JOB SPECIFICATION

ORGANIZATION: LEAD Public Schools
POSITION: Chief Operating Officer
LOCATION: Nashville, TN

Background

LEAD Public Schools is a network of six public charter middle and high schools in Nashville, Tennessee with a mission to support, educate, and train the next generation of responsible citizens. Through a unique partnership with the local school district, Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), the Tennessee Achievement School District (ASD), and the Tennessee Charter Commission, LEAD is committed to transforming chronically low-performing schools into high-performing neighborhood schools that become community assets and demonstrate all students are capable of extraordinary success. Current student enrollment is 2,500 students supported by 400 staff members, with total revenues of $50 million annually. LEAD is developing a Phase II growth plan that is anticipated to result in a network of 12 schools serving 7,000 students and graduating more than 500 college ready seniors annually.

LEAD is proud to be among the highest performing charter school organizations in the country. The first seven graduating classes of LEAD Academy High School have had 100% of seniors accepted to a four-year college or university, and three of LEAD’s middle schools have been recognized by the state of Tennessee as Reward Schools (top 5% of all schools in growth). Founded in 2007 as LEAD Academy, LEAD has since become the first charter management organization in Tennessee and now operates six schools across the city. In 2011, LEAD collaborated with the local school district on a groundbreaking partnership to transform a chronically low-performing neighborhood school into a high-performing charter school serving the same students and the same enrollment area. This school, Cameron Middle, has since become a model for transformation statewide, and LEAD has expanded its turnaround work through the Tennessee Achievement Schools District (ASD) to transform additional schools. In recent years, LEAD has opened three additional schools, including two turnarounds based on the model piloted at Cameron, and one open enrolled school. LEAD is nationally recognized for their commitment to serving neighborhood-zoned enrolled schools with no barriers to entry.

Academic Results

- 100% of LEAD Academy’s first seven graduating classes were accepted to a 4-year college or university, and over 80% of them will be the first in their families to attend college. LEAD’s Senior Signing Day and graduation ceremony are true LEAD hallmarks, of which the organization is incredibly proud. Short video highlights of these ceremonies can be found here:
  - Senior Signing Day 2022
  - Senior Signing Day 2014
  - The LEAD Neely's Bend Story
LEAD has had three of their schools, LEAD Academy Middle, LEAD Academy High, and LEAD Southeast, named Reward Schools for growth (top 5% of all schools) by the Tennessee Department of Education.

In 2014, Cameron, the state’s first charter/district turnaround partnership, was also selected as a Reward School for growth (top 5% of all schools).

In 2022, LEAD Neely’s Bend became the first Achievement School District school in Nashville to exit priority status.

For more information about LEAD, please visit: www.leadpublicschools.org.

Opportunity

LEAD Public Schools is seeking to hire an experienced school operations professional to serve as Chief Operating Officer (COO). The COO will have direct oversight for the operational systems and infrastructure of all current and future LEAD schools. S/he will work closely with the Chief Academic Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Head of Schools for Middle/High Schools, and Chief Human Resource Officer. The COO will report to LEAD’s Chief Executive Officer, Dwayne Tucker.

The COO will lead the teams that coordinate administrative and operational functions for LEAD Public Schools’ existing six schools. The COO will ensure that every operational function, including student recruitment and enrollment, facilities management and acquisition, school and network operations, data and information technology, student information systems, federal, state, and local compliance, risk management, and legal, is performed seamlessly and with excellence so that student and adult learning can flourish.

The COO and his/her team will be an integral part of LEAD’s growth over the next three+ years, leading the organization from $50 million in annual operating revenue to over $100 million. This is an opportunity for a seasoned operations leader to set a bold vision and direction, marshal resources, manage and lead a large team through transformation, and play a key leadership role in driving an established organization into its next phase of growth and development. This is an exciting opportunity to be part of one of Nashville’s fastest growing, highest-performing CMOs and to make a lasting difference in the lives of thousands of students.

In the first year, the Chief Operating Officer will be expected to:

- Clarify, codify, and communicate LEADs operational vision, aligned with the organizational strategic plan, goals, and priorities;
- Establish a functional plan for organizational operations systems and structures that support this vision and invest key stakeholders in this plan;
- Position LEAD for continued growth and expansion by shoring up, scaling, and improving critical infrastructure and systems including: data and technology, facilities management and development, student recruitment and enrollment, and school and network operations;
- Continue to build and develop a strong team to carry out the short- and long-term priorities of the organization with a focus on the direct connection between operations and academics;
• Develop an operations plan to bring on a minimum of three new schools effective July 1, 2024.

Responsibilities

Leadership
• Set the long-term vision of the Operations Team with high standards for annual and multi-year initiatives that will allow the team to execute effectively including: creation of a process improvement cycle, effective data tracking, and performance management objectives;
• Provide coaching and professional development to all direct reports and develop leadership talent from within;
• Report on all areas of operations to LEAD’s Board of Directors;
• Lead, manage, and develop a team of ~35 employees across functional areas including the following direct reports: Director of Operations, Director of Data and Technology, Compliance Manager and Director of Enrollment;
• Foster an inclusive, collaborative, and accountable team culture with a high bar for customer service and a focus on continuous improvement; and
• Serve on the executive management team with other senior leaders to provide strategic leadership and thought partnership.

Operations and Growth
• Ensure that each school is supported by high-quality, cost-effective operational support in the areas of facilities, food service, janitorial, transportation, and other non-instructional areas;
• Ensure the highest standard of safety for students and staff across the LEAD network;
• Ensure that technology infrastructure supports the operational and academic functions in the network;
• Manage relationships and negotiate services and contracts as it relates to food service, transportation, and facilities with Metro Nashville Public Schools, the Achievement School District, the Tennessee Charter Commission, and other external vendors and contractors;
• Aggressively monitor and maintain usage and cost data for operations-related activities and make recommendations for improvement;
• Oversee operational school start-up plans for new schools and grades levels; and
• Ensure the LEAD “Look and Feel” is consistent, high-quality, and implemented with fidelity across all campuses and at all events.

Enrollment, Community Relations
• Meet annual enrollment goals;
• Ensure the effectiveness of each campus’s efforts to execute a 12-month enrollment and outreach cycle; and
• Support schools in creating a welcoming environment where families are meaningfully engaged in the schools and the community.

Compliance
• Ensure 100% compliance across the network with all laws, regulations, and charter agreements.
Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have experience scaling operations in a fast-growth, multisite environment. For LEAD to grow successfully over the next three years, the COO must work with the rest of the LEAD executive management team to create and maintain nimble, flexible, and reliable systems while maintaining entrepreneurial excellence. A deep and demonstrable commitment to the work of successfully preparing students for success is required.

- At least seven years in an operations role with experience in a rapidly growing organization preferred;
- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited educational institution with an MBA or equivalent Master’s (or relevant executive experience) preferred;
- Ability to build trust and drive change by forming good relationships with staff;
- Self-starter who sets high goals and is comfortable dealing with ambiguity and can handle multiple projects at once;
- Knowledge of the day-to-day building operations;
- Meticulous attention to detail and excellent written and verbal communication skills;
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to handle confidential and sensitive issues with diplomacy and evenhandedness and the ability to work effectively with staff of all levels; and
- Belief in LEAD’s mission of doing “Ready for College - Ready for Life” to graduate 100% of our students and help them gain acceptance into college.

Compensation

Compensation is commensurate with experience with a minimum base salary of $150,000.00 annually and the potential to earn up to $25,000.00 annually in performance incentive bonus.

To Apply

Please email your resume to jobs@k12searchgroup.com with the subject line: “LEAD Public Schools COO” no later than May 28, 2023.