

**Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools**  
Harrisburg, PA

## Position Description

### Executive Director

July 2020

The Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (PCPCS) is the largest, oldest, most inclusive, and most effective charter school organization in Pennsylvania. PCPCS is dedicated to achieving choice for parents, quality for children, and accountability for taxpayers through advocacy in the legislature, litigation in the courts, operational improvement in charter schools, and educational understanding in the media.

PCPCS is a 501c3 organization which is governed by a Board of Trustees, comprised of at least eight charter school leaders (currently 11) and at least two other persons not directly affiliated with a charter school but with special expertise or passion for children that benefits the charter movement (currently four). The charter members of the Board are elected by the 20-member Leaders Council, which is elected by the member schools, and represents all geographic areas of the state and all types of charter schools. The other members of the Board are elected by the Board. Members of the Leaders Council also serve as advisors and sounding boards for actions of and positions taken by PCPCS.

There are more than 165 brick-and-mortar charter schools and 14 cyber charter schools in Pennsylvania serving 143,000 students and representing about 8% of all the children in K-12 public schools in the state. The number of students in charter schools has almost doubled in the past decade - and there are still tens of thousands of children on waiting lists to get into a charter school.

The past two executive directors served three and five years in the position respectively, and the PCPCS Board is seeking a highly qualified, visionary, and committed successor. In the past few years, PCPCS has seen increases in membership, membership dues and general participation by member schools across the state. In 2019, PCPCS launched a statewide communications campaign called "143K Rising" to elevate the voices of students and families benefiting from charter schools. The organization has made significant strides in bringing a unified advocacy agenda to state legislators that reflects the shared interests of mission-driven charter schools across the state. However, as charter enrollment has grown and traditional school districts have been challenged financially by inflexible legacy costs, the challenges for charter schools in the policy and political arena have multiplied. At this time, PCPCS needs a leader with strategic vision, outstanding communications skills, educational credibility, and the ability to persuade and inspire member schools to commit to a unified agenda on behalf of families and students across the state.

Additionally, while the membership and leadership of PCPCS is broadly reflective of the geographic and educational diversity found in the state's charter school sector, the Board of Trustees is determined to ensure that its membership and leadership is also fully reflective of the racial diversity found in the state's charter enrollment. PCPCS has made strides toward this goal and seeks an Executive Director who will prioritize and accelerate further strides.

## **Our Mission**

The mission of the Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools is to be the preferred resource serving the collective interests of all Pennsylvania Charter Schools by encouraging positive internal and external communication, advocating for shared goals, and promoting the highest standards for all public schools.

## **Our Work**

- PCPCS advocates for progressive, reform-minded charter school laws;
- Promotes the public charter school movement;
- Fosters communication among its members to ensure that best practices and up-to-date information is shared among our schools and their staffs;
- Supports and assists its members in the development of their professional managerial skills and in the advancement of public charter schools;
- Establishes working relationships with other education reform organizations, professional organizations and government agencies seeking to improve the quantity and quality of educational choices for parents.
- Seeks opportunities to engage in collaborative discussions and/or alliances with various educational systems (i.e. charters, traditional public, and private) in an effort to share best practices, identify common interests, and strengthen the quality of education overall for all students in Pennsylvania.

## **Executive Director Position**

The Executive Director has the responsibility for the organization's consistent achievement of its mission. In order to fulfill that responsibility, it is expected that the successful candidate for this position will have the competencies to be successful in four areas of concentration.

- Effectively advocating to assure that legislation and administrative policies provide accountability, transparency, and equitable treatment and funding for all forms of K-12 public education
- Driving to establish high standards of performance and consistently strong and fair authorizers for all charter schools
- Providing support to help member schools improve, with the goal of having every charter school in Pennsylvania become a high-performing public school relative to the mission for which the charter school was created
- Creating a strong and sustained financial base for the organization.

## **Desired Competencies, Experience, and Education**

- The maturity, confidence, composure, and presence to effectively build relationships and promote policies and standards with legislators, legislative staffs, members of the Governor's office, the Department of Education, peers in other states, and the print and electronic media
- Knowledge of the issues and challenges facing education reform and school choice, the national charter landscape, and K-12 education
- A high level of integrity and the ability and tact to work effectively with persons across the entire political spectrum, and the entire public charter sector
- Superb listening and oral and written communication skills, including the ability to tailor and convey ideas and positions as a spokesperson for charter schools to a wide range of constituent groups through position papers, press releases, print and electronic media interviews, testimonies, and social media

- The ability and integrity to promote an equity strategy to ensure racial and gender equity in education, often afforded through charter school enrollment, as well as working with experts and other relevant organizations to help execute this goal and ensure stakeholders view PCPCS as an effective and inclusive advocacy organization
- The skills to develop, maintain, and support a strong Board of Trustees and facilitate Board and Leaders Council involvement in PCPCS actions
- The ability to work with the Board to obtain a strong and continuing financial base for the organization. This includes demonstrated skills in working with individuals and foundations to raise funds, including writing and organizing grant proposals, and business development skills in working with charter schools to ensure relevance, growth, and sustainability of the organization
- Demonstrated skill to develop and implement sound financial practices and ensure good fiscal and fiduciary responsibility, stewardship, and accountability
- An entrepreneurial spirit, including the abilities to initiate actions, seek appropriate and timely guidance, and achieve amazing results with limited resources; this includes being proactive relative to the aspirations of the organization as well as reactive to its immediate needs
- The ability to work with charter school leaders to provide the type of experiences and training needed to improve the operation and performance of their schools and ensure ongoing programmatic excellence
- Legislative, advocacy, and legal experience combined with political savvy to understand the legislative, legal, and philosophical complexity of the charter school movement and its opposition
- The ability to react rapidly to continually changing legislative, legal, and media needs
- The ability to ensure compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations
- At least 3 years of leading and managing organizations during periods of political uncertainty
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred; degrees in education a plus

### **Reporting Relationship**

This position will report to the Board of Trustees and will be provided with an annual performance review by the Board. Two paid staff members report to the Executive Director. Reporting to, and managed by, this position are outside contractual relationships with government affairs, law, public relations, and finance/bookkeeping counsel.

### **Compensation**

Commensurate with experience

### **Location**

The offices are located in Harrisburg, and candidates should expect to spend at least two or three days a week in Harrisburg when legislators are in session, but living in the capital is not required. Living in Pennsylvania is preferred, and the Executive Director must be able to travel extensively throughout the state to maintain contact with charter school leaders and be present for hearings, testimonies, and meetings in Harrisburg and other locales.

### **Start Date**

Ideally, the new Executive Director will start work in mid-September; however, the duration of the search process and the chosen candidate's personal circumstances will drive the final date.

### **Application Procedure**

The review of applications will begin immediately and continue on a rolling basis until the

position is filled. However, for best consideration, applications should be submitted electronically by Monday, August 10, 2020. Applicants should include a cover letter introducing you to the Board of Trustees, explaining your interest in, and qualifications for, the position, and addressing what you see as the strategic priorities of the organization, along with a resume (max. 3 pages) and a list of three or more references who can offer insight into your abilities through their professional interactions with you. Upon initial review of those documents, the Search Committee will then ask preferred candidates to submit a document outlining his or her proposed strategy and communications priorities (more details to follow at that time). After reviewing those submissions, the Committee will conduct one or more rounds of interviews. All documents should be sent to PCPCS at [pachartersed@gmail.com](mailto:pachartersed@gmail.com).

PCPCS will require appropriate and valid background checks and clearances from all finalists for this position, and the hiring decision will be contingent on the results of those checks and clearances.

The Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes a pool of candidates that is diverse in every way.