

## Emerson Waldorf School Administrator Search Survey (Fall 2011)

### Question 4: Please include any other comments here.

#### The Categories of comments, arranged below by the overall number of comments:

Must be Waldorf Trained / well versed in Anthroposophy / Look inside Waldorf community	9
Positive Feeling / Hope / Thanks	8
High School Changes / Focus / Concern	5
Desires / concerns over school governance / sustainability / communication	5
Does not need to be Waldorf-trained / look outside Waldorf community / less Waldorf orientation	4
General development hopes/concerns	4
Good Manager / Well organized	4
Empower / Listen To / Respect parents	4
Increased Authority for Administrator	4
Strong Business skills	4
Upset over Julie	3
Desires / concerns over heart/spirit	3
Desire for faculty cohesiveness	2
Meet final candidates	1
Diversity training	1
Better communication / vision	1
Decrease role of board	1
Support for Joanne	1
Reach out to wider community	1

Comments below are color-coded by demographic group:

Grandparent/Parent: 56

Faculty: 6

Staff: 1

Other: 2

#### Full Comments:

(9) Must be Waldorf Trained / well versed in Anthroposophy / Look inside Waldorf community

#2 someone who is Waldorf trained and has more involvement in the high school and over see the daily operations un like in the past where the running of the high school was done by teachers and sometimes not even Waldorf trained. not business minded people

#8 ANTHROPOSOPHIST

#11 An administrator should be empowered to work for the Cultural sphere but mainly in the Rights sphere. An understanding of the ThreeFold Social is very important for the health of our school.

#14 A background in anthroposophy is essential, of course and being able to have a positive vision of a united and high caliber Waldorf School

#16 Our governance structure REQUIRES that the new administrator embrace the three pillar model

#17 Must love Waldorf education

#18 Administrator should be able to understand the vibe of a Waldorf school.

#25 i think that only an anthroposoph or an unusually enlightened person could survive our current governance structure.

#32 We must have an administrator who guides teachers toward a renewed understanding of Waldorf Education in the 21st Century and who makes certain we are educating and supporting parents through their journey with us.

(8) Positive Feeling / Hope / Thanks

- #22 My family is very committed to EWS. Both our girls are still in Early Childhood, and I truly hope that the school will remain our first option all the way to 12th grade for us! I would love to keep my girls at EWS. We can do it!
- #26 We are very new to the school and have been very happy with the administration and communication so far.
- #30 I look forward to working in a school in which all of the bodies support each other with spirit certainty.
- #31 The structure of the school has come a long way since we first joined. I've noticed a distinct trend in the last 3 years where the school has made only forward movement in its growth. I appreciate the efforts of all the people that have devoted their time to nurture the health of EWS.
- #37 Very excited for the changes but it can be a fine line and we must steer cautiously and not be hasty in the decision that is important for the future of our children. My dtr will be starting at Emerson in the next few years and I am well prepared and motivated to be as supportive and helpful as possible in this community but am aware a change like this is crucial.
- #38 The time, work and effort I am witnessing from the teachers and board is very much appreciated. Many thanks to you all.
- #39 Much appreciation for all the dedicated people who have been working on this.... I am dreaming of a day when those talented people can go back to their full time jobs as teachers: EG Jason teaching Music Patricia teaching early Childhood I believe that if we focused on creating programs that shine then we will be able to serve our task better and will serve more students and families (IE Anything that cuts down the amount of draining meetings and reduces Administrative work for teachers!!!)
- #40 Great time for the next renewal. Need to stay focused on the critical tasks during this transition. Last time, at least one serious issue developed or at least was not recognized during the last transition period. Teachers seem stable and they are most important for the parent community.

#### (5) High School Changes / Focus / Concern

- #1 We need to hire more young teachers, especially in the High School. School wide, there must be a balance of young and old. We are not balanced in this way, too many old, not enough young. I really believe this will make a positive difference.
- #14 - It is important now that the high school be highlighted for development and be viewed as the crowning glory of the lower school education.
- #16 - I am personally very frustrated with a college which seems unwilling to make substantive changes regarding personnel, especially at the HS level.
- #19 - We have worried about the sustainability of this school recently. There seems to be random decision making occurring and poor timing of decisions. Concern over financial situation of the school and the ability of the school to maintain a high school as well.
- #36 - I would like to see a stronger curriculum in math and science

#### (5) Desires / concerns over school governance / sustainability / communication

- #9 It is essential to find balance in the governance to have the courage to promote our mission while establishing financial stability, growth and harmony in this very special setting.
- #19 We have worried about the sustainability of this school recently. There seems to be random decision making occurring and poor timing of decisions. Concern over financial situation of the school and the ability of the school to maintain a high school as well.
- #20 The school community needs to find a way to rally itself into one being and drop the fractiousness, to have the curriculum more consistent year to year and the common cause of educating the children supersedes egos- what is best for this form education?
- #45 More than anything else we need good teamwork amongst the staff. We all need to feel that each and every one of the faculty is trustworthy and supports the other. Faculty need to support administration and administration needs to support the faculty. When one speaks negatively about the other it destroys the environment.
- #46 For as long as I have been a parent at the school (currently our 7th year) it feels as though there has never been effective leadership or, when issues or conflicts arise, effective communication. Even with Joanne's departure, it felt like there was a story not being told. Another parent once told me that the school's "shadow side" was secretive and nontransparent communication and I feel that this is true.

#### (4) Does not need to be Waldorf-trained / look outside Waldorf community / less Waldorf orientation

#4 It is critical that we also look OUTSIDE the Waldorf/anthroposophical world for candidates. We have not done much of this in the past, and have paid dearly for it, at least from the past 2 administrators I have seen. We do not NEED to have an anthroposophical person or super-experienced Waldorf teacher/parent/leader to turn things around for us. That would be a bonus, yes. What we MUST have is a strong manager and visionary leader who has the business skills necessary to help us out of the hole we are in. That person can LEARN about Waldorf education, understand and support its ideals, and can then articulate it to others in the Triangle region. A basic level of understanding can be achieved even just by watching Whitney MacDonald's DVD that was produced for the school's use a few years ago. Obviously deeper understanding/appreciation can develop over time. But as long as someone can agree with the basics and articulate them, we're off to a good start. Better to focus on the professional skills we desperately need.

#12 Find someone qualified, with passion and experience, and let him or her do the job without undue interference from the board, college or faculty.

#35 PLEASE do not limit your search to just those within the sphere of Waldorf Education. I think we need competent management skills more than we need anthroposophical background.

#44 Sometimes organizations like EWS can be JUST as rigid as public schools when it comes to enforcing a vision; we are not always as flexible and inclusive as we'd like to think we are; we get mired in "our way" of doing things sometimes rather than the needs of individual children. I'd like to see an administrator challenge us to think outside the box, to be less zealot-like in our enforcement of Steiner principles and more accommodating of the different needs of kids.

#### (4) General development hopes/concerns

#14 full enrollment is key. It is important now that the high school be highlighted for development and be viewed as the crowning glory of the lower school education.

#42 The Board's ability to raise money is critical for the success of the administrator

#43 It would be great to have an administrator who can also aid in development, but it would be better to have a development officer. We can't expect all things from one individual.

#46 It is also frustrating to see so little effective fundraising (even when we had a development director) when the needs are so great. The parents are always asked to contribute more instead.

#### (4) Good Manager / Well organized

#4 What we MUST have is a strong manager and visionary leader who has the business skills necessary to help us out of the hole we are in.

#15 The flat nonhierarchical staffing structure needs fully supported leadership.

#21 Good management skills towards all groups at school

#33 I would say that a new administrator should also have a proven track record of being highly organized.

#### (4) Empower / Listen To / Respect parents

#13 As a parent, I would like to feel greater respect for parents values and abilities. I often feel talked down to by teachers, and not much awareness or compassion for the challenges that parents face economically and personally. I also feel that other parents are often shut down by the rules of the school, and I would love for the new administrator to be able to include parents without disempowering them.

#32 We must have an administrator who guides teachers toward a renewed understanding of Waldorf Education in the 21st Century and who makes certain we are educating and supporting parents through their journey with us.

#31 As the school moves on, I would like to see growth in the school community's acceptance of home-life choices families make within the school policies. I still see a lot of judgment within our own community exhibiting arrogance and causing feelings of exclusion.

#46 And every time you try to talk to someone about a concern, you get told that there is some complicated channel/hierarchy of communication that needs to be followed, which usually ends up meaning that the issue gets swallowed up in the rabbit hole. (I have had this happen.)

#### (4) Increased Authority for Administrator

#2 Someone who has the authority to make decisions without going to a board of teachers who have little experience making business decisions and or have never been in any other business but teaching.

#28 The current system where you don't hire a leader to lead, is not working, and has been very detrimental to the way this school has grown over the years, select a strong leader, set a few objectives for them, and then get out of their way.....and let them lead this school

#36 I would like to see a strong administrator who gets stronger direction from the Board and sees that it is carried out by the college. I would like to see more attention to facilities.

#14 It is imperative that the new administrator takes responsibility for the whole school and supervises staff in an engaging and enthusiastic way. Also very important that new administrator is respected by faculty and authority is agreed.

#### (4) Strong Business skills

#4 It is critical that we also look OUTSIDE the Waldorf/anthroposophical world for candidates. We have not done much of this in the past, and have paid dearly for it, at least from the past 2 administrators I have seen. We do not NEED to have an anthroposophical person or super-experienced Waldorf teacher/parent/leader to turn things around for us. That would be a bonus, yes. What we MUST have is a strong manager and visionary leader who has the business skills necessary to help us out of the hole we are in. That person can LEARN about Waldorf education, understand and support its ideals, and can then articulate it to others in the Triangle region. A basic level of understanding can be achieved even just by watching Whitney MacDonald's DVD that was produced for the school's use a few years ago. Obviously deeper understanding/appreciation can develop over time. But as long as someone can agree with the basics and articulate them, we're off to a good start. Better to focus on the professional skills we desperately need.

#6 The school needs to take the next step on its maturity growth curve. We need an administrator who recognizes that we need formal processes and a growth strategy.

#18 Administrator should be able to understand the vibe of a Waldorf school while maintaining the bottom line that the school office is still ultimately a business and should be run as such.

#23 The administrator needs to be strong minded but fair in dealing with everyone at the school. They must uphold the schools policies and not execute them according to their whim and interpretation. Fairness needs to be across the board.

#### (3) Upset over Julie

#1 Bring Back Julie!

#20 School has already had to make some unpopular and difficult decisions this year (laying off Julie...) and must do a better job of explaining why and show that we are still doing fiscally well and kept such and such in place. Ideally the community would have been more aware in advance of the need to make such decisions so that it would not come as a shock and it would have been done over the summer and not just as the school year began.

#41 The school must conduct itself in a professional manner (the way Julie was let go would be unacceptable in a hamburger joint. An apology to her and the community would be in order.). The school needs to treat people with dignity and respect. No more hiding behind the mask of Anthroposophy. Be real. Be honest. Be upstanding. Be an example of how a community should operate. Be dynamic!

#### (3) Desires / concerns over heart/spirit

#3 Don't forget the heart forces!

#10 The soul/spirit of this school is broken and the wounds run deep. Are caring energies spread too thin or just not there?

#24 I am here, because it is a Waldorf school.

#### (2) Desire for faculty cohesiveness

#24 I am worried about infighting at the school.

#45 More than anything else we need good teamwork amongst the staff. We all need to feel that each and every one of the faculty is trustworthy and supports the other. Faculty need to support administration and administration needs to support the faculty. When one speaks negatively about the other it destroys the environment.

#### (1) Meet final candidates

#5 We're looking for a special person. Take your time and keep us informed. I hope we (parents) will get to meet any final candidate(s) before the position is offered.

(1) Diversity training

#7 diversity training still an issue.... hoping for training for parents, staff, etc re: issues of ethnicity/race, gender, and special needs populations.

(1) Better communication / vision

#27 I believe our school needs to develop a clearer idea of what we stand for, and consistently communicate that idea to the community by example and by persistently presenting ourselves to the community. If we can do this effectively, our enrollment issues will get better, which will open the way to our growth as both in campus and programs.

(1) Decrease role of board

#29 The Board should be raising money and supporting the school not administering.

(1) Support for Joanne

#34 I thought Joanne was doing a great job.

(1) Reach out to wider community

#41 Emerson must stop being so internally focused and reach out to the wider community. Teachers must conduct themselves in a way that that is accessible to people outside of the Waldorf circle.