



Position Description: Executive Director

OVERVIEW

Over the past 10 years, [Hiawatha Academies](#), located in Minneapolis, Minn., has grown from a few classrooms to four high-performing charter schools, with the fifth school to open by fall 2018. The network consists of 230 staff and 1400 scholars, all focused on educational excellence and forging a reliable public educational pathway from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Hiawatha Academies' scale and academic strength position the network to meaningfully improve educational opportunities for local scholars while also tackling structural inequities in education. The Hiawatha community's commitment to equity and excellence is pervasive and deep. It's Hiawatha's driving force, and all of its stakeholders practice living it daily.

With its plans for five schools firmly in place, Hiawatha's task now is to make sure its roots are strong, and its reach is wide so they can continue to ensure that all children in Minneapolis have access to the quality schools they deserve. Hiawatha calls this effort "[Reimagine Possible,](#)" and it is rooted in a commitment to academic excellence. By 2020, Hiawatha Academies aspires to be one of the best school systems in the country, preparing scholars for college graduation and a lifetime of success to serve the common good.

In the near term, the network is looking to codify its systems and practices to: aid in more firmly establishing pedagogical and cultural norms; embed the actions and behaviors that support its [equity vision](#) uniformly across each school, and support the opening of a new middle school and high school that are solidly rooted in Hiawatha's core values and beliefs.

POSITION

After serving for the past five years as Executive Director, Eli Kramer has chosen to step down at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year, and will pass the torch to a new leader. His successor must be a champion for equitable, high-performing charter schools, and enthusiastically share that perspective with Hiawatha in the schools with the team and families, and in the broader community. The new executive director must embrace equity and excellence as the path for success, and be steadfast in the belief that every child can achieve at high levels.

The new executive director will hold themselves and all Hiawatha stakeholders – including staff, families and students – accountable for results that support Hiawatha's mission. They will be inspiring, clear, direct and transparent in communicating expectations and roles, and provide thoughtful and consistent support and coaching to team members to help them achieve their potential. They will foster a culture of collaboration and cohesiveness, striking a balance between autonomous decision-making and shared practices, to develop common

characteristics across schools, while retaining each school's distinctiveness, and creating space for creativity and continuous learning.

The executive director will also be a faithful steward of resources and provide transparency in allocation decisions. They should be able to combine the vision for Hiawatha Academies with a strategy to realize it, and ensure the network has the systems and tools in place to measure progress toward achieving the vision.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The executive director will report to the board of directors and will manage the performance of four chief officers (chief academic officer, chief external relations officer, chief operating officer, and chief talent officer) and the senior director of equity initiatives. Specific responsibilities include:

Developing and executing Hiawatha's vision.

- Work with the board, key funders and partners, and the leadership team to develop a strategic vision and implementation plan to accomplish it.
- Set clear academic, growth, operational, and financial goals and manage to them; adapt as necessary given changes in internal and external environment.
- Manage strong public transparency systems, including public compliance and internal and external reporting.

Building and managing a high-performing leadership team that delivers transformational educational outcomes for students.

- Recruit and develop senior network leadership talent.
- Build and support a cohesive culture that reflects core Hiawatha Academies values and leads to an aligned network identity. Drive alignment across schools (including curriculum and instructional alignment), and provide supports to drive academic achievement and character development.
- Introduce consistent accountability systems to ensure progress toward shared goals. Promote transparent decision-making processes and embrace distributive leadership principles over time.

Building the short and long-term organizational capacity and brand required for excellence, sustainability, and growth.

- Build the staff capacity and infrastructure system necessary to sustain the network as scale and complexity grow. Develop systems to meet the varied needs of a rapidly growing organization, including financial management, budget planning, compliance, human resources (including teacher and school leader recruitment and development) contract negotiation, facilities management, vendor management, fundraising and marketing, legal, and information technology.
- Ensure that the network has a viable long-term financial plan and a diversified and sustainable funding base. Manage development efforts to meet ambitious annual goals by identifying, cultivating, and soliciting public, individual and foundation sources of giving. In particular, ensure that schools are maximizing all public revenue sources.
- Oversee marketing efforts, branding initiatives, and advocacy work to ensure a public reputation consistent with Hiawatha values and standards and support enrollment targets. Guide actions to shape reputation and brand (internally and externally).
- Serve as the district superintendent and primary party responsible for compliance with state and federal laws regarding charter schools.

Engaging key constituents to build strategic support for Hiawatha Academies.

- Develop a strong, engaged, and active board in close partnership with the board chair.
- Build coalitions, relationships, and partnerships with key stakeholders in support of the organization's mission and goals. This group of stakeholders likely includes the local school district, charter authorizer, parents, donors, community members, and leaders of community and political organizations.

KEY BELIEFS AND QUALITIES

The executive director will possess the following beliefs and qualities:

Believes in All Children

- Possesses an unshakable, deeply held personal belief that all children can achieve at high levels.
- Demonstrates an unwavering commitment to "do whatever it takes" to deliver on our organization's mission to prepare every single child for success in college and in life.
- Makes decisions and enables others to make decisions based on what is best for students.

Drives Results

- Drives relentlessly to achieve exceptional outcomes on behalf of students and does so by demonstrating clear intellect, setting and achieving goals, and managing with grit and tenacity.
- Thrives in an entrepreneurial environment that involves high energy and rapid change. Is undeterred by obstacles and setbacks; is resilient when facing challenges.
- Constantly focuses on identifying opportunities to learn and grow for self and others, and proactively seeks to supplement strong instincts with new ideas and best practices.

Builds Relationships

- Operates with an exceptional level of self-awareness, humility and integrity.
- Builds relationships marked by trust and respect, and does so with a diverse set of stakeholders including teachers, school leaders, students, parents, community members, board members, charter authorizer, public policy makers, peer districts/networks and donors.

Manages People

- Believes that the essential purpose of his/her work will be to support and develop leaders, teachers and staff members in order to ensure that outstanding teaching and learning takes place every day in every classroom.
- Inspires and effectively manages staff to achieve extraordinary results, and offers a clear vision and direction for all staff members.
- Sets an aspirational example of personal character and fortitude for every staff member.

Oversees Instructional Leadership and Operations

- Establishes the network academic vision and goals and takes ultimate responsibility for ensuring instructional quality and academic performance.
- Provides clear direction and holds staff members accountable for delivery by providing timely and specific feedback for improvement. Works with staff to identify and manage risks and obstacles.
- Increases the efficiency and effectiveness of network operations in order to drive even stronger results in school performance.

EXPERIENCE

Required

- A proven track record of success in building and/or managing a complex organization or enterprise (e.g., a high-performing school or network of schools, a successful non-profit or for-profit organization)
- Commitment to the mission and equity vision of Hiawatha Academies
- Ability to influence and persuade a variety of stakeholders
- Eight-plus years professional work experience
- Experience leading and managing the work of others
- Bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university
- Language requirements: English (fluent)

Highly Preferred

- Experience teaching in diverse communities, and in particular working with children from low-income backgrounds, to achieve exceptional results in academics, sports, the arts, community service, etc.
- Experience leading a high-performing school serving children from low-income communities
- Familiarity with the local political, educational and philanthropic landscape
- Knowledge of charter school best practices at the local and national level
- Experience managing a multimillion dollar budget
- Graduate degree in nonprofit management, education or business
- Fluency in Spanish and/or Somali

LOCATION

Minneapolis, Minn.

COMPENSATION

Salary for this position is competitive and based on prior experience. Hiawatha offers a collaborative and committed team of colleagues, and a comprehensive benefits plan including medical, dental, life, and retirement.

APPLY

Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. To apply, send cover letter and resume to leslie@promise54.org.

Anti-discrimination Policy and Commitment to Diversity

We believe that diversity is strength, and we are committed to maintaining an inclusive, multicultural network. We are an equal-opportunity employer and welcome all qualified applicants.