Completion of application	How long does it take the application to fully complete the application? What items should the candidate have available to successfully complete the application
	Transfer applicants process for applying	How does the process for internal candidates differ from external candidates? How does the timing of transfer request impact other openings within the district?
	Submission of items	What items must be completed to fully complete a certified application/classified application?

		Support for completion		
			Who and how do applicants receive support as they go through the application submission process?	

Core Function	Actions	Steps to Complete Action	Questions to address	Persons Responsible
Vetting/Screening				
	Verifying completed application			
		All components required are within the application system		
			What process exist to ensure an application is complete before released to individuals doing the hiring?	
	Verifying accuracy of application			
		Verifying license and credentials are creditable		
			Who and how is this initial verification completed in a timely fashion?	
	Screening applicants for hiring			
		Comparing applicant against fundamental skills or qualities required for position		

			How do we ensure that individuals conducting the hiring across the district for similar roles initially screen for fundamental qualities associated with the position?	
		Researching candidate's work experiences and references	How many references are required for the different types of positions and how is this feedback documented? Who is responsible for conducting this type of research?	
		Prioritizing applicants	Are all positions that are open equal? How do buildings of highest need or those with highest rate of turnover get priority in the transfer and hiring of applicants?	
		Consideration of Transfer Applicants	What is the process for sending and receiving transfers, does this require approval by both the sender and receiver? Are requirements for transfer eligibility clearly defined and understood by candidates and people that do the hiring?	

Core Function	Actions	Steps to Complete Action	Questions to address	Persons Responsible
Interviewing				
	Timing of Interviews			

		Individual versus team interviews		
			Do multiple hiring managers coordinate dates/times to conduct team interviews? How are candidate interview dates and times documented to provide candidates a positive efficient process?	
	Developing Interview Framework			
		Defining foundational skills/attributes		
			How does the district define foundational areas to address during the interview process?	
	Training Interview Team			
			How is consistency in the interview process ensured across the district?	
			How are areas of liability addressed and communicated in the training of hiring managers and interview teams?	
	Documenting Interview Process			
			How are notes, impressions of the hiring manager and interview teams documented, and retained?	

Core Function	Actions	Steps to Complete Action	Questions to address	Persons Responsible
Offering				
	Extending conditional offer			
		Consistent language		

			Is there a script utilized by the hiring manger to communicate with the candidate their intent to hire with certain conditions? Whom does the candidate communicate with upon their acceptance or rejection of the offer?	
	Confirming accurate salary and benefits		What is the timing of the salary and benefits information being extended with the conditional offer, simultaneous to conditional offer, after conditional offer, etc.? What is expected timeframe between conditional offer and the salary and benefits information being shared with offered candidate? What is the process for the candidate if they have questions as they are considering the offer, salary, and benefits? How does the district ensure that the candidate does not leverage one offer against another within the system?	

Core Function	Actions	Steps to Complete Action	Questions to address	Persons Responsible
Hiring				
	Verification of levels of education and experience			

Checking background of candidates	How are references and background checks verified, and assured before the candidates go to the board?
Taking candidates to the board of education for hire	What is included in the board's information they receive about the candidates? What is the turnaround between accepting the position and hired?
Informing candidate of hire after board meeting	How, and what is communicated to candidate after board has taken formal action? How and when does the candidate schedule their on boarding training?
Informing unsuccessful candidates	When are unsuccessful candidates communicated with in relation to the board taking action to hire?

Core Function	Actions	Steps to Complete Action	Questions to address	Persons Responsible
Training				
	Fulfilling minimum required training			
			When, what, and how are minimal requirements fulfilled for new hires? How is annual training of employees accomplished, and ensured?	
	Foundational training around district foundational expectations/practices			
		Requiring job specific training		
			When, how, and what training is expected for different roles within the district; certified teachers, paras, aides, custodians? How are substitute employees best equipped to be successful?	
	Extended training to build capacity within system			
		Leadership development opportunities		
			How are leaders identified and encourage to engaged in further development to lead I their current	

			roles? What opportunities have been identified and offered within the district to build leadership capacity within the different levels of the system?	
		Succession planning and develop of future staff	How as the district initially focused on developing the next generation of leaders, and supervisors?	

Core Function	**Actions**	**Steps to Complete Action**	**Questions to address**	**Persons Responsible**
On Going Employee Support				
	Changes in salary category due to education/training		How are the changes communicated to the HR department? Who is responsible for ensuring that information is accurate within the system(s)?	
	Changes in voluntary benefits		How are the changes communicated to the HR department? Who is responsible for ensuring that information is accurate within the	

			system(s)?	
	Staff absences			
		FMLA		
		Maternity Leave		
		Sick Leave Pool		
		Securing Substitutes		
			How are systems being utilized to improve efficiency in the process of securing substitutes? How is information collected and transferred from the finder system to the employees' records?	
	Physical and mental health support			
		Mental Health		
			What kind of supports are accessible for employee wellness?	

Core Function	Actions	Steps to Complete Action	Questions to address	Persons Responsible
Staff Evaluation and Performance				
	Evaluation processes and procedures			
		Consistent Timelines Districtwide		
			How are state statues related to the evaluation of certified staff	

		universally communicated and shared with evaluators? How does the district communicate expected dates and timelines for evaluation completion? What are safeguards established to ensure statutes and timelines are met?
	Common expectations around steps in process	How is training delivered annually to evaluators and evaluates around district processes? How evaluation best practices reinforced and shared within the district?
	Feedback to evaluators on their evaluations	Who and how is feedback given to the evaluators around the evaluations that they have completed?
	Using evaluation data to drive professional development planning	How is data used from completed evaluations to identify and develop relevant professional development for certified and classified staff?
Improvement Plans		

Putting employee on improvement plan	Who has the ability and what are the minimum standards/requirements that must be met by employee to avoid being placed on plan
Follow up on improvement and or lack of improvement	What is the established system of support for evaluator leading improvement efforts? What is the standard timeframe utilized for providing feedback to employee on their improvement efforts? How do conversations and improvement efforts get documented? How are improvement efforts shared with the appropriate district administration so they can share with the appropriate groups?
Transitioning from improvement plans to dismissal	What are the established timelines for these decisions within the district? Who has final say in these decisions?

How is the process communicated to the employee, and then documented?
How and when are these decisions shared with the appropriate district administration so they can share with the appropriate groups, (payroll, HR, board)?

Employee Dismissal

Documentation for dismissal

How does this documentation differ between certified teachers new to the district versus experienced, and classified staff?
Where is the information contained, and how is verified to have been shared with the employee prior dismissal?
What support or training is given to supervisors that are in the process of documenting this information?

Communication of dismissal to employee

What are the district established timelines for communicating nonrenewal to certified staff?

	What are the expectations of documentation and witnesses for these types of conversations? What training or support is given to supervisors as they prepare for these conversations?
Investigating employee situations	What triggers district level investigations versus supervisor led investigations? How are supervisors trained to lead and communicate the findings of the investigations? What are the expected turnaround times between launching investigation and concluding investigation? How is information about findings, progress, and next steps communicated to the supervisor, and the employee?

Appendix B

Proposed-USD 500 Certified Teacher Voluntary Transfer Procedures- Proposed

Purpose: *To ensure equitable, demand-based distribution of teachers to protect the academic interest of students and optimize job satisfaction for our teachers in a fair and transparent way.*

--Teachers will apply via AppliTrack, the district employment portal, so that administrators have all the needed information to select candidates for their open positions. They will then apply for desired positions within the system.
Their request for transfer will be approved within the AppliTrack system by their supervising administrator.
--Administrators will then view candidates that have applied within AppliTrack.
--Transfer Candidates not selected or interviewed will receive an email indicating the status once the new hire has been made.
—Teachers seeking to transfer will need to reapply the following year within the AppliTrack system.
The following criteria will be considered as transfer requests are reviewed:

- Certification required for open position
- Desired characteristics or qualities candidate possesses that align with demands of the position
- Experience in similar position
- Needs of the building teacher has requested to transfer to along with the needs of the building teacher is transferring from
- Past performance as documented on evaluations

Appendix C

Reference Checking Template for Hiring New Employees

You can use this template to help you check your applicant's references when you are hiring for a new job. Reference checks can help you verify the claims made by applicants in their interview and help you make more informed hiring decisions.

Suggested steps for checking references

Step 1: Obtain referee details from your interviewees or shortlisted applicants

At the interview stage, ask your applicants for reference details and get their permission to contact them. References are usually past or current employers of the applicant, but they can also be anyone who is able to provide details about the person's character, education, or suitability for the job. Be aware that some applicants may be reluctant to have their current employer know that they are applying for another job.

Step 2: Decide what you want to ask the referees

Before you contact the reference, you should check what factors you need to check first. Are there any particular aspects of their application or their interview that you want to verify? Do you have any concerns about the applicant's suitability that the referee may be able to provide clarification on?

You can use the below to assist you with compiling your questions. The template has been colour coded to assist you to complete it accurately. You simply need to replace the <red> writing with what applies to your employee and situation.

Step 3: Contact the referees

Think about the best time to contact the references. For some references, you may need to consider arranging a specific time to talk where they won't be busy and will have time to think about their answers.

Step 4: Choose a successful applicant

Use the information that you've collated during the reference check, as well as their interview and application, to help you pick the best person for the job.

Proposed-District Expectations Related to Checking References

1. At least three references must be contacted prior to an offer being extended to any applicant.
2. A minimum of at least one reference must be contacted that has had a supervisory relationship with the candidate.
3. A minimum of at least one reference must be contacted via phone, or video conference. The remaining reference checks can be done via the confidential reference survey within the online application system.

Reference Check

Applicant:	**Date:**
Position applied for:	**Phone:**
Referee's details:	**Title:**
Reference check conducted by:	

My name is <your name> and I'm calling to conduct a reference check for <name of applicant> who is being considered for a position with my business <name of business>. Your details have been provided to me by <applicant's name> and I would first like to check if you are prepared to provide a reference?	**Yes** **No**
The reference check will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Is this a good time for you? If not, when is a convenient time for us to continue this conversation?	**Call back** **Proceed**

What is the nature of your relationship with the applicant?		
In what capacity is/was the applicant employed by your business?		
What were the dates of their employment?	From:	To:
What duties and responsibilities does/did the applicant have?		
What the applicant's reason for leaving?		
General performance questions		
How would you describe the applicant's overall work performance?		
What would you say are the applicant's strengths?		
What would you say are the applicant's development areas (e.g., weaknesses)?		
Have you had any concerns with their performance? If yes, please explain when these issues were identified? When were they discussed with the individual? What work are their doing to improve and what progress has been made?		

Can you comment on the applicant's: - reliability - punctuality - attendance - professionalism - <insert other factors where relevant>	
<In this section, you should prepare your list of questions based on the skills or attributes required for the job, for example: *In this role, the applicant is required to be very well organized and be able to manage a very busy office.* *Please describe <applicant's name> ability to organize their workload?>*	
Would you re-employ the applicant? Why/why not?	
Do you have any final comments?	
Thank you for taking the tame to provide feedback. If you wish to provide any further information, you can contact me on <your contact details>.	

Appendix D

Interview Rating Sheet

Interview Rating Sheet

Candidate's Name: ______________________ **Date:** ______________________

For the Position of: ______________________ **Rater:** ______________________

	Rating Scale: *(guide on backside)*
1	*Not observed*
2	*Weak*
3	*Meets minimum requirements*
4	*Above Average*
5	*Outstanding!*

Overall Rating: (Circle One)
Green-Good Fit Need to Hire
Yellow-Possible Fit
Red-Not a Fit

		-Comments -
Professional Culture		
Verbal Communication		
Education/Training		
Experience		
Knowledge of Effective Instruction		
Curriculum		
Student Management		
Professional Growth		
Professional/Personal Reflection		
What are the perceived strengths?		
What are the perceived weaknesses?		
Overall Reaction to applicant and/or General Comments		

*Interviewer's notes, references contacted, candidates willingness to consider other assignments, or other items not noted elsewhere: (on backside).

Interview Rating Sheet

Interviewer's notes:

RATER'S GUIDE FOR COMPLETING THE INTERVIEW RATING SHEET:

When completing the Interview Rating Sheet, the rater should comment on one or more specific items within each general category. The specific items listed below are given as examples and are not intended to be exhaustive. Raters should feel free to offer comments that are appropriate on the Interview Rating Sheet.

Professional Culture	Appearance - dress and grooming, confidence and poise, sense of humor, friendly, shows energy and enthusiasm, emphasizes personal strengths, maintains good eye contact, displays appropriate manners, avoids criticizing self and others, displays no distracting mannerisms, physically fit. Understanding of collaborative culture to support student needs and learning
Verbal Communication	Good word choices, answers in a concise, well-organized manner, sincere answers, listens well, correct grammar, speech is easily understandable, voice is well modulated and pleasant.
Education/Training	Possesses minimum level for certification or licensure, possesses more training than is required, degrees achieved, intensive inservice in a particular area, self-taught in a particular area of interest, on the job training.
Experience	Student teaching, practicum or work experience, special skills or/work related challenges, volunteer work, previous experience related to this position.
Knowledge of Effective Instruction	Speaks the language, knows how to transfer knowledge into practice, states examples of having utilized effective techniques.
Curriculum	Conveys an understanding of the area, conveys a thorough knowledge, knowledge is current,
Student Management	Conveys knowledge of effective student discipline techniques, classroom environment,
Professional Growth	Shows interest in continuing as an educator, commitment to continued professional growth.
Professional/Personal Reflection	Demonstrates an awareness of how personal actions contribute to their success, personally and professionally
Overall Reaction to applicant and/or General Comments	Your personal and professional reactions to the impression created by the candidate during the interview session. General comments may include information about expected permanence in the community.

Appendix E

Questions That Should Never Be Asked in The Interview

1. How old are you? When were you born? What is your date of birth? You seem awfully young to have had so much experience in the field of education, how old are you anyway?

2. What church do you go to? Do you attend religious services regularly? Do you ever have to miss work because of your religion? Do you consider yourself a religious person? Does your religion prevent you from working on weekends (or eating certain foods or drinking with associates...etc.)? I see you are wearing a cross (or mezuzah); are you Catholic or Jewish?

3. What country are you from? You have an interesting accent. Where are your people from? I have a friend with a name like yours and he's (Armenian, or Polish, or Italian). Is that what you are?

4. What kind of work does your spouse do? Does your spouse work? How much money does your spouse make? Does your spouse contribute to the family income?

5. How is your family life? Are you married (or divorced, separated, living with anyone, engaged, etc.)? How are you and your spouse getting along? Are you planning to get married (or divorced, or separated, etc.) in the near future?

6. Have you ever been arrested? Have you ever had any trouble with the law? Has a bonding company ever refused to bond you?

7. How's your health? Have you ever collected "workers compensation" for a job-related injury? Do you have high blood pressure? Are you overweight? Do you have a handicap that would prevent you from meeting the demands of this job? Are you on any type of medication?

8. What is the lowest salary you will accept? What is your minimum salary requirement? How much money do you need to take this job? How's your credit rating? How much in debt are you? How much money do you owe?

9. Do you own your own home (or car or other real estate)?

10. How many children do you have? Do you have any children? Why don't you have any children? What are your plans for raising a family?

Appendix F

Suggested Tabulation Sheet

Ranking 1 Through 5

5—Being the Highest

1—Being the Lowest

The table below should be completed by each interviewer, independently. Prior to each interviewer completing the table independently, list the top priorities/characteristics the team agreed they were seeking in a candidate in the spaces down the left side of the table. Across the top of the columns to the right side of the table interviewers should write in the names of each candidate interviewed, in the order they were interviewed. After this information has been completed in the same manner by each team member, the team members should independently go through and rank each candidate against the agreed upon priorities or characteristics. These rankings are totaled in the bottom line below each candidate's name. These totals then allow the individual team member to see how the different candidates rank against all the desired characteristics or priorities. Once each team member has had an opportunity to complete their independent ranking of the candidates, all team members share their rankings.

Notes	**Candidates Interviewed**				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Top Desired Criteria					
Total					

Appendix G

Example Certified Hiring Process for Happyville Schools

Selection Order of Candidates:

1. Building with highest number of openings (Opening to Section Ratio)
2. Date resignation letter received in personnel office for earliest opening
3. Date of Board action on nonrenewal/termination for earliest opening if no letters of resignation

In the Event of a Tie with two principals desiring the same candidate:

1. Candidate is placed at school of PDS previous assignment, or previous work experience in district
2. No prior experience in the district – school with greatest "at-risk percentage"

Hiring after Selection of Candidates:

1. Once the selection has been made it becomes the principals' responsibility to check references, and offer the position, district office will run background checks on all the green candidates
2. Openings that occur after the selection date:
    a. We will work through the remaining green recommended candidates until they are placed
    b. Once the green candidates are place, if we have remaining openings, we could hold a second interview date if needed

Interview Day Configuration:

Four or five interview stations with two principals at each:

Elementary A/Elementary B
Elementary C/Elementary D
Elementary E/Elementary F
Middle School (optional)

Interview Process:

Interviews conducted in two parts. Candidate is here for a total of 1 hour and interviews for 30 minutes with two separate teams.

A = with one set
B = with additional set

3 of 4 administrators must agree to the hire

Candidate designates elementary interest

Interview Rating Sheet (see below): marked as green (yes), yellow (possibility), red (no)

Interview days:

The following dates are reserved at District Office:

Monday, April 10, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. – room 112
Thursday, April 13, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. – room 112
*Friday, April 14, 2012, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (this will be a ½ day session to establish placements) – personnel office conference room

Appendix H

Letter of Intent for Employment

USD 253 Letter of Intent for Employment

For:
Sent By: amy.larson

Completed By: Applicant -

Sent On: 4/27/2017 9:44am CT
Completed: 4/28/2017 9:36am CT

Dear

Welcome to the Emporia Public Schools family! We are excited to have you join our team.

Please consider this as a formal letter of intent for employment with USD 253 Emporia Schools. The Emporia Board of Education will act on your official employment recommendation at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

Employment is not final until approved by the Board of Education and your background check is complete.

Your position is covered under our negotiated Master Agreement for certified staff members. Please read it carefully as this letter serves as a binding contract between USD 253 and the employee. Any break in this contract is subject to the provisions in the master agreement.

Final salary placement must be confirmed by the employee providing transcripts and validating contractual years of experience.

If you have additional questions, please let me know. We are here to support you. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely, Dr. Andrew Koenigs
Associate Superintendent of Human Resources
I acknowledge and understand the content of this letter.

X	Signed Stamped: 4/27/2017 1:11:09 PM; 192.208.30.191;

Appendix I

Contract for Educational Professional

CONTRACT FOR EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONAL
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 253, EMPORIA, KS

This contract is made and entered into this 26th of April, 2017, by and between the Board of Education of Unified School District No. 253, Lyon County, Kansas, hereinafter called the "Board [illegible], hereinafter called the "Educational Professional", at Unified School District #253.

The parties hereto agree that the Educational Professional shall be employed by the Board as an employee of said Unified School District No. 253, Lyon County, Kansas for the school year 2017-2018 as defined and scheduled by the Board, which shall include at least 1285.5 hours of teaching and other assignments as designated by the Board starting August 9, 2017 including but not limited to **GRADE 7 SCIENCE** at Unified School District #253. *A minimum base salary of $34,700.00 payable in twelve (12) equal installments, on or about the 15th day of each month, commencing September 15, 2017, subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. The services to be performed by the Educational Professional hereunder shall be determined and assigned by the Superintendent of Schools and the Educational Professional shall be subject to the policies, orders, rules and regulations of the Board; however, said policies, orders, rules and regulations are not a part of this contract. The Board reserves the right to transfer or reassign the Educational Professional to any other school, or to any educational project or program of the school district for which the Educational Professional is qualified. The signature of the educational professional below ensures agreement with the additional binding terms and conditions of employment of the Emporia Board of Education policies and the Master Contract.

2. This contract is contingent upon the Educational Professional being and remaining certificated during the term of employment hereunder with respect to the position for which the Educational Professional is employed as provided by law; in the event the Educational Professional shall be unable to furnish to the Board and to maintain an applicable Kansas Instructor's Certificate to be in full force and effect during the term of employment hereunder this Contract shall be null and void, terminated and canceled.

3. This contract is subject to termination by the Board of Education without further proceedings and without reference to any other law or contractual agreement if the results of the criminal history records check reveal that the applicant has been convicted of any offense or attempt to commit any offense specified in K.S.A. 72-1397, and amendments thereto.

4. This Contract is subject to the terms and provisions of the Kansas Cash Basis Law and the Kansas Budget Act, and amendments thereto or supplements thereto respectively, and to all other applicable United States and Kansas Laws.

*5. Salary for 2017-2018 will be determined upon completion of negotiations. Salary placement on the salary schedule is based upon earned degree and confirmed teaching experience.

WITNESS OUR HANDS on the day and year first above written.

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 253

LYON COUNTY, STATE OF KANSAS

By: Grant Riles
President, Board of Education

By: Dana Witten
Attest: Clerk, Board of Education

By: [illegible]
Educational Professional

Date: 5/4/17

Appendix J

Evaluation and Observation

Pre-Evaluation
Reflections Prior the Pre-Evaluation Conference

Evaluator must review the self-assessment of the evaluee prior to conducting the Pre-Evaluation conference. As the evaluator is reviewing the self-assessment they should be noting:

- Areas that the evaluee has defined themselves at the high end of the performance rubrics
- Artifacts or evidence that the evaluator can identify or "think of" that validate those performance levels
- Areas where the evaluee has defined themselves at the low end should also be noted, as these could potentially evolve into Professional Goal areas
- Highlight areas where there seems to be a discrepancy in the evaluee's perceptions of themselves compared to performance

During the Pre-Evaluation Conference

The purpose of this conference is for the evaluator to understand the perceptions, thoughts, and insights that the evaluee has related to their professional abilities. The role of the evaluator in this conference is to ask the "right" questions to get the evaluee to think critically about their practice. Some questions to consider:

As you were completing your self-assessment which components areas did you feel were you most confident in completing and why?

Which components of the self-assessment were the most difficult for you to complete and why? (Note: the question does not ask what their weakest areas were, as the evaluator, you can visually see those areas)

The responses to these questions should ultimately give indications to the evaluator which quadrant of ability the evaluee is falling into and that should guide your questioning.

Responses given to the questions along with the self-assessment results should ultimately guide the evaluee and evaluator towards professional goals that are written at the level of performance the evaluee is currently performing. Professional goals may be reviewed during this meeting if the teacher is continuing in the system.

It is possible to combine the pre-evaluation conference and the **pre observation conference**.

Anchor Pre-Observation Questions

What are your objectives for the lesson? (Curriculum)
How will you know if students have learned the objectives? (Assessment)
How did you decide which instructional strategies to use during the upcoming lesson? (Instruction)
What other aspects of your teaching do you want feedback? (Consciousness)
Are the any student needs that I need to be aware of prior to observing? (Instruction/Curriculum)
How do plan to account for the different learning styles and needs of students in your class? (Instruction)
How does this lesson connect with previous student learning, and align with future learning? (Curriculum)

Pre-Observation Protocol

What are the instructional, curricular, and assessing expectations within your district?

As the evaluator, what key information would you like to learn about the evaluee prior to conducting the observation?

What would be some guiding questions you would use to facilitate that conversation around the district expectations and the evaluee's perceptions of their abilities? Identify why these questions would be important, and potential artifacts.

Be prepared to share questions from your group and explain why that question would be valuable in a Pre-observation Conference.

Post Observation

The post observation must be well planned out and intentional in order to be productive. The evaluator should take into account the type of teacher, level of cognition, current skills, and observations as they plan for this conference. The goal of the post observation conference serves two purposes; 1) get the evaluee to reflect on how their actions impacted student learning, 2) provide the evaluator information necessary to accurately evaluate the level of performance of the evaluee.

Reflections of Evaluator prior to Conference

What were the evaluee's areas for growth from the self-assessment?
What are the current professional goals of the evaluee?
What were the responses given to the questions during the pre observation conference(s)?
Did the evaluee demonstrate proficiency with district expectations?
What data was collected, submitted, or observed that validates progress, or accomplishment of these previous questions?

Conducting the Post Conference

The evaluator should share the observation rubric with the evaluee prior to the post conference and use it as a reference to validate points during the conference. It is not necessary to go through line-by-line of the rubric and explain the rating. The point of sharing the rubric prior to the conference is to have the evaluee review it, and generate any questions they have so you can discuss those during the post conference. The evaluator should consider their own responses to the questions above, levels of performance indicated on the rubric and then be prepared to ask questions that clarify questions, or missing information. The questions asked should also force the evaluee to reflect on their performance and areas for growth.

Anchor Post Observation Questions

How did the lesson observed compare to the lesson that you had planned? (Instruction)
Did the students understand the objectives of the lesson? What were your indicators that student understood the objectives? (Curriculum/Assessment)
What aspects of the lesson do you feel went really well? (Instruction)
If you were to teach this lesson again what would you do differently, and why? (Instruction)
What adjustments do you plan to make with future lessons build on the learning outcomes from this lesson? (Curriculum)

Post Observation Protocol

What are the standard questions that you believe would be meaningful and useful during a post observation conference? Identify why these questions would be important.

Be prepared to share questions from your group and explain why that question would be valuable in a Post-observation Conference.

Feedback needs to be delivered in a way that is useful. Regardless of how accurate the feedback may be, if the evaluee becomes defensive, the information will be useless. Give feedback so the person receiving the information can hear/read it clearly and objectively. Clear and objective feedback enables the receiver to understand it and choose whether or not to use it.

Quality feedback is also a crucial step in developing goals and documenting professional growth or lack of growth of an evaluee. Feedback should point the evaluee to key areas of improvement, and be objective in nature. Good feedback is qualified with quantifiable data, rather than opinions and judgments.

The following are guidelines, which guide the evaluator in developing quality feedback.

- ☐ **Focus on the behavior not the person**

Focus on what the person does rather than label them too generally. This technique is less threatening. For example, rather than say, "She's lacks the ability to control the classroom environment," one might say, "The classroom environment is not conducive to student learning, as evidenced by a lack of established routines and procedures."

- ☐ **Focus feedback on a description of events rather than judgment.**

Describing tells what happened, where as judging can lead to subjectivity if not properly supported with data. A person can more easily accept an accurate description, rather than judgmental, feedback. For example, one could say "The teaching was poor." or one may say, "The instructional method utilized during the observation did not allow students the opportunity to apply or link the new content to previously learning."

- ☐ **Feedback should be specific rather than general.**

If feedback is specific, the evaluee knows what behavior to continue or change. If feedback is general, the evaluee will not know what to do differently. As an example, instead of saying "you need to use higher levels of questions," you could say, "when leading large group discussion with students, pre-developed questions focused on the higher levels of blooms taxonomy need to be used."

- ☐ **Focus feedback on descriptors that are found within the rubrics of the evaluation system.**

The feedback will be more useful if the evaluee can see how changing their behavior aligns to the next steps of improvement outlined within the system's rubrics. For example, "Developing an understanding of the developmental levels of the students will make is easier to differentiate instruction for students within the class." This aligns directly with the descriptor found within Standard IV Element A, *Understands developmental levels of students and appropriately differentiates instruction.*

- ☐ **Focus feedback on the amount of information the person can use rather than the amount you might like to give.**

Sometimes "less is more." Giving too much feedback can be ineffective. Keep it simple. Focus on the next step in the rubric or gaps rather than descriptors at the far right.

- ☐ **Focus the feedback on the current level of competence and consciousness of the evaluee**

If there are skill deficits feedback should focus on basic expectations of instruction (competence). If the deficits are more towards the awareness or consciousness side, feedback should be focused more on evaluee's preparation, adjustments within the lesson and reflections post observation. Feedback related to consciousness of the evaluee is likely more effective if given during a post conference, and then the evaluee's responses are documented as evidence of growth or lack of growth.

- ☐ **Feedback should set expectations and define measurable behaviors**

When providing feedback, using terms such as *may, consider, might*, *explore*, indicate that the evaluee has a choice in performing the behaviors that follow. The feedback should include terms such as *shall, implement, will, include* clearly set the expectation that the evaluee needs to initiate the desired behavior to demonstrate the expectation.

"Mr. Jones should use cooperative learning structures during the guided practice portion of the lesson," a better way to provide this feedback would be, "Cooperative learning structures need to be implemented during the guided practice portion of the lesson."

- ☐ **Data needs to be incorporated in the feedback**

When using the rubrics, the tallies are indicators of data points that represent when a descriptor was seen or not seen. If there are additional expectations that were met or not met that cannot be captured within the rubric it is necessary to cite the data that led to the judgments being passed.

"High levels of student engagement were consistently observed in Mr. Jones' classroom as evidenced by a high percentage of students asking questions during large group discussion, on 9/14/14; three out of three students visited with on 10/11/14, were able to state why they were learning the defined lesson objectives; all students were working in cooperative groups productively on 10/15/14."

- ☐ **Check for understanding after giving feedback**

Once the evaluator has given feedback, ensure the evaluee understands it. This check for clarity can come as the evaluee takes the feedback and crafts professional goals. If professional goals are not being developed the evaluator should ask the evaluee to share their interpretation of the feedback they have received either in writing or verbally. This is a critical step in the process that ensures the evaluee understands expectations. This will be a key step if in the future intensive support or dismissal is pursued. There must be an established pattern of clarifying expectations.

- ☐ **Focused on the behavior not the person**
- ☐ **Description of events rather than judgment**
- ☐ **Feedback is specific**
- ☐ **Focused on descriptors within the rubrics of the evaluation system.**
- ☐ **Information is useful and manageable**
- ☐ **Aligns with the current level of competence and consciousness of the evaluee**
- ☐ **Sets expectations and defines measurable behaviors**
- ☐ **Data incorporated in the feedback**
- ☐ **Checked for understanding after giving feedback**