Executive Director, Northeast Denver Innovation Zone

Application deadline: August 1, 2020

Position Overview

The Executive Director, Northeast Denver Innovation Zone (NDIZ) will set and execute the overall vision and strategy for the Zone and - in partnership with Zone Principals - ensure that the schools within it meet their ambitious goals. Responsible for all aspects of the NDIZ’s organizational health, the Executive Director will ensure the Zone’s six schools have the necessary operational, financial, and human capital infrastructure to accomplish dramatic growth in student achievement, particularly for traditionally underserved students, and will support the creation, monitoring, and improvement of school-specific and network-wide systems and structures. The Executive Director will be the primary voice and face of the NDIZ externally and the chief bearer of culture inside and out. This role is ideal for an equity-focused and adaptive leader passionate about leveraging innovation to best-serve the students and community of Northeast Denver.

The Executive Director will report directly to the NDIZ Board of Directors.

Who We Are

The NDIZ empowers school leaders, teachers, families and caregivers, and community members to elevate the quality and equity of education for all students, in the NDIZ and beyond. We are an independent 501(c)(3) jointly governed by a community-based Board of Directors, school representatives, and Denver Public Schools (DPS). The Zone includes six schools in Northeast Denver serving students from early childhood to 12th grade: the Montclair School of Academics, McAuliffe International School, McAuliffe Manual Middle School, Northfield High School, Swigert International School, and Willow Elementary School.

The NDIZ ensures that decisions about the most precious educational commodities including talent, time, curriculum, and resources are made by people invested in our community, and at a more localized level than is possible at district scale. This means our schools can direct these commodities to where they know they’ll have the greatest impact. Our schools are liberated and empowered to create the best education for the students they serve, and to be nimble and responsive as needs change or arise.

As a Zone, we are fully committed to equity and strive to do everything we can to realize this vision, including tirelessly working to open doors to new opportunities for our students and continuously working to build school teams that fully reflect the beautiful tapestry that is our students and community. We seek a tomorrow very different from today and push ourselves to adapt to meet this call for action. In particular, our moral compass directs us, with great urgency, to push courageously against all structures and systems that have been intentionally designed and sustained to negate the truth that Black lives matter.
While the NDIZ serves schools in Northeast Denver, our efforts are far from siloed. We consider the opportunity DPS has extended to us to be one of its few Innovation Zones as an imperative to prove and share what works best. We believe in sharing what we learn and ensuring that students — whether they are ever enrolled in the NDIZ or not — benefit from the gains made by our dynamic educational model.

The Executive Director will play the lead role in realizing the mission and vision of the NDIZ and ensuring that our values of inclusiveness, diverse educational approaches, community designed education, and a unified community of schools are upheld throughout and on behalf of the Zone.

Responsibilities

The core responsibilities of the Executive Director include:

Develop and implement strategy

- Set overall vision and strategy for the Zone in partnership with the NDIZ Board, including identifying the team and resources needed to enable strong execution
- Operationalize the vision and strategy to support strong Zone performance with an emphasis on equity, community, and school-based empowerment
- Develop, implement, and refine strong metrics through which to determine progress; routinely analyze data and reflect on successes and opportunities; adjust strategy and execution as needed
- Cultivate a strong working relationship with the NDIZ Board of Directors, building transparency, collaboration, and trust; manage meetings of the NDIZ Board and serve as a liaison between schools and the NDIZ Board

Support school planning and development

- Provide coaching and guidance to Zone school leaders on high quality strategies and approaches for managing school design and progress as needed
- Participate in the development and evaluation of Zone schools’ Unified Improvement Plans and the compilation of a yearly report highlighting the performance of NDIZ schools
- Partner with school leaders to update Innovation Plans and get them approved by DPS
- Facilitate collaboration and shared professional development across Zone schools and identify opportunities for the sharing of resources and expertise
- Identify and coordinate access to high caliber partner organizations for Zone schools
- Oversee transition processes at school sites, including providing additional leadership at the school sites as needed

Recruit, manage, grow, and retain Zone staff

- Develop and grow a Zone school leadership pipeline by identifying and cultivating existing or potential leadership talent within and outside the network schools
● Coach, manage and evaluate NDIZ school leaders using the DPS’s LEAD evaluation system
● Support NDIZ school leaders in recruiting, developing, and retaining their school staff; act as a thought partner as needed for complex and sensitive school-based staff situations
● Enable an innovative, equitable, and inclusive culture to strengthen existing schools and their ability to attract and retain mission-aligned staff

Lead advocacy and external relations for the Zone
● Serve as spokesperson for the NDIZ and articulate a clear vision of the strategic goals and objectives to all stakeholders
● Build relationships with the six school communities and regularly gather feedback to ensure that the Zone is an organization responsive to the needs of the school communities
● Create strong brand recognition and positive publicity for NDIZ in local, state, and national settings
● Cultivate and strengthen NDIZ’s relationship to DPS and the DPS School Board while advocating for the自主s granted in each school’s and the NDIZ Innovation Plan
● Develop and maintain strategic community partnerships with state and federal agencies, educational associations, interest groups, families and caregivers, and other groups
● Partner with the NDIZ Board, Zone school leaders, and other community stakeholders to attract new schools to the Zone

Ensure financial health of the Zone
● Set financial priorities in partnership with the NDIZ Board; oversee the budgeting process for NDIZ and maximize budget efficiencies for Zone schools
● Establish strong and appropriate financial plans and controls; monitor closely throughout the school year
● Partner with DPS to ensure smooth functioning of key financial systems
● Negotiate and manage contracts for any shared services across the NDIZ schools
● Research, identify, and apply for additional funding sources to support Zone schools

Manage Zone operations
● Ensure high-quality infrastructure and operations throughout the organization, including facilities, finance, human capital, and development
● Partner with DPS staff in the development and execution of operational guidelines relating to NDIZ schools, including monitoring and compliance processes, and effectively integrate zone flexibilities with District systems
● Coordinate and resolve issues between the NDIZ schools and the operational service departments of the District

Desired Skills, Knowledge, Qualifications and Experience
● At least 7-10 years of relevant work experience, including school leadership
● Deep commitment to the mission and values of the NDIZ, including equity, innovation, and community and passion for improving public education, particularly in the Northeast Denver community
● Demonstrated ability to effectively organize, prioritize, and manage implementation of multiple initiatives
● Ability to adapt quickly in the face of change
● Exceptional communication skills, including the ability to instill confidence in and build buy-in from internal and external stakeholders
● Demonstrated success managing and mentoring staff, with a successful track record of recruiting, inspiring, and retaining a diverse, high-performing and mission-driven team
● Excellent coalition-building, consensus-building, and collaboration skills with the ability to work with professionals from diverse backgrounds and orientations
● Strategic mindset and strong analytic and strong problem-solving skills, in support of sound decision making
● Incredible work ethic, high standards of excellence for self and for others, and the ability to do what it takes to get the job done
● Strong background in school operations, including finance, facilities, and human capital
● Bachelor’s degree required; advanced degree preferred

Salary and Benefits

The salary for this position is between $125,000 and $135,000 annually. The NDIZ also offers a comprehensive benefits package, including medical, dental, and vision insurance; four weeks of paid vacation in addition to holidays; and partial IRA matching.

Application

Interested and qualified applicants should send a combined resume and statement of interest to careers@ndiz.org.

The application deadline is August 1, 2020. After this date we do not guarantee review of submissions.

The Northeast Denver Innovation Zone is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or any other status protected by law or regulation. We encourage individuals from historically underrepresented backgrounds to apply.