



JOB SPECIFICATION

ORGANIZATION: The Kindezi Schools
POSITION: Executive Director
LOCATION: Atlanta, GA
REPORTS TO: Board of Directors

Background

Founded in 2010, Kindezi is a community of public schools with small classes led by great teachers. The Kindezi Schools serve over 1200 students across three successful and innovative schools within Atlanta Public Schools (APS): Kindezi West (K-8), Kindezi Old Fourth Ward (K-8), and Kindezi at Gideons (Pre-K-5). “Kindezi” is a Bantu word which describes the act by which a community educates, loves, and values every child. The Kindezi Schools provide students and families with a life-changing education filled with love and rigor, that enables all children to thrive. The Kindezi Schools are driven by a deep belief that every child has an innate worth and value and the right to reach their full potential. The mission of Kindezi is to transform public education in Atlanta by providing more students—including those with the highest needs—access to a genius-awakening education, built on family-sized classrooms, scholarly excellence, socioeconomic integration, and holistic growth. The Kindezi Schools envision a future in which each child knows they have an innate worth, value, and the right to look forward to exciting futures full of opportunity; students are empowered holistically to succeed in colleges, careers, and in improving our world for the sake of future generations; and families of all backgrounds benefit from, enjoy, and understand the societal importance of going to school together in interconnected, diverse school communities.

Small class sizes are foundational to the Kindezi model, as they foster a sense of family and community, nurture the genius in each child, and provide opportunities for differentiation and building deep, authentic relationships. Kindezi is the only public option in Atlanta averaging just eight students per class. The Kindezi Schools model also emphasizes excellent teaching, including high-quality professional development and career pathways, rigorous expectations combined with caring, individualized support, community engagement, racial and socio-economic diversity, and holistic data-driven decision-making.

While each of The Kindezi Schools has a particular focus, all three are unified in their goals of providing students with the academic, cognitive, and communication skills necessary to be successful in college, career, and leadership; instilling academic ownership in students so they develop the self-awareness, self-knowledge, enthusiasm, and engagement to be an advocate for their own academic growth; and creating opportunities for culture and social-emotional learning as well as community connectedness. For more information about The Kindezi Schools, please visit their [website](#).

Opportunity

Kindezi’s Executive Director and Founder, Dean Leeper, is stepping down at the end of the school year, and the board is seeking a dynamic, collaborative, executive leader to assume the role of Executive Director (ED) and build upon the success of the network. The new ED will be expected to codify unique aspects of the Kindezi model and build out supports and structures to unleash the full potential of Kindezi. Though historically The Kindezi Schools

have outperformed their neighborhood counterparts, the ED will be expected to drive improvement in academic outcomes.

The ED will also prioritize organizational stability, including a focus on the core operating functions held at “The Village” (central office) level. The ED will directly manage the leaders of the academics, operations, talent and finance teams, ensuring that role clarity, effective collaboration and teamwork undergirds “The Village” culture. The ED will manage the organizational budget of \$25 million, while investing significant time and energy in fundraising and donor stewardship. The ED will have the opportunity to oversee a new multi-faceted strategic planning process in concert with the board, and will engage staff members, families, students and other stakeholders in this process.

This is an exciting opportunity for a passionate, relationship-driven leader who is a strong manager of people and has a track record of leading teams to aggressive results. The ideal candidate is personally aligned with Kindezi’s mission and community-focused approach and possesses the change management experience and executive leadership skills to unite families, staff, students and partners as they drive towards common goals and write a new chapter in Kindezi’s history.

In the first year, the ED will be expected to:

- Establish strong relationships and deep trust with Kindezi families, students, staff (both at schools and in “The Village” or central office), funders, and other key stakeholders;
- Work with the board and other stakeholders to clarify the strategic multi-year vision for The Kindezi Schools;
- Unite the team in a near-term operating plan by establishing key priorities, codifying systems/structures, setting measurable goals and leading staff members to achieve annual goals for fundraising and student achievement outcomes;
- Plan for long-term financial sustainability by ensuring fiscal and operational efficiency across the organization, stewarding existing funders, and cultivating relationships with potential partners to broaden the base of financial support for Kindezi;
- Work closely with the instructional leadership team to create a plan for improving academic outcomes.

Responsibilities

Strategic Vision Setting, Planning and Execution

- Clarify Kindezi’s strategic vision, priorities, and short and long-term goals;
- Oversee a new strategic planning process in collaboration with the board;
- Engage and invest all stakeholders including the board, staff, parents, students, community, and other supporters, in the strategic plan and the realization of the vision;
- Champion the vision of the organization and lead the organization to fulfill its mission;
- Set organizational priorities and determine how the organization’s overall performance will be assessed;
- Ensure accountability across the organization by setting clear academic, operational, and financial goals and managing towards them, adapting as necessary given changes in internal and external environments;
- Create and sustain the conditions for the organization to codify the aspects of the Kindezi model that have the most meaningful impact on students’ experiences and outcomes.

Team Management and Culture Building

- Develop and retain a high-performing team and manage them towards ambitious goals with a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion;
- Oversee and provide leadership to the talent, finance, operations and academic teams;
- Provide the leadership and management necessary to ensure “The Village” (central office teams) are able to effectively support schools as they strive to deliver transformational educational outcomes for students;
- Regularly monitor and assess role clarity and organizational structure to ensure the right team is assembled to achieve goals;
- Preserve and promote the Kindezi mission while also codifying and communicating the core values, philosophy, and operating norms so that the “Kindezi way” is clear and consistently practiced throughout the organization;
- Build and support a strong, cohesive culture across the entire organization that leads to an embedded and aligned organizational identity;
- Oversee and manage an organization wide budget of \$25 million.

Organizational Sustainability and Fundraising

- Develop and expand fundraising efforts by cultivating new and leveraging existing relationships, as well as diversifying Kindezi’s funding base to ensure financial sustainability;
- Ensure that Kindezi has a viable long-term financial plan by creating cost efficient organizational systems;
- Ensure that the organization and the schools follow all legal requirements implemented by the authorizing authority, the state of Georgia, and any other applicable laws.

External Relations

- Serve as the public face and chief spokesperson for The Kindezi Schools;
- Build coalitions, relationships, and partnerships with key stakeholders in support of Kindezi’s mission and goals. This group of stakeholders includes the local school district, parents, students, alumni, donors, community members, and leaders of business, community, and political organizations;
- Build a strong relationship with Atlanta Public Schools and represent Kindezi in district and authorizer communications;
- Continue to develop a strong, engaged, and active board in close partnership with the board chair;
- Work closely with the board of directors and its committees, along with the chair and vice chair, to provide information to them in a transparent and timely manner and more effectively connect the board to the experiences of staff, students and families.

Qualifications

Experience

- At least ten years of professional experience, including successfully leading an organization or a team to meet ambitious goals, ideally in the education sector;
- Enterprise leadership experience setting a vision for a large, multi-tiered team/entity and defining strategies to operationalize the vision through layers;
- A track record of coaching, motivating, and empowering others and investing stakeholders in a vision;

- Experience leading a high performing school, system of schools and/or a successful nonprofit supporting schools or school reform efforts a plus;
- Knowledge of the local education landscape/sector in Atlanta or ties to Atlanta preferred, though not required;
- Experience building, nurturing, and supporting high-performing teams (ideally large teams through layers) to achieve ambitious outcomes;
- Experience building and stewarding external partnerships and serving as the external face of an organization;
- Fundraising/development experience required;
- A track record of successfully overcoming obstacles in challenging/complex environments;
- A Bachelor's degree from an accredited, four-year university.

Skills

- Culturally competent leader with the ability to build an inclusive workplace where diversity, equity and inclusiveness is valued and leveraged to achieve the vision and mission of the organization;
- Superior relationship management skills, the ability to engage a variety of stakeholders, and the executive presence to inspire confidence and passion in both internal and external audiences;
- Strong people and team management skills;
- Ability to build and maintain a strong organizational culture over time;
- A clear and effective communication style and an ability to empathize with and understand the perspectives of others.

Mindset/Values

- Philosophical alignment with the unique culture, mission, and vision of The Kindezi Schools;
- Ability to lead with love and compassion;
- Belief in the importance of fostering a sense of family/community in schools by affirming each student's educational journey and placing a focus on socio-emotional learning and supports;
- A deep-seated commitment to (and history of) leading with integrity, including building long-term relationships that engender trust and establish a sense of family/community;
- Appreciation for Kindezi's history and legacy, combined with a value for continuous improvement;
- A balance of urgency and focus to achieve results;
- Openness to piloting new initiatives and ability to create the space for teams/individuals to take risks.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please email your resume to Jobs@k12searchgroup.com with a subject line of "The Kindezi Schools ED." Applications must be received by midnight on **March 31, 2020**.