

# **Recruiting and Vetting your *Leader and Service Provider***

## **SCSC Petitioner Boot Camp**

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# Starting Strong

- According to the Vanderbilt Study, commissioned by the SCSC. Effective start-up charter leaders have the following characteristics:
  - Resilience
  - Flexibility
  - Transparent communication
  - Humility
  - Ambition to set and achieve high expectations
  - Ability and charisma to mobilize groups
  - Ability to recruit, select and retain a high quality teaching staff
  - Principals interviewed for the study consistently felt they were not fully prepared to run a charter school

# Great Leaders for Great Schools



- School leadership accounts for 25% of in-school factors that **influence student outcomes**
- Highly effective leaders typically show gains for all students
- Leader turnover in the US is **25%**
- **50%** of new leaders leave by the end of year 3
- Leader hiring often **lacks rigor**, thoughtfulness and data
- Recruitment is often **passive** (board waits for applications to arrive)
- Focus is usually in **recruiting from within**
- **Leader impact on student learning** (track record) is often not considered
- Matching leaders to schools is not done **strategically**
- Recruiting efforts are **rarely evaluated for effectiveness**

# More things to consider

Instructional vs.  
Business  
Leader

Experience

Proven Results

Ability to work  
with various  
stakeholders

Pioneering  
Spirit

Shared  
leadership

Instructional  
coaching

Cast a wide net

Contingency  
plans

Understand  
strengths and  
weaknesses

Mission-aligned  
leadership  
development

Disposition

# Core Competencies of Effective Charter School Leaders



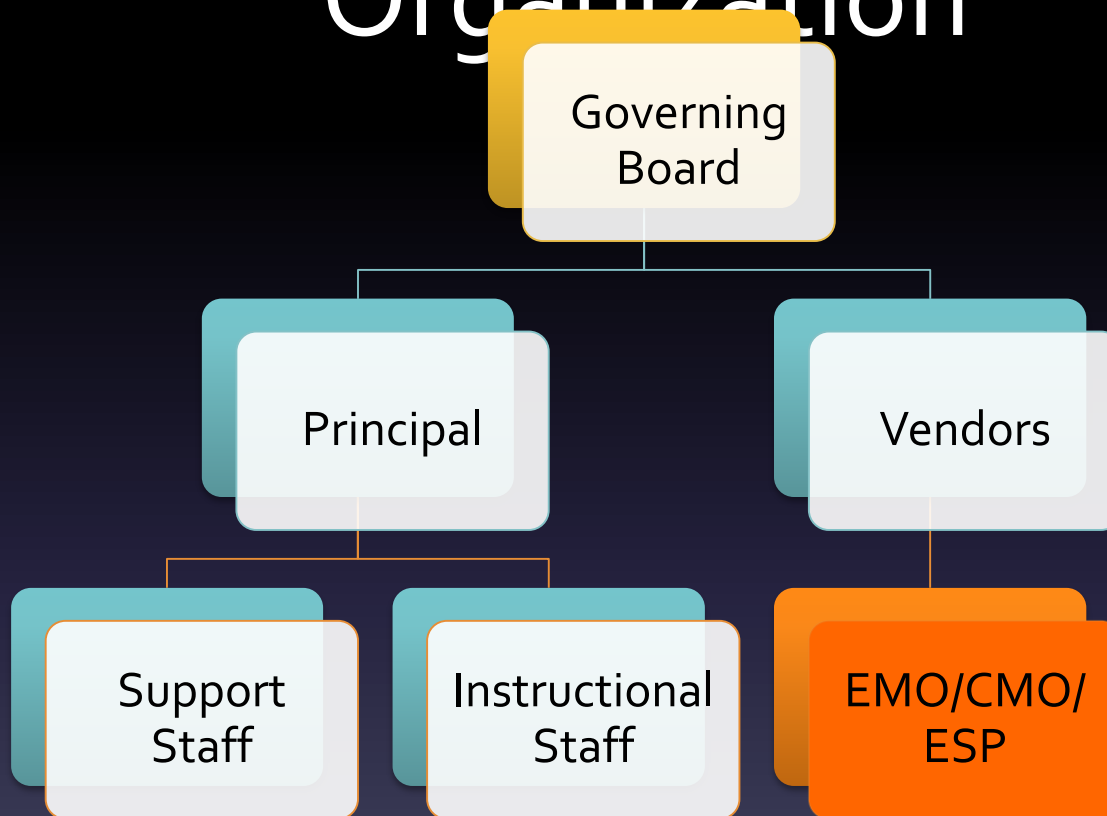
# Red Flags

- Lead founder insists he/she is the only option for leadership position
- Prospective leader cannot demonstrate results or capacity to develop teachers
- Prospective leader's core motivation is to work in a smaller school
- Prospective leader is passionate about education, but lacks results
- Prospective leader does not understand chartering
- **Prospective leader has not worked in a "start-up" environment**

# Common Mistakes

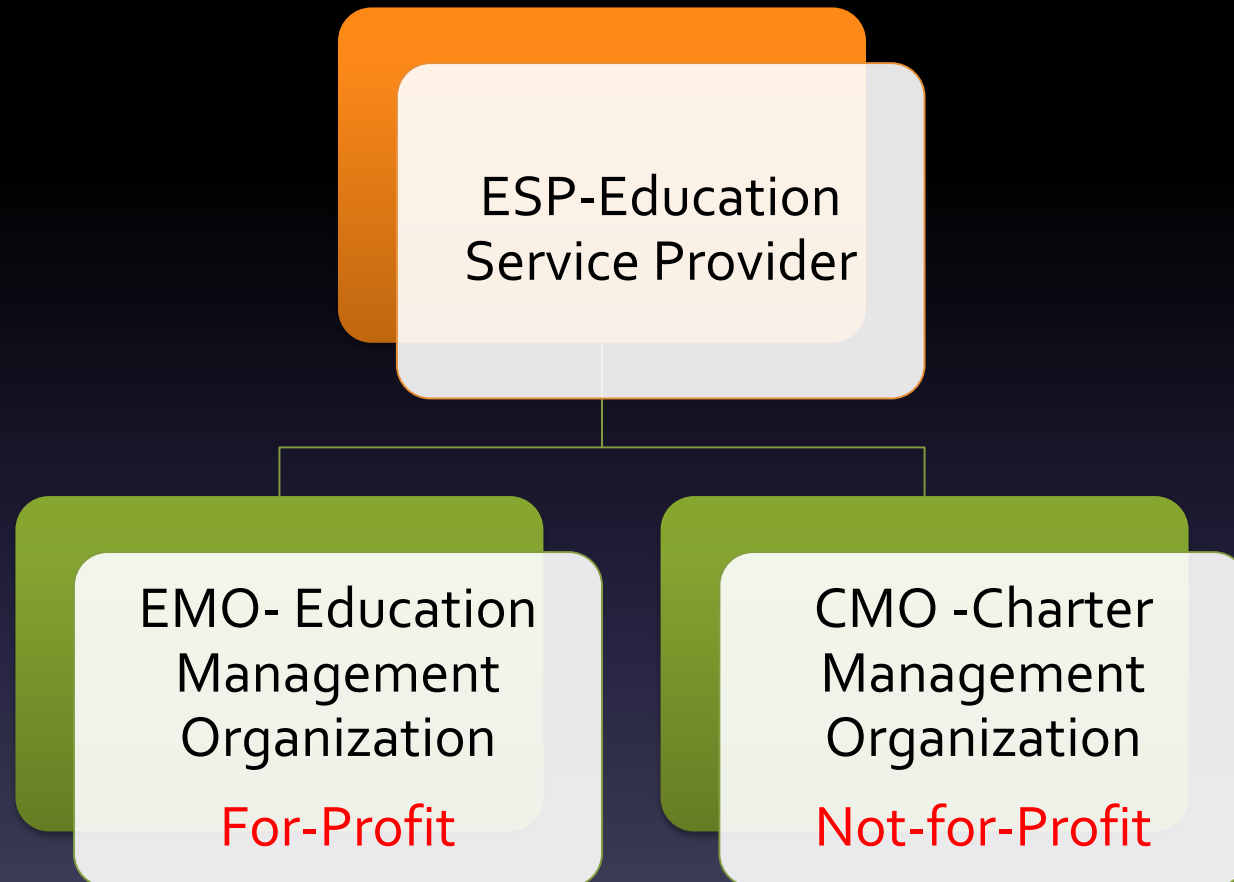
- Lack of training on effective interview practices
- Lack of HR expertise on board
- Board is sold on credentials / resume and doesn't fully vet / check references for candidate
- Board is unaware of high turn over, shortage of effective leaders
- Enough thought is not given to the type of leader needed to execute the program

# Selecting a Management Organization





# Glossary of Terms



# Service Providers Offer



## Finance

- CFO
- Financial Management Personnel
- Understand service provider fiscal health
- Financial Management System
- **Beware of "sweeps" contracts**
- Grant proposal writing and management
- Fee should not exceed 15% of total operating budget

## Key Questions

- Have any schools in the EMO/ESP/CMO network closed due to financial reasons? What role did the ESP play in the closure?
- Are the business practices aligned with your governance board/mission/philosophy?
- How will start-up financing be paid back? How many charters in the network are sustainable?
- What are the long-range strategic goals of the management company?
- What is the company's track record for securing grant funds for network charter schools?
- How many charters in the network have cash reserves?
- Does the ESP assert intellectual property rights over curriculum and materials tied to the contract?

## Curriculum

- **If the service provider requires you use their curricular model, is it aligned with Georgia Standards? How do you know? Ask for evidence!**
- Academic achievement results – *look for trends...beyond the flagship school*
- Benchmark tool – is it a good predictor for GA mandated exams? What proof do you have?
- Student information. Is the management organization responsible for purchasing the student information system?

## Key Questions

- Does the management company have a good track record with the demographic you will be serving?
- **Is the SIS compatible with Georgia's SLDS (Statewide Longitudinal Data System)? If not, who is responsible for paying to make the system compatible?**
- Is the management company's approach to teaching and learning philosophically aligned?

## Culture

- School-wide discipline
- Mission/philosophical alignment
- Standard operating procedures

## Key Questions

- **Is there a discipline model required? Does it ensure due process for all students?**
- Is the charter school required to use services that establish school culture? How successful are such services at other charter schools?
- Does the management company provide a standard operating procedures manual? How can the school customize these procedures to ensure mission alignment?

## Facilities

- **Facility financing**
- Market rates/value
- **Debt management**
- Maintenance and repairs
- Maintenance and facilities personnel

## Key Questions

- Does the management company provide assistance with facilities financing? What about furnishings, fixtures and equipment?
- Does the company charge fair market rates? How do you know?
- How many charters in the network own, or are under contract to purchase their facilities?
- Does the management company derive its sustainability from facilities services?

## More to consider...

- Employees must be employees of the board
- Check **references and results**, (not just the flagship school)
- If the company is not currently operating in Georgia, why not?
- Review the history of EMO/CMOs in Georgia
- **Have an attorney review your contract and assist with negotiations**
- Board support and development, not best practice to receive from ESP
- Policy development, how do you ensure alignment with GA
- **You will have to justify your selection**
- Ask to see the annual report & strategic plan
- **What happens “contractually” if there is a falling out?**
- What is the process for amending the contract?

## More to consider...

- Does the ESP handle human resources on behalf of the board?
- **What are the potential problems with this particular service?**



# Red Flag s

- **Board should not delegate authority to ESP.**
- Beware of balloon payments/fee structures.
- Beware of ESP managing all recruiting / hiring.
- ESP should not set calendar and schedule.
- No ESP “appointee” on board
- **No “evergreen” contracts**
- **Be sure that termination clause(s) are balanced for both parties**
- ESP contract should not conflict with local, state, federal laws or SCSC policies

# Due Diligence for Leader and Service Provider, and Consultant Selection

What due diligence should you do when selecting a leader, service provider or consultant?



# References

Cannata, Marisa, Thomas, Grant, and Thombre, Zaia. Starting Strong: Best Practices in Starting a Charter School. Vanderbilt University. Peabody College.

Campbell, Neil and Lettre, Simmons. *Great Leaders for Great Schools: How four charter networks recruit, develop, and select principals.*

# Questions?

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