

3.001 EMPLOYEE AGREEMENTS/CONTRACTS

All Riverside Leadership Academy staff members are employees of Riverside Leadership Academy, Inc. Riverside Leadership Academy, Inc. is an “at-will” employer. As such, either Riverside Leadership Academy, Inc. or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time for any reason, according to the terms of the employment contract

Please note that all binding contractual duties and rights are set forth only in the employment contract. This policy and other board policies or procedures are not part of the employment contract unless otherwise stated in the contract, itself.

I. Hiring Process

Riverside Leadership Academy must adopt a hiring process which adequately screens candidates and provides the board of directors with a level of assurance that certain requirements were reviewed before offering a position of employment.

At a minimum, the hiring process shall include:

- Collect Resume and Riverside Leadership Academy Application for Employment
- Initial interview with Collaborative team (grade level teachers, Support personnel, Administrators, etc.)
- Follow up Screening Activity (sample lesson, collaborative activity, mock project tuning protocol, video of sample lesson implementation, etc.) involving several stakeholders (could include colleagues, students, and community members)
- Interview with Executive Director
- Administrator checks three references
 - References do not have to be those listed by the employee. In fact, it is a good practice to check one or more non-listed references. If that happens it is a courtesy to let the applicant know in advance that this may happen.
- Background Check [§ 115C-218.90](#) (the school criminal check policy must mimic that of the LEA)
- Drug Screening is required for all applicants
- Administrator makes a recommendation for hire to the Board of Directors

Criminal Background Check

Applicants must immediately notify the Executive Director of Riverside Leadership Academy if they are arrested, charged with, or convicted of a criminal offense (including entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere), other than a minor traffic violation (e.g., speeding, parking, or a lesser offense).

Notification must be submitted in writing, include all pertinent facts, and be delivered to the Executive Director no later than the next scheduled business day following the arrest, charge, or conviction. If the applicant is hospitalized or incarcerated, they must report the alleged violation within 24 hours of their release.

Upon judicial action in the matter, the applicant must report the final disposition and all relevant details in writing to the Executive Director no later than the next business day following adjudication.

A criminal history check and a review of sex offender registries must be conducted on all final candidates for employment with Riverside Leadership Academy. Criminal history checks must be conducted in accordance with North Carolina state law and any procedures established by the Executive Director. School officials shall not require candidates to disclose expunged arrests, charges, or convictions, nor shall they ask candidates to voluntarily disclose such information without first advising that disclosure is not required. The Executive Director or designee shall report to the State Board of Education any licensed individual found to have a criminal history, as required by State Board policy.

A final candidate for employment or for hiring as an independent contractor at Riverside Leadership Academy will be excluded from hiring based on criminal conduct only when such exclusion is job-related and consistent with business necessity.

If a final candidate has been convicted (including entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere) of a criminal offense—other than a minor traffic violation—the Executive Director shall determine whether the individual remains qualified for employment despite the criminal history. This determination will include an assessment of whether the candidate poses a threat to the safety of students or personnel or lacks the integrity or honesty necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.

The following factors will be considered in making this determination:

1. The nature and gravity of the offense or conduct
2. The time elapsed since the offense or conduct and/or completion of the sentence
3. The nature of the job sought

Before the Executive Director may exclude a final candidate based on past criminal convictions, the candidate must be given the opportunity to demonstrate that the exclusion does not properly apply to them.

RLA Board Recommendation

When Riverside Leadership Academy's Executive Director has selected a candidate to recommend for hire to the board of directors, a new hire recommendation packet should be presented to the board.

At a minimum, the new hire recommendation packet presented to the board of directors should include:

- Copy of resume

- Copy of Employee Application
- Certify review of Riverside Leadership Academy's Educational plan, Mission and Vision
- Pertinent notes from team interview
- Summary comments from screening activity
- Recommendation comments from Executive Director interview
- Certification by Executive Director that reference checks were completed and no barriers to employment were raised
- Certification by the Executive Director that background check and drug screening resulted in no findings.

Once all of the procedures for hiring have been completed the prospective employee shall be presented with the employee agreement. This agreement shall include the employee's salary, benefits, and length of service.

Conditional Employment. In circumstances in which the Executive Director deems it necessary, the Executive Director may, after consultation with the Board Chairperson (or designee) and legal counsel, extend a "conditional offer of employment" to a job applicant who may begin working for pay prior to formal Board approval. Such conditional offer shall be in writing to the prospective employee. It shall clearly communicate the initial terms of employment, and that permanent employment is subject to successful completion of all reference and criminal background check, and formal Board approval of the employment contract.

II. Employee Pay and Benefits

Riverside Leadership Academy's Board of Directors is not obligated to follow the state and local salary schedule when determining employee salaries. However, it is Riverside Leadership Academy's goal to pay all full-time employees competitively with the state and local salary schedule. Riverside Leadership Academy's Board of Directors will differentiate employee salary amounts according to years of experience, attained college/university degrees and professional certification as established and recognized by the North Carolina State Board of Education.

Any payment of additional annual salary supplements and/or performance bonuses shall be determined by the Board at the end of each fiscal year.

All full-time employees shall be entitled to participate in the annual benefits package at those rates and provisions as are offered in the package each year. The Board reserves unto itself the right to offer those additional employment benefits as it deems reasonable, appropriate, and affordable. Additional benefits offered by the Board are limited to one fiscal year at a time, subject to annual review and renewal.

As a public charter school, RLA is almost exclusively funded through state, local and federal monies. Prior to the beginning of each school year, the board approves the school's annual budget, which contains all

Board Adopted: November 08, 2023

Revised and Board Approved: January 24, 2024

Revised and Board Approved March 12, 2025

expected personnel costs. Those costs are derived in large part from the compensation and benefits paid to employees pursuant to our policies and contracts. As such, the school does not change compensation for employees during the year unless there is a change in position or responsibility. Teachers are expected to ensure their licensure and experience is updated by the end of February, prior to contracts being offered. Once personnel contracts are executed, changes in compensation will not be made even if there is a change in years of experience/service or licensure. Contract changes are only permitted if there is a change in responsibility or position and must be approved or ratified by the school's board of directors.

III. Open Door Policy

Riverside Leadership Academy is committed to fair and equitable treatment for all employees. Good-faith complaints, grievances, questions, comments, suggestions, or ideas are of interest to Riverside Leadership Academy. Riverside Leadership Academy encourages its employees to communicate such good-faith complaints, grievances, questions, comments, suggestions, or ideas to their supervisor, or the Executive Director.