



POSITION DESCRIPTION
January 10, 2009

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| Organization | Quest Milwaukee |
| Location | Milwaukee, WI |
| Position Title | Executive Director |
| Reports To | Board of Directors |

The Opportunity With a student population of more than 120,000, Milwaukee is at the forefront of innovation in approaches to K-12 education. Over the past 20 years, experimentation in Milwaukee has resulted in what is now a vibrant “education ecosystem.” This ecosystem includes:

- Milwaukee Public School District (MPS), which operates traditional public schools and “instrumentality” charter schools -- charter schools operating within MPS, in which staff are employed by MPS (current enrollment: 77,940 students)
- Independent charter schools, which have been authorized by the City’s Common Council and by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee (current enrollment: 5,900 students), in addition to MPS (current enrollment: 2,195 students)
- Contracted schools, such as the partnership schools supported by Wisconsin’s Children At Risk statute (current enrollment: 2,309 students)
- Private schools participating in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (current enrollment: 21,062 students)
- Schools in suburban districts are also an option through open enrollment (current participation: 5,193 students) and a decades-old program designed to foster integration, called “Chapter 220” (current participation: 2,409 students)

Milwaukee is among the nation’s “majority-minority” cities, and the constellation reflects this diversity. Many of the schools functioning outside of the traditional system were founded to address the educational needs of low-income children of color who are, generally speaking, not performing well in the traditional system. This is particularly true for the African American community, which comprises nearly 40% of the city’s population.

It is in this rich fabric of educational options where Quest Milwaukee (Quest) sits. A project of the Institute for the Transformation of Learning at Marquette University, Quest works to ensure that independent charter schools and schools participating in the MPCP led by African Americans can provide a level of service that will lead to



excellent educational outcomes and career and college readiness for students. Schools led by African Americans account for 34% of the schools, and 31% of all students participating in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. Schools led by African Americans are largely clustered among private and contracted schools; currently, there is only one independent charter school led by African Americans, which is a K-8 school with 280 students.

Over its two-year history, Quest has been funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation as part of a broader network of education reform initiatives in communities around the nation. Quest brings a very important element to the overall effort of strengthening schools and improving educational outcomes for Milwaukee's young people. Specifically, Quest provides the resources that schools led by African Americans need in order to become the highest performing schools in Milwaukee, if not the nation. By assembling a robust set of resources for schools that participate in the Quest network, Quest provides technical assistance for governance, school leadership, financial and operational management, school culture, human capital, educational design and assessment systems. Current Walton Family Foundation support is intended to assist Quest to develop a business plan, which will be a key priority for the new Executive Director in the first year of his/her tenure.

Position Responsibilities

The Executive Director will provide creative, dynamic, and forward-thinking leadership, promoting the fulfillment of Quest Milwaukee's vision and mission. Quest's new Executive Director will lead a team that identifies needs, coordinates resources and measures the impact of the assistance on the schools and their students. The Executive Director is the public face of the organization and, as such, is a leading and highly visible advocate in a region that often has the nation's education reform movement squarely in its sights. Marketing, fundraising, financial management, organizational development, strategic planning, board development, and staff management are all key areas the Executive Director will be expected to lead.

Specifically, the Executive Director will:

Organizational Leadership and Management

- Develop and implement a business plan for Quest
- Build consensus around Quest's vision among the board, staff, and key stakeholders
- Lead and manage all programmatic, operational, financial and fundraising activities of the organization

Service Development, Delivery, and Evaluation

- Understand current and emerging issues in school leadership and management, and be able to respond creatively and effectively through Quest's resource pool

- Enhance and expand Quest's capacity and supporting infrastructure for collecting and communicating best practices in K-12 education, using a range of formats and technologies
- Create and oversee a "resource network" to supply capacity building assistance to member schools
- Oversee the development and implementation of data-driven assessment systems for member schools
- Oversee evaluation of capacity building and technical assistance efforts coordinated by Quest

Financial Management

- Develop, manage, and monitor organizational budget

Network Development

- Create and foster ongoing development of a collaborative, mutually supportive, and high-performing network among Quest member schools
- Connect the Quest network with other national networks of high performing schools

Fundraising

- Deepen and expand relationships with diverse funding sources
- Develop strategic alliances with organizations that can enhance Quest's mission

Staff Supervision and Human Resources

- Hire, oversee, and evaluate all Quest employees and consultants
- Foster an organizational culture of creativity, learning, risk taking, open dialogue, responsibility, and accountability
- Cultivate an enthusiastic and inclusive work environment

Communications and Public Relations

- Elevate visibility for member schools through services and communications as well as through personal appearances
- Lead development of messages, materials and vehicles supporting communications platform

Board Relations and Development

- Encourage and leverage board participation in Quest's strategic direction and identification of opportunities to fulfill the organization's mission
- Prepare regular financial and organizational reports for the board

Profile of the Successful Candidate

The Executive Director will be a results-oriented entrepreneurial thinker with strong interpersonal skills, who has a dynamic and inclusive approach to leadership. The ideal candidate will possess a balance of strength in both creative and analytical thinking ability. Experience in leading broad-based community improvement initiatives would be helpful, especially as Quest seeks an engaging leader to build networks, inspire commitment, and facilitate action toward change in K-12 education in Milwaukee and around the nation.

More specifically, Quest Milwaukee seeks a professional who has:

- A personal commitment to K-12 education, and familiarity with the cultures and systems of the K-12 education field
- Demonstrated ability to provide leadership and management of a nonprofit or progressive business organization

- An energetic, entrepreneurial nature that combines intellectual curiosity with analytical skills and political savvy
- Familiarity with utilizing nonprofit boards effectively
- The ability to forge pragmatic solutions in environments characterized by ambiguity and complexity
- A communicative and collaborative approach, demonstrated through strong written and oral skills as well as strong listening and public speaking skills
- An inclusive, consensus-building leadership style both in and out of the public spotlight that inspires Board members, staff, clients, benefactors and partners in the community
- Wisdom and prudence in deployment of financial resources
- Strong diagnostic skills combined with an execution bias that helps member schools directly address organizational challenges, including the ability to identify resources to fill capacity gaps
- Demonstrated track record of developing and managing new programs
- Excellent relationship-building and fundraising skills
- Proven ability to develop organizational budgets, monitor expenditures and manage cash flow
- Willingness to travel as necessary for personal development and to secure resources and connections for Quest
- An undergraduate degree

In addition, the successful candidate will likely have:

- An advanced degree, and at least five to seven years of progressively responsible management experience
- Deep understanding of and appreciation for the mission and day-to-day work of schools, particularly those serving low-income students
- A track record of building partnerships, coalitions, and alliances in the public spotlight and across sectors, communities and fields of practice

Start Timeframe

We seek to have the right individual in place by early summer 2010.

Compensation

This position offers competitive compensation and excellent benefits.

To Apply

All applications are held in strict confidence. Please submit your credentials and a letter of interest via email to The 360 Group at:

QM@the360group.us

Applications should be directed to the attention of Vincent Robinson, Managing Partner. No calls, please. To be considered, The 360 Group must receive applications no later than **5:00pm Pacific time on Wednesday, February 17th, 2010.**

At The 360 Group, we know that a richly diverse mix of professionals makes organizations more effective. As such, we make demographic and experiential diversity a hallmark of all our work, including search engagements.