



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PHILADELPHIA ACADEMY OF SCHOOL LEADERS
Philadelphia, PA

The [Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders](#) (“School Leaders”) seeks a dynamic, strategic, and entrepreneurial leader and an experienced manager to serve as its next Executive Director and build on the organization’s commitment to develop, engage, and retain school and system leaders who transform schools, improve student outcomes, and drive systemic change across all Philadelphia’s schools.

Philadelphia aspires to be an exemplar of successful urban education and this is an exciting time of transition and innovation in the city as the School District of Philadelphia welcomed a new superintendent in June 2022 who is deepening the prioritization of student achievement and academic performance. School Leaders serves as a critical partner and leadership development hub by supporting the training and professional development of many of the city’s most talented educational leaders who stimulate greater student success across the 225,000 youth in the city’s district, charter, and faith-based schools. The Executive Director will be a forward-facing champion for public service and a strategic operator able to set and execute an ambitious vision for the future of educational leadership development in Philadelphia during this opportunistic moment of city-wide public education leadership change and beyond.

Driven by a sense of urgency to improve educational quality for Philadelphia’s school children, the Neubauer Family Foundation, the University of Chicago’s Urban Education Institute, and a coalition of local stakeholders created School Leaders in 2015 to serve as a cross-sector leadership development resource. With the conviction that effectively trained school leaders can maximize student success, the organization meets the needs of leaders through engaging programmatic experiences that develop four critical leadership competencies, or Leadership Levers: Lead Authentically, Develop People, Advance Equity, and Drive Results. This results-driven, evidence-based approach provides the tools, skills, and networks needed to inspire high levels of student achievement.

Looking ahead, School Leaders is well positioned for even greater impact, and the next Executive Director will be expected to heighten the effectiveness, profile, and influence of the organization by deepening relationships with and expanding the reach of the organization’s impressive network of school leaders and funders. The successful candidate should be a champion for Philadelphia’s students, schools, and school leaders; an experienced and confident manager who values results, excellence, accountability, and collaboration; and a natural and effective relationship builder with connections across Philadelphia’s education sector—or the desire to develop them. Familiarity with the opportunities and challenges of urban school systems and a passion for advancing academic achievement and educational equity are also essential.

Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, is assisting School Leaders with the search for its next Executive Director. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

PHILADELPHIA ACADEMY OF SCHOOL LEADERS

The [Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders](#) (“School Leaders”) is a nonprofit organization that develops, engages, and retains principals and system leaders who transform schools, dramatically improve student outcomes, and drive systemic change to prepare all Philadelphia students for college, career, and life.

The organization’s fundamental belief is that Philadelphia’s principals and school system leaders change students’ lives. Through investment in results-driven leadership development experiences, the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders empowers individuals to drive student outcomes and advance equity in Philadelphia’s district, charter, and faith-based schools.

The flagship experience, the [Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership](#), provides proven principals with the resources and guidance to sharpen their leadership capacities. The Fellowship is a transformative two-year experience that helps principals develop critical leadership skills needed to elevate school performance and student outcomes in their schools and across the city. Fellows receive best-in-class professional development, including proven high-impact practices of individualized executive coaching, an established comprehensive community of support and resources, and learning that is applicable to practice. Fellows build relationships with a network of outstanding peers who share strategies and problem-solve with one another.

[Leaders of Leaders](#), which serves Assistant Superintendents and principal supervisors (often promoted Neubauer Fellowship alumni), is designed to provide the tools needed to effectively supervise and develop principals, improve principal practice, and increase student outcomes.

Additional School Leaders program offerings are identified and designed to meet the needs of educational leaders across roles and throughout their careers. School Leaders ran the [Aspiring Assistant Superintendent Academy](#), designed in collaboration with the School District of Philadelphia to develop

sitting principals to become future successful principal supervisors. In 2021-2022, School Leaders, in collaboration with Restorative Practices in Action, launched programming for academic administrators focused on empowering students in the classroom. In 2022, School Leaders launched the Black Educator Pipeline, designed to support Neubauer Fellow alumni of color in the recruitment, selection, development, and retention of teachers of color in the respective schools they lead.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Executive Director sets the strategic direction of the organization, develops and oversees a sustainable business plan that maximizes the success of current programs and pursues new revenue-generating initiatives, continuously analyzes the organization's progress, and works with all stakeholders to ensure that School Leaders' priorities remain relevant. The Executive Director leads a team of five direct reports and manages a budget of over \$3.2 million. All work will be conducted in collaboration with and under the close advisement of the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders' [Board of Directors](#).

School Leaders also benefits from the input of a [Practitioner Advisory Committee](#) to inform School Leaders' organizational priorities and program design. The committee serves as thought partners and ambassadors to ensure that the programs meet the needs of school and system leaders and, ultimately, the students they all serve. Members reflect diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and representation across School Leaders' programs, cohorts, sectors, and school levels.

The overarching opportunity for the next Executive Director is to further School Leaders' impact on student success in Philadelphia by providing exceptional leadership development programs. To this end, the Executive Director will raise the profile of the organization, expand School Leaders' base of philanthropic support, empower a talented staff of practitioners, and develop and implement a results-oriented, ambitious organizational strategy that solidifies School Leaders' position as the premier leadership development program in Philadelphia.

Specifically, the primary opportunities and challenges for the Executive Director will include the following:

Provide strategic leadership and management.

At a critical time in the history of the organization, the School District of Philadelphia, and the city of Philadelphia, the new Executive Director will lead School Leaders into its next stage of evolution and growth. Building upon a history of rich engagement with local educational leaders, the Executive Director will set a vision for the future of school leadership development in Philadelphia, broadening School Leaders' reach and impact. While School Leaders' founding Fellowship program is well regarded for its support of high-performing principals, the organization has broader ambitions for leadership development in the city, including expanding programming and activities in strategic and intentional ways to maximize impact and progress on mission-driven initiatives, with a focus on driving systemic change and realizing dramatically improved student outcomes. Drawing on the expertise of the organization's

diverse stakeholder groups, the Executive Director will further develop School Leaders' strategy, refine its business plan, track performance measures, and inspire an even broader group of engaged stakeholders, program participants, and alumni to achieve their leadership potential.

While setting and leading School Leaders' strategy, the Executive Director also oversees the day-to-day work of the organization. The talented staff of School Leaders possesses a deep commitment to the organization's mission. As an experienced manager, the Executive Director will harness this passion, leading the School Leaders' team to maintain high standards of performance and ensuring that the work of the organization is high-quality, responsive, and nimble. The Executive Director also manages School Leaders' budget responsibly and effectively, allocating resources in a manner consistent with its direction and goals.

Crystalize and amplify the identity of School Leaders and elevate the work of the organization.

The Executive Director will serve as the chief representative and ambassador for School Leaders and its programs, bringing considerable political skill and polish to the role. As its primary spokesperson, the Executive Director will expand School Leaders' visibility, reach, and reputation, and forge productive relationships with the media and other external stakeholders in partnership with the Director of Communications. In doing so, the Executive Director will seek to take School Leaders to the next level, further positioning the organization as a key partner in student success and as a model for programs in leadership development.

Lead the fundraising strategy in collaboration with the Board of Directors.

The Executive Director's primary responsibility is ensuring School Leaders' long-term sustainability, and fundraising strategically, tirelessly, and enthusiastically will be key to their success. The Executive Director will tell School Leaders' story to potential philanthropic partners, securing additional sources of funding from local and national foundations, the Philadelphia business community, and individual donors to augment the organization's annual budget. The Board of Directors serves as an asset to the Executive Director in their collective efforts to bring more resources to the organization. The Executive Director will partner effectively with the Board, solicit strategic advisement, and coordinate collaborative fundraising initiatives with the group leveraging their reach, relationships, and influence in the Philadelphia region.

Deepen partnerships with stakeholders.

School Leaders' success is inextricably linked to the quality of its relationships with partner organizations and Neubauer Fellows. The Executive Director must collaborate effectively with all stakeholders, including key funders and the School District of Philadelphia, as well as charter, faith-based, and other school operators, to earn the support of school leaders and philanthropic partners, identify and address the most pressing leadership development needs, deliver best-in-class programs, and effectively measure outcomes. The ability to establish long-term relationships with school leaders who participate in School

Leaders' programs is key, and the Executive Director will maintain and nurture thoughtful connections to a network of past and present Neubauer Fellows.

Nurture an equity-focused, supportive, and empowering workplace culture.

The Executive Director will directly supervise five individuals—the two Program Directors, the Director of Data and Evaluation, the Director of Communications, and the Director of Operations—and will work with their team as a thought partner and advocate to carry out the objectives of the organization. The Executive Director will use their management skillset to empower, develop, and support their team, and will bring the highest ethical and moral standards in conjunction with deep care and a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in daily operations and short- and long-term strategic planning. Throughout their tenure, the Executive Director will strive to build a welcoming and nurturing workplace community that promotes the value and respect of all employees—generating an environment where everyone can thrive.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

The next Executive Director should possess many of the following experiences, skills, and credentials:

- Experience leading an executive leadership team in an entrepreneurial, innovative environment;
- A track record of organizational problem-solving with tangible, measurable results;
- Familiarity with the challenges of urban school systems, and an unwavering commitment to their success;
- An appreciation for the diversity of learning environments and school structures in which educational leaders operate and drive change;
- Equity driven with evidence of disrupting inequities in their sphere of influence;
- A leadership style and personal work ethic that encourages collaboration and prioritizes results, accountability, and rigor;
- Demonstrated ability to successfully plan, organize, and lead complex initiatives and high-impact programs;
- A successful history of engaging funders and raising philanthropic support for an organization or cause;
- The integrity, gravitas, and communication skills to be the public face of School Leaders;
- The political skills required to establish relationships and build coalitions with key players and groups working in Philadelphia;
- Experience working with individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives;
- Familiarity with adult learning, program design, development, implementation, and evaluation;
- A relevant advanced degree or credential; and
- A positive attitude, flexibility, and humor

TO APPLY

School Leaders has engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to conduct this search. Please direct all applications, nominations, inquiries, and referrals in strict confidence to:

Katie Rockman and Tiffany Weber
Isaacson, Miller

Apply, nominate, and inquire online: <https://www.imsearch.com/8806>

*The Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
For more information about School Leaders, please visit our website at phillyschoolleaders.org.*