Charlestown Nursery School (CNS) is a private nursery school for children aged 1-5 years old, located in Charlestown, MA.
Challenge

Charlestown Nursery was experiencing many of the same staffing turnover issues as other pre-schools nationally and in Massachusetts:

- Low pay for teachers meant 35% of MA childhood educators were living below the poverty line and many teachers had to take on additional jobs to make ends meet.
- High teacher turnover meant children were not receiving quality care at a time in their lives when most early childhood experts believe it is most important. In an effort to provide the highest quality programming, the board

Charlestown Nursery School and its board wanted to change the dynamic

- Identified the need to attract and retain the best educators possibly by matching teachers salaries to public schools

Action

Charlestown Nursery School's board of directors and administrators made the decision to buck the norm and revisit how early education teachers, who are primarily women, are paid. They created an innovative non-profit business model that allowed for some of the highest paid early childhood educators in the city, the state and the country. The priority in resource allocation began with paying teachers at the highest possible rate, often at the expense of other administrative expenses such as tech or office space.

Results

Since instituting this new pay model, Charlestown Nursery School has improved both its attraction and retention of talented preschool educators. Teachers are able to focus on one job - teaching at CNS - resulting in excellent quality of education and higher job satisfaction. CNS has received recognition in books, conferences, and documentaries due to the high quality of instruction, reinforcing the importance of paying a professional wage, in order to support highly qualified educators.