

Faculty

Membership eligibility

The Faculty encompasses all employees of the Waldorf School of New Orleans whose primary function is teaching the students.

Hiring process

In the event that a position is in need of being filled at WSNO, the Faculty will first look to their existing members to determine whether there is a suitable candidate already present. In order to fill a position completely in-house, without an official posting for the position to the larger Waldorf community, a teacher must be transitioning to the same position, job description, and section only (for example, an 8th Grade class teacher who is then moving down to a lower grade for the following year). In the event that no in-house candidate is available, a job posting is crafted or adapted by the Business Administrator (or Section Chair) in partnership with the Leadership Council for Lead Teacher positions, or the Faculty who have expertise in the particular field of study for subject teachers. A Hiring Taskforce will also be created for the specific position. The members of this taskforce will include the Business Administrator and volunteers from the Leadership Council, if it is a lead teacher position, or the section, headed up by its Leadership Council members, if it is an assistant or subject teacher position. All Faculty members will have the opportunity to see the resumes, speak to the qualifications, and observe the applicants, however. For most positions, with the possible exception of classroom assistants, jobs postings are first placed on official Waldorf websites, as well as the WSNO website. A cover letter, biography, resume, and three references are requested from all applicants. The hiring process will then continue as follows:

1. Application materials are reviewed by the Hiring Taskforce, and a short list of candidates will be generated.
2. All the selected candidates' references will be checked, and communication will be initiated with their previous schools or employers.
3. If these are favorable, candidates will be interviewed by members of the hiring committee, although all Faculty may participate if they wish. A section of the interview will involve only the candidate and the Business Administrator so that specifics about salary and benefits may be discussed.
4. If the interview goes well, and takes place during the school year, the top candidate is then invited to offer sample lessons. If the interview occurs over the summer, however, sample mini-lessons will be presented by the candidates to the hiring task force in conjunction with their interviews.
5. Once this process is completed, the appropriate Faculty groups will then meet and determine whether they would like to offer a candidate the position.

6. Once a decision is reached, the Business Administrator will be informed by the hiring task force and will then follow up with a formal offer.

In the event that no suitable Waldorf candidate can be found, the job search is widened to include the greater New Orleans educational community. Should a position be offered to a person without Waldorf training, the Faculty will then work with the Business Administrator to determine the most appropriate and financially feasible way in which Waldorf training can be procured for the new hire.

Termination of Employment process

In the event that a concern or complaint is brought about a teacher, everything is done to facilitate direct communication in order for the issue to be addressed. Teachers who receive chronic complaints, or who has been determined to need extra support by the Leadership Council, will first be approached by a Chair of his or her section. This meeting will be followed up by a written letter outlining the steps that are to be taken to address the situation. In addition, the decision may be made to assign the teacher a Teacher Support Taskforce. This taskforce will do everything in their power to support the teacher and guide him or her through mentoring and a resolution process. This process will also be formally documented. If the teacher being supported is unwilling or unable to address the challenges he or she is facing within an agreed-upon timeframe, then a judgement about termination will be made by the Teacher Support Taskforce in consultation with the Business Administrator. This decision will then be carried out by the Business Administrator. In the event that an issue or complaint is brought against a Section Chair, one of the other two Section Chairs will initiate these proceedings.

In the event of an egregious breach of school policy or unsafe behavior exhibited by a teacher, a Section Chair, with the guidance of the other two Chairs, is empowered to suspend the Faculty member immediately. In the event that a Section Chair needs to be suspended, the other Section Chairs will take charge of the proceedings. After a formal investigation, a decision regarding termination can then be made by the Leadership Council with the facilitation of the Section Chairs, and in consultation with the Business Administrator.

Decision-making process

The Faculty of the Waldorf School of New Orleans is committed to arrive at decisions by consensus.

If agreement cannot be reached in a meeting, to which invitations and agenda with the indication of decision were sent out three days in advance, then the issue shall be brought back for the following meeting. If questions remain a third session shall be scheduled for a decision, which will be made by majority vote.

Consensus for the Faculty means that people speak their agreement and that not more than 10% of members stand aside (an acceptable stance that does indicate that they

can go along with the group although they do have some reservations) and that no one blocks.

Blocking is a major step for an individual, forcing the group to reexamine the whole question and not proceeding with the decision making process. Faculty have affirmed that such blocking is acceptable and welcome as it can represent the 'spirit' of the school/community to speak – but we also are clear that this activity is a 'once or twice in a life time' event for an individual as this is not an easy thing.

This process is our preferred model, but it may only be adopted when time permits for the decision to be deferred in this fashion. Decisions that require a curtailed timeline are decided via majority vote by the appropriate Faculty group. Under these circumstances, if a member of a Faculty group is unavailable, he or she waves the right to decide on the issue. Votes via proxy or over email will be allowed, however, as long as these votes are cast prior to the meeting in which the decision is to be made. In order for such decisions to be considered valid, a quorum of over 50% of the Faculty groups' members must be present or have submitted votes by proxy. In emergency circumstances, in which an immediate decision must be reached, the Section Chairs are empowered to decide on the issue through majority vote. This may be done in consultation with the Business Administrator or a representative of the Board if the decision is also within their purview.

All Faculty members have a voice, but some decisions are reserved for the appropriate department, taskforce, or the Leadership Council.

Early Childhood (EC) can vote on decisions that only impact EC, and the same with the Grades. Specialty teachers vote with the Grades. Matters that affect the whole school require a vote from either the Leadership Council or the full Faculty, depending on the subject.

Accountability

The Faculty is accountable to their peers with regard to their general responsibility to carry out the specified WSNO curriculum to the best of their ability. Selected members of the Leadership Council liaise and coordinate with the other members of his or her department to ensure that all complete their assessments, hold parent evenings, and fulfill their obligations. Faculty members are observed several times a year by their peers, and also meet regularly with mentors or speaking partners to discuss their lessons. On a regular basis, all teachers are assessed by an AWSNA or WECAN representative from outside the school. In years when this does not occur, the Faculty engages in self-review, which is then discussed with a mentor or speaking partner.

The Leadership Council provides guidance and leadership to, and occasionally, oversight over the Faculty as a whole. In the event that a teacher is facing particular difficulties or challenges, this committee will create a Teacher Support Taskforce, which

will be responsible for doing its utmost to help the teacher improve or resolve the difficulty.

The Faculty is accountable to the Board with regard to ensuring that the curriculum and agreed-upon programs are being carried out. Monthly written reports are submitted. The Faculty is responsible for educating Board members about Waldorf education, and serving as pedagogical advisors in Board meetings. Two Faculty representatives are also voting members of the Board.

The Faculty is accountable to the parents with regard to providing the best possible educational experience for their children. The Faculty reports to parents through two formal written reports and two parent-teacher conferences annually, as well as weekly email communication. Grades Faculty also provide written assessments at the conclusion of each block. Parents are encouraged to use direct communication to bring concerns to the Faculty with regard to their teaching. In the event that a parent feels that these concerns have not been addressed, the Leadership Council is responsible for reviewing concerns and, if necessary, creating the aforementioned Teacher Support Taskforce.

Meetings

The Faculty meet weekly, with a rotating schedule of Section Meetings and Full Faculty Meetings. Leadership Council Meetings will be held twice a month, and additionally as needed.

Review

TBA

The Faculty has not, as of yet, participated in a formal review of themselves as a governing body. We will be looking into this and will discuss how we could participate in an annual review to improve our process.

Reporting

Monthly report to the Board.

EC and Grades Sections report to each other at each full Faculty meeting. These will be facilitated by the three Section Chairs.

Teachers report to parents twice annually via formal written reports and parent-teacher conferences. Regular updates are also provided via email. Teachers schedule additional meetings with parents at need.

Mandates and authority

- The mandate to teach out of freedom; it is the Faculty's purview to determine, in consultation with their peers and mentors, the best way to bring the principles of Waldorf education and Steiner's model of child development to their classroom
- The power to set the curriculum specifically designed for the Waldorf School of New Orleans, with the understanding that it is based upon the overarching, developmentally appropriate curriculum used by all Waldorf schools
- The ability to choose materials, design, and maintain their classroom in a way that they see fit, provided that their choices adhere to basic Waldorf principles
- Hiring and terminating the employment of fellow Faculty members, following the aforementioned guidelines, in partnership with the Business Administrator
- Has the ultimate decision-making responsibility with regard to student admissions, placement, and continued enrollment

Duties and responsibilities

- Responsible for determining and resolving issues of pedagogy and identity of school
- Charts student progress
- Creates and maintains a school calendar
- Festivals, fairs, and assembly schedule
- Hires new Faculty (class teachers, assistants, specialty)
- Communicates with parents and Faculty to resolve issues regarding students
- Admissions: reviews applications, assesses student applicants, and makes decisions about admissions; also determines class placement, and makes decisions about students' continued enrollment
- Has representation on Leadership Council, Committees, and Board
- Ensures that programming is philosophically in line with school values
- Responsible for maintaining a harmonious and beautiful learning environment, with the support of a professional cleaning service
- Accountable for Teacher Development, including establishing accountability, assessment, and professional development. Enacts Teacher improvement if necessary in order to support teachers. Makes decisions about continued employment.
- Provides needs and input for supplies, furniture, allocation of supply and educational funds.
- Makes decisions regarding curriculum and programming for future projects and upcoming school years.
- Provides feedback for Administrators' and Board's annual review
- Collaborates with Board and administration on salary scale and policies
- Takes responsibility for orienting, training, and mentoring subject teachers, assistants, new hires, and before and aftercare staff
- Makes a commitment to be on the path of personal development

Organizational Structure

Sub-committees and task forces

Leadership Council

- Sets agendas and facilitates weekly Faculty meetings
- Charts progress of school-wide plans related to curriculum and administration
- Teacher development
- 5 year plan progress
- School curriculum, festivals, and programs
- Ensures that subject teachers, assistants, new hires, and before and aftercare staff receive the orientation, training, and mentorship they require
- Facilitates teacher support such as providing meeting times, teacher training information and approval of program, as well as direct mentor support (some of this may go to Teacher Development committee)
- Facilitates large scale furniture and supply orders and planning for future staffing needs with collaboration of Faculty
- Visions and plans for future school years and projects and brings information to Faculty for consideration and decisions.

Membership on the Leadership Council is open to all teachers with at least one year of experience at the Waldorf School of New Orleans, in either the Early Childhood or in Grades, who feel called to serve. New teachers may choose to audit Leadership Council meetings, but will not be voting members. The decision to join the Leadership Council is made out of freedom by all Faculty members. The three Section Chairs, one for Early Childhood, one for the Lower Grades, and one for the Upper Grades, serve as facilitators for the Leadership Council. These Chair positions are reserved for experienced teachers who have completed their Waldorf training.

Teacher Support Taskforce

- Provides support to teachers in crisis
- Facilitates resolution of difficulties between a teacher in crisis and parents, students, and/or other parties
- Documents challenges and progress
- Makes a decision about a teacher in crisis' continued employment

The three members of the Taskforce will include a second Faculty member from the same department as the teacher in need of support, as well as the Section Chair and a third representative from the Leadership Council selected by the teacher for whom the Taskforce is being assembled. If a Section Chair is the teacher in crisis, another Faculty member from the same department will step in to serve as the third member, in lieu of the Chair.

Special Circumstances

As mentioned above, parent concerns about a class or teacher should initially be directed to that teacher directly. Parents may request a Chair or another support person to be in attendance. Meetings regarding serious concerns must always include a note taker, so that all in attendance can receive and approve notes. Parents may submit concerns in writing by filling out the Request for Communication Form and submitting it to the Leadership Council if the parent is dissatisfied with the action taken, uncomfortable addressing it with the teacher, or if the concern is more serious in nature. The Leadership Council is obligated to respond to the parent with regard to the concerns in three business days. Section Chairs will serve as liaisons whenever possible.