

## DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS

LEARN Charter School Network has successfully created a model that generates significant academic achievement for traditionally underserved students. LEARN is now poised to replicate its success by offering a rigorous academic learning system to impact the lives of 8,000 low-income students throughout Chicago. Replication efforts will be focused on low-income communities characterized by students with low state and national test scores; students who under other circumstances would not be given the tools and support to academically succeed. LEARN is dedicated to developing a network of 16 schools over a 9 year period, expanding its capacity to touch the lives of 8,000 students each year at full capacity.

Our founders were frustrated by the lack of high quality educational opportunities available for students in the North Lawndale community. They were determined to launch a neighborhood school where high academic achievement was expected and encouraged and a culture of mutual respect was promoted as the optimal learning environment for students and their families. The founders were committed to academically and socially preparing its scholars for matriculation to the best high schools in Chicago and eventually to colleges across the country.

Over the last 27 years, much has changed about this school. We have grown from serving 11 students to almost 1,000 students from Pre-K to Eighth grade. Seven years ago we transitioned from a private school to a public school. With this growth, **LEARN's commitment to providing children in need with an outstanding elementary education and preparing them for college prep high schools and eventually college, has not changed.** In fact, this commitment and passion is as powerful today as it was in 1981.

We focus on providing children, specifically in distressed communities, with the option of a high quality elementary education and preparing them for college. We know that students, regardless of race or income, who attend a college preparatory high school and graduate from college, are far more capable of securing quality employment, leading fulfilling lives, improving their communities and becoming productive citizens of society. **We focus on elementary education because we believe that the ambition and academic foundation for college must be sown and cultivated early in a child's academic career.** LEARN offers the right combination of an accelerated curriculum, high parent and teacher expectations, and social exposure that propels our students on to college prep high schools and colleges.

Our 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates have attended many of Chicago's most selective public and private college prep high schools and several boarding schools. Based on an alumni survey, an estimated 99% of our alumni have graduated from high school and 83% have matriculated to college. This compares very favorably to Chicago Public School's 54% graduation rate and 47% college matriculation rate for low-income students. This means for every 100 students, LEARN will send 83 to college and CPS will send 25. By executing this ambitious growth plan, we expect to significantly increase the number of low-income 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who attend college prep high schools and eventually matriculate to college

As a result of our alumni success, we have overwhelming demand from low-income families eager to join the LEARN network. Our independent market research has convinced us that there is a large, unmet demand for high quality, elementary education from low-income families. In Chicago, there are over 251,000 elementary age children that come from low-income families. To meet this demand, we will implement an aggressive growth strategy to expand to over 16 schools serving approximately 8,000 students at full enrollment.

LEARN understands that opening and operating 16 schools is a large and complex undertaking with many risks and challenges. In order to be successful, LEARN will have to recruit and retain over 700 talented staff members, secure 13 more facilities, raise nearly \$30 million in capital, and exercise prudent fiscal management. As LEARN grows, we will build the required infrastructure and create an efficient central office support structure to support the operations of each individual school, ensure cross-fertilization of best practices and consistent quality across all schools. This organization will be the central service provider to the network of schools, meeting all administrative needs, including budgeting, fundraising, facilities, technology, procurement, and compliance, as well as certain academic oversight functions such as curriculum development and quality assurance.

### **POSITION**

The Director of Finance & Operations is the senior finance and operations resource in the LEARN Charter School Network. The position is primarily responsible for the financial management and all non-academic operations of the existing and planned schools.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Responsible for financial operations and controls for LEARN's Network of Charter Schools.
- Oversee the facilities management of all LEARN buildings
- Evaluate and manage the implementation of all technology
- Manage procurement, oversee all purchasing and negotiate vendor contracts
- Ensure that LEARN is operating in accordance with its accounting procedures and controls.
- Review and revise procedures and controls periodically
- Prepare and maintain financial records
- Cash management and analysis
- Manage bill payments and processing by providing supervision to accounting staff.
- Compliance reporting
- Manage all Payroll and Pension Fund Management and Compliance
- Drive fiscal responsibility and expense management on all vendor contracts.
- Lead periodic review and renewal of all vendor relationships using a formalized Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

The successful candidate will have a proven track record of providing strong, creative and strategic leadership in all areas of finance management and the ability to apply a sophisticated knowledge of finance and accounting to support an ambitious long-term strategy for expansion and growth

- Bachelor's degree in Finance / Accounting with the ability to analyze and improve processes and problem solving skills
- At least 7 years of accounting and/or financial experience, hands –on experience with various financial software systems and operations
- Thorough knowledge and understanding of generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP)
- High degree of integrity and ethics
- Demonstrated leadership and management ability
- Experience in development and implementation of policies and procedures
- Advanced skills with Microsoft Office applications and accounting software
- Customer Service orientated, highly customer focused with both internal and external customers
- Ability to prioritize and manage multiple projects and adhere to strict timelines, with a high degree of initiative and independent judgment
- Superior negotiation and presentation skills
- Able to create and write financial reports and business correspondence
- Ability to develop and manage budgets

## **Certifications, Licenses, Registrations**

Certified Public Accountant.

## **PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Master's degree in Finance / Accounting
2. Strong IT Management knowledge and experience
3. Ability to evaluate and improve processes
4. Real Estate management and/or development expertise

## **COMPENSATION**

Compensation will be commensurate with experience and record of successful achievement.

## **APPLICATION**

To be considered for this opportunity, please send letter of interest with salary requirement and resume to [careers@learncharter.org](mailto:careers@learncharter.org),