OSD Director Advisory Committee
Final Committee Recommendations

March 7, 2007

Committee Membership

An advisory committee comprised of representatives of School Districts, Regional Programs, OSD parents, students, staff, alumni, and related community groups meet to provide recommendations to the Oregon Department of Education regarding candidate criteria, recruitment strategy, and the hiring process for a Director for the Oregon School for the Deaf. Member of the committee included:

OSD parents:	Eric Sunquist,
	Dale Campbell
	Marcia Liebe
OSD student:	Cruz Saucedo
OSD Staff:	Karen Trowbridge (SEIU representative)
	Bill Cruscial (STEA representative
	Judith Holzinger (Management Services)

School District Representatives:
Linda Felber (Salem Kiezer School District)
Sandra Gruhn (Tillamook School District)

Regional Program Representatives:
Robbie Weber (Columbia Regional Programs)
Eleni Boston (Willamette ESD)

State Advisory Council for Special Education (SACSE)
Roberta Dunn

Community Group Representatives:
Margi Morgan (OR Association of the Deaf)
Bentley Fink (OR Deaf and HH Services Program)
Daniel Sloan (OSD Alumni Association)

ODE Staff to the Committee
Jay Gense (Interim Director of Special Schools)
Colleen Carson (OSD)

Facilitation of all committee meetings was provided by Laurel Singer with the Oregon Consensus Program. A copy of the working agreements which governed the operation of the committee is attached.

Relevant Background

Numerous and changing issues are driving the needs of students who are deaf/hard of hearing (D/HH) across the state of Oregon. Notably, significant advances in technology, including the use of bilateral cochlear implants, are ushering in a vital new era in the education of students who are D/HH. While some current trends bring opportunities, some new directions pose challenges the new OSD director will need to face.

The Committee identified the following trends as having significant present and future implications for OSD:

Changing and increasingly complex needs of students who are D/HH, including:
- Increasing immigration of families and students from other countries: many students now have "tricultural" language and social needs (e.g. English, ASL/Deaf, Spanish)
- Increasing percentage of students who do not speak English nor do family members speak English
- More students with multiple challenges, including emotional and behavioral challenges and mental health treatment needs
- Students entering OSD more frequently at middle and high school level
- Early identification, digital hearing aids, and the use of cochlear implants means that students are acquiring more language competence while young, and frequently are needing different types of service and support (e.g. auditory/verbal) from school

A Shortage of Trained Professionals and Funding Resources to Meet the Needs
- Across the country, there is a shortage of trained professionals in the field of deafness;
- As sign language interpreters become more trained and licensed, salaries are not keeping pace; many skilled staff are choosing to work in the private sector. Increased standards for interpreters and the possible shortage this may bring could actually increase the demand for OSD's services;
- State and Federal funding resources may be diminishing

Availability of Enhanced Technology for Individualized and Targeted Education
- Better testing tools are allowing for better assessment of individual student's needs
- Technology is improving accessibility for students who are D/HH. Technology is allowing students who are either multi-cultural and/or have multiple disabilities to be more actively engaged
- On-line classes and other distance learning opportunities are increasingly available and more in demand
- Technology advancement also creates new challenges, including:
  - "Genetic engineering" may be misused and needs to be monitored

- o Inequitable access to and use of technology (e.g. using webcams via high speed internet to communicate to others outside the school community) across the state

Heightened Need for Interagency Collaborations
- Need to increase the awareness of OSD as a placement option
- It is a challenge to meet the needs of the rural communities
- Statewide programs are experiencing the same stress of the shortage of funding and professionals as OSD

Recommendations for the Position of Director

To meet the challenges ahead, the Committee recommends that this be a distinct position from an ODE Director of Special Schools. The committee recommends that to be competitive at the national level, the job duties are written to qualify the position for the highest level of classification possible as a Principle Executive Manager.

The advisory committee recommends the working title of this position be either Superintendent or Director.

The working title as Superintendent is recommended as it provides the following benefits:

- The position will oversee an elementary school, middle school, and high-school; the title of superintendent carries a level of responsibility on par with other state and local positions who over see multiple school levels.
- This title emphasizes the level of responsibility required in this role
- This title may make the position more attractive to national candidates.

However, the committee also raised concerns about using the title Superintendent and recommended the title of Director for the following benefits:

- Within the educational system in which this position operates, the title Superintendent might imply a higher rank and thus create less responsiveness to referring school districts. In addition, since this position could be a direct report of the Assistant Superintendent at ODE, the title of director would be more appropriate in this setting.
- Superintendent implies being removed from the day-to-day operations of a school and may be misleading to potential candidates as this position is designed to be involved in the day-to-day oversight of the OSD. The working title of Director would better emphasize the main responsibility for the day-to-day operations of OSD.

The committee would recommend that regardless of the title, the job description is written to clearly indicate the position is responsible for the day-to-day operations of OSD, and that the position reports directly to the ODE.

It is recommended that the position description for the OSD Director be revised to emphasize the following key roles:

- Administrator of OSD operations
- Understanding of and involvement in the legislative processes; including the monitoring of state and federal guidelines
- Builder of relationships at all levels
- Educational leader and visionary for the creation and support of a comprehensive educational system serving diverse students who are D/HH
- Advocate for students who are D/HH
- Problem solver

Recommended Qualifications for the OSD Director

To be qualified to meet these critical roles and responsibilities as OSD Director, it is recommended that candidates to be considered possess skills, abilities and experiences in the following areas:

Cultural Proficiency as demonstrated by:
- American Sign Language competency at Level 3 on the ASLPI (if the ASLPI has not been taken, the candidate must be able to demonstrate advanced proficiency in ASL via personal interview or videotape)
- Strong communication skills
- On-going involvement in deaf related issues and activities.

Strategic Leadership as demonstrated by:
- Experience in strategic planning in all stages from visioning to evaluation;
- Demonstrated ability to form partnerships and work collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders groups;
- Knowledge of and involvement in the legislative process.

School and Residential Programs Administration as demonstrated by:
- Experience with schools and residential programs;
- Knowledge of relevant laws, policies and procedures;
- Experience with financial management and budgeting.

Instructional Leadership as demonstrated by:
- Experience with K-12 curriculum;
- Knowledge of deaf education;
- Previous classroom experience with students who are D/HH;
- Knowledge of ELL strategies desirable.

Communication and Collaboration Skills as demonstrated by:
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills;
- Ability to communicate and collaborate with students, staff, families, agencies, regional programs.

<u>Recruitment Process</u>

In Committee recommends the following procedures for recruiting a candidate for the position:

ODE Human Resource is responsible for revising the job description, developing a time-line for hiring and implementing their established proceedures for a national recruitment search.

While a closure date of August 1, 2007 should be noted on the job description, the announcement also clarify the position will remain open until filled.

The job description is written to emphasize the expectation that this position is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the school; the description also notes that the position is not required to live on site.

Given the level of specialization required for this position, ODE aggressively recruit by posting the job announcement in the following additional places:

- CEC Council for Exceptional Children
- CEASD
- CID
- Deaf Net
- NAD – National Assoc. of the Deaf
- Gallaudet Leadership Institute
- www.hiredeaf.com
- Other Deaf Schools
- RID – Rochester Institute for the Deaf
- www.deafnation.com
- College and Universities that have Deaf Education programs – WOU, U of Tenn.
- NTID
- Annals of the Deaf
- OSD website
- University of Tennessee at Knoxville Deaf teacher education (Dr. M. Lynn Woolsey, Director; Claxton Complex A213;Knoxville, TN 37996-3442;Phone: 865-974-0607 (v/tty);Fax: 865-974-3522;E-mail: deafness@utk.edu)

ODE creates a packet of information about OSD that could be given to interested candidates.

All expenses incurred for the hiring of a new director would come from the ODE budget and not that of OSD.

The Hiring Process:

The Committee believes the most effective hiring process is one that involves and is responsive to the feedback of representatives of the diverse stakeholders invested in the OSD. As a result, the committee is recommending the hiring for the position proceed according to the following steps:

Step 1: ODE Human Resources screens applications for minimum qualifications.

Step 2: The applications meeting minimal criteria would be forwarded to a committee to review and select candidates for personal interviews. (Information forwarded to the committee would be sensitive to confidentiality requirements) The committee would be comprised of representatives from the following stakeholder groups:

- OSD parents
- OSD student(s)
- OSD staff
- School District Representatives
- Deaf Community Groups

Step 3: The committee selects and interviews top candidates. The ASLPI test is given as part of the interview process. In addition, if an interview question were asked in ASL, the candidate would be required to respond in ASL. If the question asked were in English, the candidate would answer in their native language.

Up to three of the top candidates would be invited for a "meet and greet" at OSD. The committee would develop a feedback mechanism for participants attending the meet and greet to register their reaction to the candidates.

Step 4: Reference checks on the top candidate(s) would be completed by ODE/HR, preferably by Liz Snook (or someone who possesses a similar familiarity with deaf education) prior to the next step. The committee could submit some questions to add to those used by ODE/HR used when conducting reference checks.

Step 5: A "meet and greet", open to the public, is held at OSD for each of the top three candidates. Representatives from all departments would be invited and encouraged to attend. Any candidate who could not attend a meet and greet could have the option of connecting via a webcam, video relay, or video conferencing.

Step 6: The committee would review feedback from the meet and greet, interviews, and reference checks to determine a final ranking of the candidates for hire.

Summary

The Advisory Committee would like to express their appreciation for the opportunity to provide in-put into the criteria, recruitment and hiring of the Director of ODE. The committee believes this has been a valuable process which allowed for the open dialogue of a wide range of perspectives and opinions from stakeholders in the OSD. The recommendations provided reflect the best thinking of this diverse group and are forwarded with the hopes that ODE will give them their utmost consideration in moving forward.