

TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School #4095

Procedure 134

Guidance on References for Staff Members

I. Official References by Charter School Director

For staff members who request an official reference from the TRIO Wolf Creek Charter School Director, the following procedures and guidelines shall apply.

A. Letters on Official Letterhead

The Director may provide written letters of reference in accordance with the following policies and procedures:

1. Description of Staff Member's Job Performance: Subject to Paragraph 3 below, the Director may, at the Director's discretion and based upon the staff member's job performance, write a letter of reference describing the requesting staff member's job performance in general terms. The Charter School is not obligated to create a letter in response to the staff member's request.
2. Description of Staff Member's Dates of Employment: The Director may alternatively, at the Director's discretion, write a letter only indicating the requesting staff member's starting and ending dates of employment.
3. Data Privacy: All references given by the Charter School shall comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act ("MGDPA"). Unless the staff member requesting a reference signs a written authorization, in a form approved by the Director, the Charter School will only release data classified by the MGDPA as "public." Such public data includes, but is not limited to, the staff member's: (a) name; (b) salary range; (c) actual gross salary; (d) job title and description; (e) education and training background; (f) first and last date of employment; (g) existence and status of any complaints or charges, regardless of whether the complaint resulted in discipline; and (h) the final disposition of any disciplinary action, together with the specific reasons for the action.
 - a. If the staff member requests a letter of reference containing a description of the staff member's job performance pursuant to Paragraph I(A)(1), the staff member must provide a written authorization to release information in the form approved by the Director *before* the Director issues the requested letter.

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B. No Official Phone References

The Director will not provide references over the phone. Official references shall be made in writing, as described above. The Director will not disclose private, confidential, or other non-public data, as those terms are defined in the MGDPA, over the phone or otherwise, without the express written consent of the staff member in a form approved by the Director.

II. Unofficial References by Staff Members

For staff members requesting references from, or providing references to, other staff members, the Charter School provides the following recommendations and requirements:

- A. Director as Sole Official Reference:** The Director of the Charter School is the *only* person designated to act as an official reference for the school. Staff members are *discouraged*, but *not prohibited*, from offering references due to potential confusion regarding the communication, and the staff member's potential liability in connection with the communication.
- B. References on Wolf Creek Letterhead Reserved:** Staff members, other than the Director, *shall not* offer letters of reference on the Charter School's letterhead due to the potential confusion regarding the authority to act as an official reference.
- C. Representations in Connection to Wolf Creek:** Staff members, other than the Director, *shall not* offer references, whether in writing or verbal, which purport or convey that the staff member is acting on behalf of, or in connection with, the Charter School. Such representations include, but are not limited to:
1. Signatures indicating identification with the Charter School;
 2. Stating or implying that a reference is being given on behalf of the Charter School; and
 3. Use of titles indicating affiliation with the Charter School in a context where it would state or imply that the reference is being given on behalf of the Charter School.
- D. Encouraged Documentation:** Staff members are *encouraged*, but not required, to provide the Director with a copy of letters of reference for documentation purposes.
- E. Data Privacy.** No staff member may disclose any data that is classified as private, confidential, or non-public, except as permitted or required by law.