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LYCÉE FRANÇAIS SHARES QUALIFICATIONS OF INTERIM CEO
School Also Discloses Details of Resignations of Former Principals

(New Orleans, LA) – Responding to public records requests, Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans has shared the resume and extensive qualifications of Giselle Schexnider, the school’s Academic Director and interim CEO. Ms. Schexnider stepped in to lead the school after the resignation of the general director, Jean-Jacques Grandière, in November. The school is also sharing, in connection with public records requests, details surrounding the resignations of Mr. Grandière and the principal he succeeded after the 2011-2012 academic year, Jill Otis.

Prior to joining Lycée Français, Ms. Schexnider served as a professor of French in primary grades at The Louise S. McGehee School, a college preparatory private school for young women in New Orleans. Previously, she worked as an assistant professor and part-time professor at the University of New Orleans, and as a kindergarten teacher at The International School of Louisiana, the first language immersion charter in the state. In addition to her background in education, Ms. Schexnider has leadership experience in the French private sector, serving as a director for a business center of Regus, the world’s largest provider of flexible workspaces, and as an administrative director for Netscape Communications Europe.

She earned a Master’s Degree in Linguistics of Romance Languages from the University of New Orleans and her training includes DAEFLE, a professional degree program affiliated with the French National Education for teaching French to a non-French audience. She has also received training in TPRS (teaching proficiency through reading and storytelling) and AIM, also known as the Accelerative Integrated Method, which uses gestures, music, dance, and theatre to help students learn.

In explaining why the Board opted for Ms. Schexnider over any candidate with a teaching certification from the French government, Board Chairman Jean Montès noted that Ms. Schexnider was raised in France and is a product of and strong advocate for the French curriculum. Even before joining Lycée Français, he explained, “Ms. Schexnider was a friend and supporter of the school, being one of the first persons to explain the project to the French Government.” Just as important, he added, “[a]s an established resident of the United States, she has a clear understanding of the Franco-American establishments and organizations in Louisiana, and a strong commitment to remaining a part of the New Orleans community, a critical factor in making long-term plans for our school.”

Once the Board selects a permanent CEO, Ms. Schexnider will step down as interim CEO. She will remain in her post as Academic Director, which is charged with supporting and evaluating the school’s teachers and establishing school-wide academic performance goals and instructional objectives.

Regarding the school's former principals, Dr. Montès explained that Mr. Grandière resigned citing personal reasons. Mr. Grandière did not disclose the details of those reasons.

At the time of his resignation, Mr. Grandière offered the following statement: "Although I know that I am leaving the school in good hands, I intend to stay in contact with the school as needed. I believe that with our current staff, the school will continue to thrive and fulfill its mission. I want to thank the students, parents, teachers, staff and board for their understanding and support during this time."

According to Dr. Montès, the Board agreed to pay Mr. Grandière for six weeks during a transition period, in addition to his provided two weeks of personal leave. Dr. Montès believes this pay was fair, considering Mr. Grandière was available and assisted with the transition after his departure, including offering advice and co-signing checks until a new signatory could be processed by the bank, providing services that were necessary for the school during that period.

As for Ms. Otis, she opted in April 2012 to ultimately resign after the Board pointed out areas in which she could show improvement. According to a recent independent auditor's report, however, she resigned *effective* April 2, 2012, and the report noted the school continued making payments to her through July 6, 2012, amounting to \$29,879, concluding the school failed to perform proper controls over payroll amounts and disbursements. According to Dr. Montès, however, the now former Board chairman, Andrew Abrams, decided to accept her resignation effective on a date and in a role that was not clear instead of immediately or with a short defined transition period. Given the budget deficit for the academic year that later came to light and the unnecessarily long and rather unproductive transition period, Dr. Montès believes a different decision likely should have been made.

Nevertheless, the Board has no plans at this time to seek reimbursement of the payments made to Ms. Otis, deferring to Mr. Abrams' decision and preferring to concentrate on the school's future, especially the hiring of a permanent CEO. With a new operations director installed back in August, the school has been transparent with its finances and is adhering to a published budget to compensate for last year's deficit and to balance its books for this academic year.

About Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans:

Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans is a charter school in New Orleans, Louisiana, presently serving students from PK-3 to second grade, with plans to add a grade each year through high school. It is committed to teaching the French Ministry of Education's National curriculum in a French-immersion setting. It is authorized and supervised by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and may accept students from any parish in Louisiana. For more information, see lfno.org.

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