

POSITION PROFILE



Executive Director Washington Alliance for Better Schools Bothell, Washington

The Washington Alliance for Better Schools (WABS) is seeking an accomplished, action-oriented leader to serve as its next Executive Director. WABS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation with the mission to improve student achievement in Washington state's public schools. The new Executive Director will have the opportunity to increase the Alliance's positive impact on the student academic success in its member districts.

The Alliance's top priority is maintaining, and finding new ways to expand upon, the creative synergy between grant makers' objectives and the collective needs of the member districts. The new Executive Director's primary focus will to find the common needs and interests among member districts that are fundable by grant makers, and then to implement these grants through the districts' coordinators.

Overview of the Organization

The Washington Alliance is a partnership of 12 Puget Sound school districts, serving over 286,000 students. The Alliance partnership was formed in 1995 to assist its member school districts in their quest to improve academic achievement. Member districts include: Clover Park, Edmonds, Everett, Federal Way, Highline, Kent, Lake Washington, Marysville, Monroe, Mukilteo, Northshore, Shoreline, and Tukwila. The University of Washington, College of Education is also a member of the Alliance. Its Board of Directors consists of district superintendents of these school districts plus a representative of the University of Washington.

The Alliance helps its member districts share resources, expertise and technical assistance as they strive to:

- Implement standards for what students should know and be able to do, and design assessments that accurately measure students' progress toward meeting these standards;
- Integrate new learning and communication technologies that support and accelerate learning, and prepare students for the 21st century;
- Engage parent and community participation in the decision-making that each school must undertake to improve students' academic performance; and
- Assist students and families to come to school ready and eager to learn.

WABS targets its assistance and support in five areas:

- Standards and Assessments
- Instructional Systems
- Comprehensive School Reform
- Community Support and Partnerships
- High Performance Management Systems

The Alliance also provides its members with:

- Opportunities to share research-based strategies, and to leverage resources, expertise and support;
- Grant resources to improve student achievement;
- Comprehensive school reform strategies to close the achievement gap;
- High quality professional development and staff training;
- Designated networks for sharing results-based instruction and programs;





- Partnerships with community agencies to provide support services to schools and students;
- Leverage for a regional focus to improve public education.

The Alliance currently has an annual budget of \$1.2 million. Major funders include: the Member Districts, The Boeing Company, United Way of King County, the City of Seattle, the Gates Foundation, the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and various federal grants.

Organizational Strengths and Recent Accomplishments

WABS has a strong track record of accomplishments in developing, funding, and implementing programs that improve student achievement. Most recently these include:

- The Alliance’s ability to secure grants for educational programs that positively impact student achievement, while meeting the needs of a variety of the member districts (and in various combinations of districts) in an environment of declining resources; finding the common ground on which all can stand
- Excellent programs for professional development of district faculty and staff, particularly in math and reading
- Excellent facilitation of meetings and managing the variety of agendas among member districts
- A strong connection with Boeing, including a focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)
- A strong current cash balance, and low administrative overhead
- Robust, ongoing collaboration and regular connections between member districts (at numerous levels - administrators and practitioners) in working together and moving the Alliance’s agenda forward
- Sharing of best practices among member districts
- The Alliance’s intermediary role between funders and the districts
- Development of a common vision of math and science learning among member districts

- Providing expert speakers and other learning opportunities for district leadership
- Strong relationships with other education-related organizations and associations

Challenges and Opportunities for the Future

The Alliance is well-positioned to meet its challenges and take advantage of its opportunities in the future. The following have been identified by the WABS Board as the most pressing issues facing the Alliance:

Near-Term:

- Creating a smooth transition to the new Executive Director
- Ensuring that the new ED quickly becomes acquainted with the directions being taken by all the various players in the state's education arena
- The new ED quickly establishing his/her credibility with district coordinators and superintendents
- Reaffirming members' commitment to the Alliance
- Sustaining the Alliance's relationship with Boeing, and ensuring that the joint programs are a win-win for all involved

Mid- to Long-Term:

- Galvanizing the variety of interests of the member districts into programs that are attractive to funders and that have the greatest positive impact on student achievement
- Securing new and larger grants to grow the Alliance's ability to provide supplemental resources to member districts; ensure that the grants obtained are in support of programs attractive to the maximum number of members
- Defining how WABS can best respond to the moving targets in state and national education reform and continuing to clarify the connections between them, as well as between other issues confronting the member districts
- Continuing to demonstrate the value-added of the Alliance to member districts in order to maintain its viability, sustain and improve the collaborations between districts, and to advance the interests of the members, even through changes in district leadership





- Sustaining the Alliance’s momentum regarding STEM initiatives and establishing positive relationships with other regional, state and national STEM program leaders
- Continuing to successfully manage the natural tension between the often diverse interests of the members
- The new ED becoming familiar with new state guidelines and regulations regarding education

For more detailed information about the Alliance, please visit their web site at:
<http://allianceforbetterschools.org>

The Position

Responsibilities

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors of WABS and has general responsibility for leading and managing the operations of WABS.

The Executive Director:

- Advises and implements decisions of the Board of Directors.
- Participates fully with the District Coordinators in implementing the strategies aimed at reaching the goals of WABS.
- Develops an Annual Work Plan and Annual Budget for approval by the Board and District Coordinators.
- Manages the day-to-day operations of the organization (i.e., scheduling quarterly Board meetings, administering contracts, preparing grant evaluation reports).
- Develops plans, proposals and strategies for Board review.
- Facilitates meetings, work sessions and planning retreats.
- Coordinates the activities of individuals and groups within the partner organizations and/or grant obligations.

- Demonstrates a high work ethic and recognizes, utilizes and respects individual talents of staff members of partner school districts.
- Monitors progress on WABS goals and objectives.
- Conducts fund-raising and grant writing activities.
- Communicates information throughout the partner districts to increase the awareness and capacity of individuals and schools to improve student performance.
- Serves as a clearinghouse for information contributing to improving student performance.
- Represents the interests of the Board to external organizations and groups within the region, state and nation.

Compensation & Benefits

The salary range for the position is commensurate with qualifications and experience. A very attractive employee benefits package is available. The position is currently covered under the Washington teacher's retirement system.

Diversity Focus

The students in the Alliance's member districts represent wide and diverse socio-economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. A demonstrated commitment to, and understanding of, diversity and cultural competency will be critical in the selection process.

Leadership Philosophy Required

The Executive Director must provide visionary leadership, inspire Board members and district coordinators to do their best work, create, as well as identify, strategic opportunities for the Alliance, and serve as the "face of the organization" to its many stakeholders. The Executive Director has wide latitude in exercising independent initiative and judgment, subject to the policies and procedures established by the Board of Directors.

The new Executive Director must be free of any affiliations that could conflict (or could create the appearance of conflict) with the exercise of his/her responsibilities.





Working Relationships

The Executive Director interacts with the following persons/groups on a regular basis. A collaborative approach and a professional public presence are essential.

- Board of Directors
- Member District Coordinators and teachers
- Funders
- Program volunteers
- Local, regional and statewide education-related organizations
- Business partnerships
- Other Local, district and state education administrators
- Elected and appointed government officials
- News media
- Members of the general public

Immediate Areas of Focus for the New Executive Director

The following areas have been identified by the Board of Directors as the highest priorities for measuring the success of the new Executive Director during his/her first 12 months in office:

- Funding continues to be secured for programs of interest to the broadest possible number of member districts
- New ED is building/has built strong, respectful relationships/connections with the key players in each of the member districts, other education-related associations and partner organizations, stakeholders, funders (Boeing in particular) and legislators; feedback from them is positive
- Partner districts are excited about the work of the Alliance and place it high on their agendas; districts are actively collaborating and sharing best practices
- Mutually agreed-to performance expectations (between new ED and board) are in place and being met
- District representatives remain positive about the value of the monthly meetings and participation in them remains high
- Focus is on adding value for each member district

- Responsiveness to members' needs is being demonstrated and communications between the ED and member districts are positive
- New ED is visible and engaged in, and respected by, the greater education community
- The Alliance is operating smoothly and collaboratively; current programs are continuing to run effectively
- There is clarity around Boeing's continued support of the Alliance

Candidate Requirements

A Masters degree in related field or equivalent experience is preferred; a doctorate or other professional degree is a plus.

The position requires demonstrated skill, experience and success in/with the following areas:

- Securing grants from corporate, foundation and government sources (grant writing for educational programs, a plus)
- Building and sustaining positive relationships and collaborations with key individuals, constituencies and partner organizations
- Leadership in the public education field, combined with private sector experience, a plus
- Project/program development, implementation, and management (of educational programs and curriculum development, a plus)
- Building and sustaining successful coalitions
- Understanding of school funding, school district operations, and state and national education reform initiatives, but also speaks the "corporate language"
- Well-networked in a variety of different sectors, skilled at finding key information
- Business savvy/perspective; fiscally responsible
- An understanding of the Washington State political and educational landscape and culture
- As an ED of an education-related nonprofit organization, a plus





- Maintaining focus on organization’s mission
- Organizing talent, based on customer needs
- Providing high quality customer service
- Translating complex issues into language that parties from multiple sectors can understand
- Working with elected and appointed government officials at all levels

The successful candidate will possess the following personal attributes and competencies:

- Able to work well independently, proactive, results-oriented
- Accountable (holds self and others accountable for performance); sets high expectations for self and others; follows through on commitments
- Excellent communications skills – oral, written, listening and public speaking; articulate, direct and concise, good at translating between different groups
- Exemplary interpersonal skills; personable; engaging; comfortable dealing with wide variety of people, cultures and constituencies,
- Decisive decision maker, while remaining open-minded and considerate of other’s views; actively seeks input on key decisions; evaluates potential positive and negative consequences of various options; demonstrates consistency and fairness in decisions
- Energetic, enthusiastic, strong work ethic
- Excellent convener, facilitator, moderator, negotiator and bridge-builder
- Out of the box thinker, creative problem solver; resourceful, innovative, entrepreneurial, yet well-grounded
- Skilled at seeing connections between differing points of view, and synthesizing diverse interests into a common direction
- Well-organized and efficient; effectively sets and follows mission-driven priorities
- Assertive and self confident, but balanced with humility; has ego in check; recognizes and accounts for own weaknesses; highly “self-evolved”
- Engenders credibility, trust and respect from all sectors
- Positive attitude, inspires optimism, enthusiastic, but has a great “sense of the possible,” - the ability to turn ideas into actionable plans

Application Timing

The position is open until filled. However, interested candidates should submit a letter of interest and resume as soon as possible. Full consideration is assured if letters and resumes are received by 8:00 a.m. PDT, August 19, 2010. We appreciate all submissions via email with documents in MS Word or PDF format. If alternative methods are required please contact us. All applications will be held in strict confidence and will be acknowledged. It is anticipated that final interviews for the position will be conducted in mid-September, with the hiring decision being made shortly thereafter.

Contact Information

To apply, or for further information, please contact: Dave Osmer, Hagel & Company, Bellevue, WA, Phone: 425-643-4223, Email: dave@hagel.net.

WABS is an Equal Opportunity Employer and desires a highly diverse candidate group.

