



Position Description: *Chief Executive Officer*

WHO WE ARE

Explore Schools is a network of eight public charter schools providing ~2,000 K-8 students in Brooklyn with the outstanding education they deserve. Since our founding in 2002, we have been anchored by our mission to provide our students with the academic skills and critical thinking abilities they need to succeed in a college-preparatory high school. To do that, we strive to provide students with curriculum and instruction that are both standards-aligned as well as culturally responsive, and to nurture students as critical thinkers and natural problem-solvers.

We believe that:

- all children can learn when immersed in a rich environment full of high expectations, rigorous academics, and caring, committed adults;
- equity and excellence are not mutually exclusive—we can meet the needs of all students in our schools, while actively engaging parents and driving toward excellent academic results; and
- It is both our privilege and responsibility to help close the opportunity gap in the Brooklyn community.

These beliefs, coupled with [our operating values](#), compel us to engage in work that disrupts and roots out systems and structures that perpetuate white supremacy. We intentionally seek to build and maintain a diverse and talented team that reflects the backgrounds and experiences of our students, while also creating an inclusive environment for all employees.

THIS OPPORTUNITY

The Explore Schools community is seeking a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to replace co-leaders Carrie Mauer (Executive Director) and Christina Froeb (Superintendent). After succeeding Explore's founding CEO, Mauer and Froeb united their complementary strengths and skillfully led the organization together through a period marked by the renewal of Explore's four charters, an era of significant investment into the organization's talent base and leadership pipelines, the onset of the pandemic, and the launch of the (still evolving) "#ReimagineExplore" strategic plan. Assured that the timing is right to make room for the influence and ideas of another strong and inspiring leader, Mauer and Froeb will transition out of the organization once the new CEO has arrived and a smooth transition has transpired. While their absence will be felt deeply by the team, Explore stakeholders are confident about the strong foundation that these two leaders will hand off, excited about the possibility of attracting a new leader whose identity reflects the students and families of Explore, and optimistic that the best of Explore is yet to come.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

In that spirit, Explore Schools seeks an experienced organizational leader to serve as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for our network of schools. In addition to the specific set of CEO responsibilities listed in the next section, the next leader of Explore will be given an outstanding opportunity to play an integral role in the educational landscape of Explore's beloved community of Brooklyn, and to lead and champion a close-knit organization full of educators and families committed to serving its children.

Further, this is a unique professional opportunity for a seasoned executive to lead an organization navigating the natural tensions between competing priorities as it transitions into the next stage of its evolution. Specifically, the Explore Board and leadership team are seeking a unique leader who can attend to and balance the following goals and related challenges:

- Our need and desire to provide students and families with robust and culturally responsive content in STEM, social studies, social/emotional learning, and after school programming, while sustaining our core math and ELA curriculum and continuing momentum toward ensuring all students are meeting and exceeding grade level expectations;
- Attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining talent - particularly educators - while simultaneously maintaining a high bar for staff performance and for student achievement, all in the context of a highly competitive hiring environment;
- Fostering and sustaining an organization known for the autonomy of its Principals and the subsequent uniqueness of each Explore school building's culture and curriculum, while identifying, designing, and delivering services and support from the central office to each school that is both responsive and efficient; and
- Honoring our existing approach to decision making (which is collaborative and consensus-driven by way of committees and the incorporation of a wide range of voices and perspectives) while managing the natural tension that arises given that this approach is not always conducive to speed and efficiency.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

With the support of the network executive team and in close collaboration with Explore Schools' Board of Trustees, the CEO of Explore Schools is responsible for setting the organization's vision and strategy for effectiveness in ensuring academic achievement for our students and, ultimately, the success of our schools. The CEO will achieve this through leadership and management of the organization, including but not limited to the elements of: executive leadership, organizational culture, programmatic leadership, operations, and external relations. Specifically, the CEO will be responsible for:

Executive Leadership

- Setting and managing organizational goals - including but not limited to: growth, operational, financial, staff satisfaction, student/staff retention, and student achievement - and implementing corresponding systems to monitor network-wide progress towards these goals, while also adapting to internal and external changes
- Engaging with Explore Schools' two Boards: the Explore Schools Inc. Board (or "ESI Board" which meets quarterly and whose purview is the CMO) and the Explore Charter Schools Board ("ECS Board" which manages and holds the charters of the schools), and promoting rigorous Board-management discussion to solve key challenges and realize Explore's mission
- Communicating information to the Board transparently and in a timely manner
- Working with the Board to recruit new board members and support their on-boarding and training

Organizational Culture

- Ensuring network-wide alignment around vision, mission, core values, and goals and actively seeking opportunities to cultivate and deepen that commitment
- Conveying that vision – orally and verbally - to motivate, focus, and inspire the Explore community and communicate transparently with all staff regularly to reinforce priorities, share results, name areas for improvement, and celebrate successes
- Promoting, modeling, and building a diverse, inclusive and culturally competent organization, one centered on the overall experience and academic achievement of students and characterized by anti-white supremacy values, openness, transparency, fairness, and respect for all employees
- Implementing effective talent management strategies to recruit, hire, coach, develop, and retain high-performing and diverse people for all levels of the organization, including a high-performing and collaborative executive team as well as school leaders, high-quality teachers, and staff

Programmatic Leadership

- Ensuring that Explore's academic program is rigorous, engaging, and effective and that schools are innovating, testing, piloting, and scaling new solutions that drive student achievement and prepare all students to graduate from college prep high schools
- Promoting network-wide understanding and investment in the Explore Schools model, including proactively identifying "tight vs. loose" elements and related implications at the school and CMO level
- Ensuring effective, inspiring leadership and management of the program team and principals by senior leaders, so that Explore Schools' programmatic vision is clearly understood and executed successfully
- Managing all programmatic design decisions, relying on internal data, external best practices, and collaboration with key stakeholders

Operations, Finance and Accountability

- Ensuring that operations and facilities are safe and support the academic program
- Ensuring that Explore maintains its robust fiscal health and has a viable long-term financial plan, becomes financially sustainable on public funding, manages resources strategically, and adheres to audit expectations
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the CMO's services and leveraging data in service of continuous improvement
- Administering the development and management of annual school and ESI budgets
- Overseeing student recruitment and enrollment
- Ensuring a smooth charter renewal process for the organization's four charters, and for subsequent renewal applications

External Relations

- Developing meaningful partnerships and relationships with community leaders, government and school district officials, charter authorizer representatives, parents, and local organizations
- Leveraging local and national relationships in the funding, advocacy, policy, and education communities to continue to improve Explore
- Serving as Explore's primary spokesperson and a trusted source for information on our schools, as well as the charter movement, to the media and in the community
- Pursue branding, media, and advocacy opportunities to further the mission of Explore through presentations, publications, and social media presence

QUALIFICATIONS

The next CEO of Explore Schools will possess the following professional experience, skills, and personal characteristics that validate their stated readiness to lead an innovative, urban, and ambitious educational organization:

The successful candidate will bring to the role the following ***professional experience:***

- Senior leadership experience in a school-based or other educational setting
- Leading and making decisions in a senior-level role within a consensus-driven environment and through an equity lens
- A track record of results in setting priorities, shaping processes, guiding investment in people and systems, and developing an infrastructure that creates a stronger and more efficient organization
- Working in historically underserved and under-resourced communities
- Demonstrating capacity to lean in and push forward, especially during times of ambiguity and/or challenge

Further, the successful candidate will possess **skills** that warrant the following descriptors:

- Focused strategist: relentlessly focused on the achievement of ambitious goals, able to recognize and prioritize highest needs, is flexible in approach to problem solving, and understands the need to take calculated risks for the good of the organization
- Inclusive collaborator: a leader who can steward a team toward results-oriented decisions through a deeply collaborative and consensus-driven approach
- Effective manager: a detail-oriented manager who can set clear expectations and hold others accountable for progress, skilled at creating and implementing systems and processes that enable work to be accomplished effectively
- Influential communicator, collaborator, team builder, and consensus builder: an active listener who can inspire others around a shared vision and motivate team members to work together to execute against the vision that has been set
- Fiscal steward: demonstrable readiness to steward the financial operation of a complex, \$45M organization
- Adept public speaker: comfortable leading and speaking to diverse constituencies

Finally, the successful candidate must possess these **personal characteristics**:

- Unwavering belief in the ability of every child to achieve at the highest levels and to be prepared to succeed in college prep high schools and beyond
- An interpersonal skill set and style conducive to meaningful interactions with families and student care-givers
- Committed to leading a mission-driven organization with an equity lens
- Self-aware, constant learner; a reflective practitioner who is aware of his/her/their strengths and weaknesses, open to feedback and seeks help to improve

While **not required**, the following attributes would be **highly attractive** in candidates:

- Lived experience and/or identity represented within the Explore student body
- A master's degree in educational leadership, business, or other relevant field

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The CEO reports directly to the two previously-mentioned Boards of Explore Schools. Reporting to the CEO will be a robust Network team, currently comprising several Managing Directors and Assistant Superintendents, although the structure of the senior leadership could change depending on the profile of the new leader.

LOCATION & OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Brooklyn, New York City

NOTE: This is an in-person role that requires visiting schools located in NYC Department of Education buildings. *All staff members are required to follow the COVID-19 vaccine mandate.* Please reach out to humanresources@explorenetwork.org if you'd like to see a copy of the mandate.

COMPENSATION

The salary for the CEO role is highly competitive. Explore Schools is deeply committed to its equity practices and, as such, we are working on pay band transparency and will update this job description once all of our pay bands are ready for publication. Additionally, Explore Schools employees receive paid time off including network shutdown days, considerable matching of retirement contributions, and a comprehensive benefits package including three health plans to choose from, two dental plans, and vision insurance. We also offer flexible spending accounts for health, dependent care and transit.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Explore Schools is an equal opportunity employer. It is important to us that all staff members have a place of employment that is free of discrimination of all kinds and where staff can bring their authentic selves to work. We do not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran, or military status. See our [Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#).

TO APPLY

The review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. However, *for best consideration, please follow these instructions to submit a cover letter and resume by **Friday, April 15**:*

- Visit the Opportunities section on our website and click on the APPLY NOW tab within the Explore Schools CEO job description
- Answer a brief set of questions about you
- Below the questions, you'll be able to upload your resume as well as a cover letter
- Finally, if you encounter any technical difficulties, contact: monisha@promise54.org.

NOTE! Explore is offering a \$5,000 referral bonus to the person who refers the next CEO!