



## **Position Description: Head Program Officer**

### **The Context**

Today, 60% of all California children birth to age five are dual language learners born into family and community surroundings rich with multilingual and multicultural assets. That number will continue to grow, so it is imperative to engage even more intentionally in making our public education system better prepared and capable to teach such a diversity of students and help them reach their fullest potential.

For too long, public schools have not fully understood and not been equipped to address the educational needs of English Learners. As a result, they can experience stigma and other barriers to forming healthy identities and a sense of belonging in schools. They often struggle academically and do not become proficient in English, they have higher rates of diversion into special education programs and alternative schools and overall lower rates of graduation and matriculation to college. Furthermore, they often lose their home language skills, creating barriers to maintaining family, community and cultural connections.

Yet, with the right investments, focus, and support, we can center the needs and strengths of these students, and make our educational system into a space for their joy, growth and success. Research shows that when we view English Learners' home languages as assets, and design learning to meet their needs, they succeed academically. In today's global economy, a next generation, multilingual workforce and civic body is tremendously important to California. If we want to ensure that California realizes its true potential as a socially just and prosperous state, we must make these learners an essential, urgent priority.

### **The Organization**

In 2007, focused on improving outcomes for English Learners in San Jose and Redwood City, the [Sobrato family began a philanthropic initiative](#) with Dr. Laurie Olsen to design and pilot a new, comprehensive approach to learning in preschool and early elementary grades. The result of this pilot was the creation of the SEAL (Sobrato Early Academic Language) model which was subsequently implemented as a program across 100+ public school sites in the Bay Area, central California, and the greater Los Angeles region between 2008 and 2019.

Two separate and independent external evaluations of the model found promising evidence of SEAL's effectiveness in increasing research-based instructional practices and contributing to stronger student engagement and positive outcomes for SEAL English Learners on measures of English proficiency and academic achievement. In 2019, fueled by the promising data,

SEAL became an independent organization, operationally separate from the Sobrato family's philanthropic enterprise, with the aim of scaling our impact and engaging new partners in projects and activities that connect educators, families, researchers, advocates, and policy leaders to elevate this important student group and to promote multilingualism for all students in California.

SEAL addresses English Learner needs at all levels - from practice, to research, to policy and advocacy - creating long-term systemic change:

**Practice:** We partner with public schools over multiple years to train teachers in research-based pedagogy, spark cross-school collaboration, and build internal coaching and leadership capacity to support English Learners.

**Research:** We conduct research in classrooms, pilot new approaches, and publish insights to advance the field's understanding of what works for English Learners.

**Policy and Advocacy:** We engage district leaders, educators and other education stakeholders, using our research, practice, and analysis to connect them to opportunities to advance policies that centralize the needs of English Learners.

With over a decade of experience implementing our evidence-based and research-tested model, we foster systems change by partnering with educators across the state and by helping transform classrooms into language-rich, rigorous, and joyful learning environments.

### **The Core Model**

SEAL's powerful approach to education is rooted at the intersection of research and educational equity. Our bedrock values are: commitment to developing the intellectual and linguistic genius of young children; honoring the value and role of families' cultures and languages in students' lives, and helping teachers cultivate the skills and mindset they need to become powerfully effective educators. Our high-leverage, developmentally appropriate [pedagogical practices](#) are aligned across the preschool through elementary grades, and address the language demands of increasingly rigorous, grade level standards in multiple disciplines including English, social studies, sciences, and the arts.

### **The Opportunity**

After an in-depth strategic planning process, SEAL has defined three interconnected strategic priorities that each speak to the tremendous need and opportunity across the field: 1) continued implementation of the SEAL "Full Model"; 2) development of a new set of select "Designs for Change" offerings; and 3) building SEAL's role as a "Knowledge Hub" of expertise and resources.

The Head Program Officer role represents an opportunity to increase SEAL's impact by serving the unmet needs of English Learners and Dual Language Learners in California, and, ultimately, a source of expertise across the country, and to help to ensure that an asset-based focus on English Learners is infused into these offerings and catalyzes transformative change.

### **The Role**

You will apply your distinct skills, strategic perspective and sophisticated understanding of the internal and external drivers of program evolution and delivery to leading the ongoing programmatic product development cycle that leverages SEAL's abundant and unique expertise to create products and services that are responsive to the field/market. Specifically, you will be focused on business development and growth: forecasting, pricing, funder relationship development, etc., to support the work already underway to leverage the considerable

pedagogical and operational expertise of the program team and optimize its functioning through more inclusive decision making and improved role clarity.

As part of a group of senior leaders, you will play a significant role in developing and supporting key strategic organizational objectives:

- **Definition:** Collaborate with and facilitate across SEAL's senior leadership and program leadership teams, to construct a shared understanding of the external environment; serve as a thought partner in productizing SEAL's new program offerings and ensuring that the offerings (a) coherently align with existing offerings/the organization's overall goals and strategy; (b) have a strong, sustainable business model; (c) respond to shifting external conditions and opportunities; and (d) have clearly defined cycles of evaluation and continuous improvement.
- **Delivery:** Support the program team's work with external leaders to build strong partnerships at the state, county department of education, district, and school levels to ensure high-quality delivery that results in measurable impact and partner satisfaction -- even as the number and profile of SEAL partners grows and evolves.
- **Growth:** This role will lead the effort to define SEAL's growth goals, determine an annual portfolio of partnerships/offerings, refine the business model, and identify the organizational investments (in staff, funding, etc.) required to enable such growth.
- **Organizational Management and Internal Communication:** As SEAL's body of work grows in magnitude and complexity, this role will support the team-wide effort to establish role clarity, manage capacity and interdependencies in service of organizational goals and priorities. The Head will employ strong mechanisms of connection, alignment and communication across teams, and closely partner with the Executive Director to define organizational strategy/annual goals and strengthen interdepartmental collaboration.
- **Impact:** With a new strategic plan, SEAL's commitment to integrity and excellence requires explicit attention to monitoring our impact. This role will support the development and use of ongoing mechanisms and data analytics to track SEAL's new innovative approaches and to reflect upon and track SEAL's overall reach and impact.

### **Priorities**

A successful first year in the role will yield these outcomes:

- You will have gleaned a sufficient understanding of the history, ethos, aspirations and operations of the organization to inform a clear and compelling theory of action across the three priority areas of SEAL's strategic plan that relate to our programs: 1) core model, 2) designs for change and 3) knowledge hub, that affirms your understanding of how they come together and reinforce each other.
- You will have made a meaningful contribution to work in progress to identify a codified set of offerings that define the work across the three priority areas
- You will have developed a rapport with the team marked by trust and collaboration and validated by ongoing feedback as a valued thought partner
- You will be seen as a valued thought partner in pursuit of optimizing the program team structure and staffing model to achieve goals and priorities identified in the new strategic plan

### **The Candidate**

Your commitment to the movement to center the assets and needs of English Learner/Dual Language Learners and multilingualism positions you well to play a leadership role in refining the expression of SEAL's value proposition as well as the internal systems and structures that ensure ongoing program relevance and support broad scale program delivery. You are an inspiring, practice-adept, systems-focused and highly relational leader, whose expertise combines the capacity to connect across a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, with the instincts and authenticity to gain their trust and confidence. You will support increased impact by leveraging the collective practice expertise possessed by the SEAL team, as well as a deep understanding of

the local and national contexts for the work. Additionally, you will possess some combination of the following professional skills, experience and personal characteristics:

- Experience successfully operationalizing a programmatic vision across a wide range of stakeholders for a non-profit education organization
- Business planning, forecasting, development, and analysis proficiency to frame and recommend decisions on SEAL's program offerings, including actual cost and required pricing parameters for earned income activities
- An understanding of mechanisms and players that drive funding opportunities, whether from philanthropy, public funds, or earned income sources, and the capacity to seize those opportunities to optimize program impact
- A track record of championing the use of high-quality research and data analytics to inform SEAL's programmatic strategy
- Tested ability to liaise across the organization, particularly with the ED, marketing, finance and development teams, to garner their functional expertise to drive innovation and ensure sustainable growth
- On the ground experience working with English Learner/Dual Language Learners and educators, and knowledge of what the research suggests about their assets, needs and how to best support their learning
- Strategic thinking skills that foster inclusive, collaborative leadership and synergy
- A willingness and ability to make, act on and own thoughtfully informed decisions
- Demonstrated ability to lead, develop and retain a diverse group of team members, recognize and leverage their talents in a way that inspires commitment, cohesion and a collaborative, high-functioning culture, and monitor team capacity and composition to meet the evolving needs of the program function
- Commitment to giving and receiving low-inference, constructive feedback that reflects a growth mindset and supports continuous improvement
- Beyond the skills and experience indicated above, bilingual skills, and education credentials that support preparedness for this role, are desired.

### **Core Competencies**

A successful Head will demonstrate SEAL's core competencies:

- Adaptability and growth mindset
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Connection to mission and values
- Demonstrates a commitment to equity
- Effective communication
- Effective planning and follow-through
- Emotional intelligence
- Expertise in area of focus
- Presenting and facilitating
- Strategic and critical thinking

### **Reporting**

This position will report to Executive Director [Anya Hurwitz](#). The Head Program Officer can reside anywhere within the state of California.

### **Compensation**

Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience, beginning at \$200k. SEAL offers a highly competitive benefits package: 100% coverage for employee medical, dental, vision, and long and short-term disability benefits; 50% coverage for dependent(s) medical, dental and vision benefits; matching of up to 6% of contributions to 401k, Medical FSA and Dependent Care FSA.

## To Apply

Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. For best consideration, *please follow these instructions to submit a cover letter and resume by **July 30, 2023***:

- Visit the [Opportunities](#) section on our website and click on the APPLY NOW tab within the SEAL Head Program Officer job description
- Answer a brief set of questions about you
- Below the questions, you'll be able to upload your resume as well as a cover letter
- Finally, if you encounter any technical difficulties, contact: [admin@promise54.org](mailto:admin@promise54.org).

*At SEAL, we are committed to building a diverse and inclusive organization in which we give voice to, and meet the needs of, the communities, teachers, and students we serve. We believe in lifelong learning and continuous improvement, and we are ever-evolving the processes through which we select and support team members and foster a culture of universal belonging and empowerment.*

*SEAL encourages applications from individuals of diverse backgrounds and lived experiences, especially those from immigrant and English Learner communities, people of color and members of other historically marginalized groups.*

*SEAL is committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment.*