

**Westside Atlanta Charter School Hiring Philosophy and Procedure**

**Adopted on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Last Reviewed On 3/10/2016 Last Revised On 4/5/2018**

Westside Atlanta Charter School (“Westside”) is an equal opportunity employer. Westside provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants without regard to race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, or disability. All vacancies will be posted and/or advertised as described in the outlined procedure.

Westside believes in challenging and encouraging educators to grow professionally and personally. When positions are identified, staff members will be encouraged to apply for positions that align with their talents. Internal candidates who express an interest in an open position will be granted an interview.

**Philosophy**

Since Westside opened its doors in 2013, hiring and the identification of candidates has been focused in four areas:

* **Building Relationships with Candidates** – We are looking for those passionate education entrepreneurs who are willing to take risks based in research. This makes hiring at Westside unique in the fact that the hiring process takes time and candidates are not merely brought in for an interview. Candidates are encouraged to visit the school during our operating hours, sit in classrooms and participate. Candidates get a chance to look at the culture and climate of the school, while we in turn get to see how they interact with students and staff.
* **Focusing on Mission and Vision** – The candidates that we bring in must demonstrate an understanding of our mission and vision, as well as demonstrate some working knowledge of our curriculum. Language, literacy, student-centered learning, project based learning/design thinking and dynamic social engagement are all areas that ideal candidates for Westside will have demonstrated some depth of knowledge and proof of practice.
* **Embracing Diverse Learners/Diverse Communities** – It is important that Westside candidates understand and demonstrate flexibility when it comes to dealing with our intentional diverse community. Candidates must have a working knowledge of the needs of the various communities we serve and the daily impact that they will have on these many partners that make up the Westside family. For these reasons, we endeavor to solicit a diverse candidate pool.
* **Pursuing Rigor** – We understand that Westside candidates must be equipped to engage our students in a rigorous learning environment. We seek candidates with educational qualifications, experiences and references that demonstrate an ability to challenge our students to succeed.

**Procedure**

1. Position Identification – Positions will be identified through:
   1. Openings that occur during the school year due to termination, or other notification.
   2. Openings as needs are identified during the school year.
   3. Anticipated openings for the upcoming school year.
2. Position Notice and Approval (where applicable) – Executive Director/ School Leader and Deans (Elementary/Curriculum) will notify the Education Committee of openings when identified. The Executive Director/ School Leaderor Deans will notify the Finance Committee when there is an opening identified that is not included in the current Westside governance board (the “Board”) approved organizational chart. The Board shall approve any changes to the WACS organizational chart.
3. Posting – Positions will be posted in the employment section of the Westside website. Positions may also be posted on the Georgia Charter School Association, AJC, local universities or any other website/facility deemed appropriate by the Executive Director/ School Leaderor Deans.
4. Application Review – Executive Director/ School Leader and/or Deans will review applications, resumes, and cover letters to select the most qualified candidates for the pool.
5. School Visit – Candidates are encouraged to conduct a school visit during operating hours. School visits will consist of classroom visits, student/staff interaction and end with a conversation to determine next steps from candidate and Westside staff. Conversations will be conducted by Executive Director/ School Leader and/or Deans. Candidates who are not able to perform a school visit but have desirable attributes for potential employment will be brought in for an interview as outlined below.
6. Interview – Interview panels will consist of Executive Director/ School Leader and/or Deans and no less than two staff members (peers or others). Interview questions will be based on behavioral interview practices. Candidates will be interviewed with identical questions. Panel’s notes will be collected and kept for one year by the Executive Director/ School Leader and/or Deans.
7. Panel Recommendation – Panel will recommend candidates to the Executive Director/ School Leader and/or Deans for open positions after interviews are conducted.
8. Reference Checks – A minimum of two reference checks will be conducted by Executive Director/ School Leader and/or Deans. Notes from references will be kept with candidate’s employment files.
9. Finalist Community Conversation – Once candidates are identified as a recommendation for an open position, the Executive Director/ School Leader and/or Deans will consider giving the Community Council Chair, or his or her designee, the opportunity to have a conversation with the recommended candidate and Executive Director/ School Leaderand/or Deans. Conversations will be at the discretion of the Community Council Chair and may be waived by the chair.
10. Board Notice – The Executive Director/ School Leader and/or Deans will provide the Board notice at the next scheduled Board meeting of any personnel changes that do not impact the annual budget or organizational chart previously approved by the Board and that do not require a personnel contract. Such notice shall include the resume of the candidate for informational purposes.
11. Board Approval – The Executive Director/ School Leader and/or Deans will bring recommendations to the Board to execute personnel contracts (after the above procedures are completed), approve a budget for salaries and/or the Westside organizational chart, as may be required for each hire. The Board will ratify a slate of candidate(s) through a single vote. In ratifying candidates, the board will generally focus on whether the hiring policy was followed and whether the selection of any candidate(s) would otherwise violate state or federal law or regulation. In the instance where a parent board member is asked to vote on a single candidate who will serve primarily in a classroom attended by the board member’s child, the board member shall recuse himself/herself from the vote.
12. Background Check – Background checks are completed once an offer is made to the candidate. The finalized offer is contingent on a clear background check.
13. Board members will participate in the application review and interview process for the school CFO. The Board will conduct the application review and interview process for the Executive Director/ School Leader.