Introductory Statement

The district has been informed of the Broad Foundation’s intent to grant the district an award of up to $400,000 to be spent by June 30, 2004 for the purpose of recruiting principal and vice principal candidates. This report describes elements of the recruitment proposal and recommends acceptance of Broad Foundation funding, implementation of the recruitment strategies as soon as possible, and authority to establish an auditable accounting system for payment of referral awards to district employees and hiring incentives to out-of-district candidates.

Background

National Shortage of School Principals

The course and pace of important reform initiatives depend to a large degree on the principal. But while effective principals are the lynchpins of school improvement, the task of placing a high-quality principal in every school is more challenging than ever. Across the nation, good school principals have never been harder to find, regardless of pay, size of district or location. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a ten percent to twenty percent increase in the number of school administrator jobs through 2005, primarily because of retirements. The National Association of Elementary School Principals estimates that more than 40 percent of elementary school principals will retire or quit over the next decade.

Many districts are already experiencing a principal shortage. About half of school districts nationwide reported a shortage of qualified candidates for vacant principals’ positions, according to a recent survey by Educational Research Service. Often schools serving poor and low-achieving students are the hardest hit by a principal shortage and find it notoriously difficult to attract promising candidates.

In addressing the shortage of qualified candidates, school districts are challenged to move beyond past practices, improve outreach policies, and explore longer-term solutions to principals and vice principal shortages.

District’s Response to the Shortage

In 1999-2000 the district established the Educational Leadership Development Academy (ELDA), a collaboration of the school system with several local institutions of higher education, with the University of San Diego as the lead organization. Through ELDA, the district has created innovative programs to “grow our own” leaders and to build scaffolding for administrative career ladders.
District outreach efforts to attract promising candidates from surrounding areas are ongoing. The district routinely opens site leadership to outside candidates through job announcements on its website and on-line applications. The instructional leaders and school principals identify and mentor potential leaders from within our teacher ranks, and vice principals who demonstrate readiness for a principalship.

The district’s current efforts must be supplemented with more rigorous recruitment strategies if it is to draw a sufficient number of high-quality candidates to site leadership. In short, the climate calls for a new approach to recruitment – one that will increase the district’s odds of finding the best candidates through inviting a larger number of applicants.

Proposal for a Recruitment Plan

On May 13, 2003, the Institute for Learning brought forward a proposal to the board regarding proposed modifications to the site leadership selection processes. The report included a reference to a site leadership recruitment proposal that had been submitted for consideration by the Broad Foundation. The foundation has since notified the district verbally and via electronic mail that it has approved our request for funding and will award the district up to $400,000 to support recruitment efforts. It is our understanding that the foundation is preparing a formal grant award letter and that the funding is to cover two “recruiting seasons” to be spent by June 30, 2004.

The recruitment proposal contains the following strategies to be supported through Broad Foundation funding:

- **Hire expert(s) in the recruitment field.** The district will hire a recruitment officer on an hourly basis to begin full-scale recruitment efforts. The role of the recruitment officer will be to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of recruitment strategies and programs, work closely with staff to tap the district’s teacher ranks for potential leaders, and actively seek to identify and contact exemplary candidates from outside the district. If necessary, the district may contract with a professional expert in specialized areas of recruitment methods and practices.

- **Employ a full-scale advertising campaign.** The Institute for Learning will work closely with Human Resources and the Communications Office to employ an aggressive advertising campaign. Immediate strategies include newspaper and magazine advertisements. Other strategies to be considered and possibly employed include radio and television spots, recruitment booths at job fairs, etc.

- **Develop a marketing plan.** The Recruitment officer would work closely with the communications office to develop a marketing plan and high-quality materials to package, advertise and promote the unique features of the district to outside candidates.

- **Reward employees for referrals.** A “finder’s fee” of $500.00 would be awarded to district management team employees who refer successful candidates for principal or vice principal positions.
- **Provide incentives for newly-hired vice principals and principals from outside of the district.**
Incentives will be offered for new hires based on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentive</th>
<th>Vice Principals</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Exemplary Principals*</th>
<th>Small High School Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signing bonus</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving expenses/home closing costs - hires residing outside of San Diego County</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
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*Must be able to demonstrate proven leadership at low-performing school(s) as evidenced in comparison API (or other state equivalent) rankings.

**Instructional Implications**

Principals and vice principals directly impact both the implementation and sustainability of reforms focused on improving student achievement. Real improvements occur not at the state or school system level but school by school. Thus, the course and pace of important reforms depend to large degree on site leadership. The district’s recruitment plan accelerates its efforts to attract and keep high-quality leaders for student learning.

**Facilities Implications**

There are no facilities implications associated with this report.

**Budget Implications**

The Broad Foundation is awarding the district up to $400,000 to support the strategies outlined in this report. The funding must be spent by June 30, 2004. Upon board approval, the Finance Department will develop an appropriate accounting system for two of the recruitment strategies: disbursement of payments for staff referral awards and incentives for new hires.

**Public Support and Engagement Implications**

The Institute for Learning has met with representatives from the Administrators Association regarding the recruitment strategies described in this report and the association has indicated its support of the plan.
The district’s recent retirement offer was highly publicized and the community is aware that a significant number of administrators will be retiring at the conclusion of the 2003-04 school year. The Institute for Learning has acted to assign site leaders before next fall to ensure the smooth opening of school and to assure leadership for instructional improvement throughout the school year. Through the new recruitment strategies, the Institute has also taken steps to address the anticipated continued high number of site leadership vacancies and dwindling candidate pools.

Policy Implications

Two of the recruitment strategies – referral awards and hiring incentives - have fiscal management policy (D-3800 and D-5000) implications. Therefore, this report includes a recommendation to authorize establishment and maintenance of an auditable accounting system for referral awards for existing management team employees and incentives for newly-hired site leaders.

Recommendations

The Superintendent recommends approval of:

1) Receipt of Broad Foundation funds to support the recruitment strategies outlined in this report;

2) Implementation of the recruitment strategies as soon as possible; and

3) Authorization of establishment and maintenance of an auditable accounting system in compliance with all legal requirements for payment of referral awards to district management staff, and incentives for newly-hired vice principals and principals from outside of the district.

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