Approved:
July 21, 2026

Birch Grove Community School #4145
School Director Succession Policy

I. PURPOSE and PHILOSOPHY

A change in School Directors is inevitable for all schools. Birch Grove Community School (the School) Board of Directors recognizes that succession planning is one of its most important responsibilities. The Board of Directors is committed to guiding the school through the transition as smoothly as possible, while maintaining accountability and stability.

This policy provides guidance for planned or unplanned absences of the School Director. It addresses the appointment of an Interim Director, gives duties and expectations to the Interim Director and search committee, and outlines the ways the Board will support the new School Director during the transition time. This policy also addresses the importance of building leadership talent within the school, in order to have a pool of suitable candidates from which to draw for leadership positions, whether interim or permanent. Having inside talent makes succession issues easier to resolve and cushions the temporary waves caused by a change in leadership.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. Succession: the process of replacing a person in a leadership position
B. Planned succession: succession in the case of retirement or Board termination
C. Unplanned succession: succession in the case of serious illness or injury, death, or resignation
D. Interim Director: the person appointed to fill the School Director's position until a permanent replacement is found; placing a temporary School Director gives the Board more time to make needs assessments and decisions surrounding the succession
E. Transition time: the time period between when the School Director is first known to be leaving through the first year of the permanent replacement School Director
F. Transition assistance: planned support given to the interim and replacement School Director during the succession process, including the new School Director's first year on the job

III. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A. Leadership development within the school is critical to succession planning. With a pool of trusted leaders already familiar with the school, its staff, students, mission, values, and processes, transition time is shorter and smoother. Economic impact is also lessened. Interim and permanent School Directors, whether from inside or outside the organization, will draw from this pool the knowledge they need to be successful.

B. The School Director will constantly identify, assess and develop leadership potential.

C. Leadership development can be accomplished through:
   1. Training and workshops
   2. Testing potential through special assignments
   3. Promotion to stepping-stone positions
   4. Encouragement to earn certificates, degrees, or other additional education in academic leadership

D. The Board is committed to ensuring that school leaders, both current and aspiring, receive opportunities for growth.

E. The School Director, or his or her designee, will track employee professional development.

F. The Board will receive annual reports from the School Director on the development of leadership potential within the school and efforts made to ensure job satisfaction and retain key employees.

IV. ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL NEEDS

A. The Board, or its designated committee, will assess school leadership needs during the succession process. Tools may include:
   1. A review of the School Director's performance evaluations for the previous two years.
   2. A review of the school's mission and vision
   3. Student achievement/test results
   4. A review of the most recent summary of Audited Financials Report and current financial standing
   5. An interview with the exiting School Director to identify future needs

B. The Board, or its committee, will analyze the School Director's strengths and successes in order to provide continuity in those areas.

C. Assessment will begin immediately during the transition time.

D. The Board will consider the use of an outside consultant for needs assessment.

V. INTERIM DIRECTOR

A. The Board will appoint an Interim School Director to perform the duties and responsibilities of the exiting School Director in his or her absence, until a permanent replacement is identified.
   1. The Board may assign the task of finding Interim School Director candidates to the Succession Committee described in IV.
   2. School employees should be considered first for potential fit in the role of Interim School Director.
   3. The Interim School Director will be appointed no later than within five (5) business days of the School Director's absence.

B. The Interim School Director will ensure that the school continues to operate without disruption and that all school commitments previously made are adequately executed, including loans, reports, contracts, licenses, certifications, memberships, and other obligations.

VI. SUCCESSION COMMITTEE

A. The succession committee will be appointed within ten (10) business days of knowing of the loss of the School Director.
The committee shall have at least one member of the Executive Committee and at least three members of the Board.

B. The Succession Committee will appoint a search committee, which will also contain at least three board members, to identify finalist candidates for the permanent (not interim) School Director's position. If the search committee's recommended finalist is not accepted by the Board, the search fails and must begin again.

C. The search committee will perform or use the results of the needs assessment outlined in Section IV of this policy in their work.

D. The search committee will determine the best method to conduct the search for candidates.

E. The Board will approve a time frame for the recruitment and selection process.

VII. TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

A. Transition assistance is an opportunity for the Board to ease any school community concerns during the first stages of the new School Director's employment.

B. The Board is committed to supporting the new School Director

during the beginning stages of his or her new position and throughout his or her employment. The Board will specifically show this by:

1. Budgeting for at least two memberships in professional organizations for the School Director. Examples include principals organizations and other academic leadership organizations.
2. Budgeting for the School Director's continuing professional development in the area of academic leadership, including workshops and conferences.
3. Meeting with the School Director as needed to discuss topics suggested by either the Board or the School Director.

C. The Interim School Director, particularly in the case of an appointment that lasts 3 or more months, will receive transition support (listed under letter (b) above) from the Board and staff equivalent to that of the School Director. The Interim School Director will fill the *ex officio* board member position usually held by the School Director.

VIII. COMMUNICATION

A. The Board will communicate with school staff, parents, students, business service providers, bondholders, and other stakeholders about the succession and transition process.

IX. EVALUATION

A. The Board will evaluate and reflect on the succession process and its impact on the School as each phase is completed.