



POSITION DESCRIPTION: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I. OVERVIEW

Building Excellent Schools

Building Excellent Schools (BES) is a national nonprofit organization that trains leaders to take on the demanding and urgent work of leading high-achieving, college-preparatory urban charter schools. BES is committed to improving the academic achievement of the most underserved students in U.S. cities – 85% of students in BES schools qualify for free/reduced lunch, 50% are Black, and 42% are Hispanic. To date, BES has established 79 schools in 22 cities, educating nearly 22,000 students. With more than half of BES schools adding new campuses, and with new cohorts of leaders being trained each year, BES anticipates there will be nearly 100 BES schools impacting 27,000 students by the fall of 2016.

BES History

The history of BES is rooted in the beginnings of the national charter school movement. In 2001, in response to the poor academic outcomes of Massachusetts' first charter schools, the Massachusetts Charter School Resource Center set out to ensure that a dominant share of new charters would be truly excellent, founded by talented leaders and grounded from the start in proven strategies and design elements. By providing intensive, full-time training to individuals to build new charter schools of the highest quality, the **Building Excellent Schools Fellowship** was born. The model was so successful that the organization expanded its training outside of the state and re-formed as Building Excellent Schools, a self-governed nonprofit corporation, in 2003. From serving three states in 2004 to working in more than four times that many states currently, BES has a crow's nest vantage point and a wealth of experience in training high-capacity leaders and founding top-performing schools.

BES Core Values

Everything BES does – from opening schools to training leaders to supporting school growth – stems from the organization's *core belief that academic achievement must drive every element of a school*. Academic rigor and excellence are the pathways to a better future. It's why BES schools routinely outperform their surrounding districts by an average of 20 percentage points in math and 13 percentage points in English language arts, and thoroughly prepare their students for success in college.

The complete set of *core values* of the organization, from which great leaders and great schools emerge, is as follows:

Academic Performance Drives Leadership

Leaders of excellent schools demand, manage, and support strong academic-performance.

Academic Performance Drives Design

Everything about a school's design – from its schedule to curriculum to instructional strategies – helps students achieve high academic standards.

Academic Performance Drives Culture

To succeed academically, students need and deserve a culture that is warm, strict, and motivating of their intrinsic desire to excel.

Academic Performance Drives Decisions

Decisions at every level of a school's operation are based on careful measurement and analysis of student achievement.

Academic Performance Drives Governance

An urban charter school cannot succeed without the determination of its governing body to hold the school fast to its ambitious standards and provide the resources necessary to meet those standards.

Accountability Drives Academic Performance

We must be able to measure the growth and progress our students have made to ensure our students are reaching the goals we have set for them and to hold us accountable for the real value our school does or does not provide.

BES Schools

While BES is headquartered in the heart of downtown Boston, its schools – nearly 40 charter organizations across nearly 80 campuses – are located in urban centers around the country. BES schools share a common goal: to close the achievement gap in the communities they serve.

BES schools incorporate *10 principles of school design*, proven practices that have been utilized in schools across the country with documented success closing achievement gaps:

1. Firm belief that all students can learn and achieve at high levels
2. Clear, outcome-focused mission, understood by all, evidenced throughout the school
3. Highly visible leader, ensuring all are focused on the mission
4. Structured learning environment and organization
5. Classroom practices promote continuity and predictability across the school
6. Frequent internal assessments with data to drive instruction
7. Strong discipline code enforced by all
8. Clear and frequent communications with parents regarding student performance
9. Strong curriculum focus on skill mastery leading to conceptual understanding and application
10. Extended school day and school year

BES Results

As detailed in its [2014 Report Card](#), BES schools have measurable, impressive impact. Deliberate in its choice of true excellence over volume, BES is nevertheless a formidable engine for creating thousands of high-quality seats for the students with the greatest needs, using tested, highly effective, proprietary leadership development methods and mechanisms. Leading in operationalizing the BES vision and mission, [The Network](#), a select (and growing) group of the highest performing BES schools, boasts the following among many examples of strong results:

- Excel Academy has ranked #1 in Massachusetts on the 8th grade English MCAS for the last 4 years;
- Achievement Prep has ranked as a top-rated Tier 1 school in the District of Columbia for the last 5 years;
- Endeavor College Prep was recently ranked among the top 10 California Charter Schools by the Rossier School of Education at University of Southern California;
- Equitas Academy and Cornerstone Academy received the 2014 California Distinguished School award; and
- Freedom Preparatory Academy and RePublic Schools were named 2014 Reward Schools for the state of Tennessee.

II. OPPORTUNITY

Context

After 12 years building, leading, and holding the vision for the organization's uncompromising standard of excellence, BES Founder Linda Brown will transition from her central administrative and leadership role into a role more closely focused on stewardship and resource development. The BES Board of Directors is, therefore, in search of a similarly strong and dedicated executive leader who is committed to the BES mission and values.

The next leader of BES will join an organization that has distinguished itself as a powerful catalyst for the creation, development, and sustaining of high-performing charter schools across the country. S/he will inherit a lean, proud, exacting, and unapologetically scrappy organization that has squarely established itself as a leader for professional development in the national charter landscape, and is at an exciting and critical juncture in its evolution.

Position and Responsibilities

First and foremost, the next leader of BES will need to believe unequivocally in the transformative power of quality charter schools and possess the grit and tenacity to champion them. Almost equally as important, the ED will have an understanding of charter schools and a professional background composed of credentials and experiences that will validate his/her stated readiness to lead a complex, urban, educational organization with an ambitious, reform-oriented mission. The ED will also be expected to:

- uphold the BES standard of excellence for the selection of Fellows and program delivery;
- serve as the face and the voice of BES by championing quality charter schools, increasing the visibility and stature of the organization, and responding swiftly and effectively to attacks from antagonists;

- partner with the Board of Directors and senior staff to design and implement multi-year programmatic, strategic, and financial plans;
- identify and secure funding from foundations, corporations, and individual donors, and increase the board's contribution in this process;
- work closely with the board to strengthen existing relationships and develop new partnerships across states and nationally;
- attract, develop, and retain highly qualified employees, and foster a productive, self-motivated, team-oriented culture that empowers the work of the entire team;
- develop and manage staff performance and professional development plans; and
- assume ultimate oversight and responsibility for effective management, staff, and infrastructure, including optimizing policies, practices, and systems required to manage financial resources and the multi-million dollar annual operating budget toward the achievement of the core mission.

Requisite Qualifications

BES seeks an entrepreneurial leader propelled by a palpable urgency to enhance a high-impact organization positioned to achieve ambitious goals for increasing the number of quality charter schools across the country. Specifically, the successful candidate must have the following **experience**:

- at least 10 years of proven executive-level management and operational experience – in either a non- or for-profit context – which includes ultimate accountability for strategic planning and tactical execution, as well as making resource allocation decisions;
- experience building and working with a Board of Directors;
- a proven ability to attract, recruit, retain, and develop excellent staff; and
- experience with identifying new sources of funding from foundations, corporations, investors, and/or individual donors, and a successful track record of securing those resources through relationship-building.

S/he must also bring these important **skills**:

- knowledge of and familiarity with charter schools and their history, funding, successes, and failures; specific experience in areas such as charter school development and operations, federal grants, facilities, and education law and policy is a strong plus but not required;
- strong instincts for identifying top talent and the ability to motivate and lead a team of distinguished professionals in their fields of expertise;
- effective managerial experience including measuring a team against performance benchmarks and outcomes, providing feedback, delegating, and making decisions in the face of aggressive deadlines;
- excellent interpersonal and relationship-building skills;
- the ability to articulate and generate a sense of urgency; and
- impressive and persuasive public speaking and communications skills.

And, finally, s/he must embody these **personal characteristics**:

- a deep personal commitment to quality education for public school children;
- an unwavering belief in the transformative power of quality charter schools; and
- the personality, work ethic, and personal integrity to inspire others to perform at a high level and to embrace change.

Reporting Relationships

The ED will report directly to a 7-member Board of Directors, which includes Founder Linda Brown. Reporting directly to the ED are: the Senior Director of Education and Leadership Development; and the Directors of Talent & Recruitment (Fellowship); Operations; Development & Communications, and The Network.

Compensation

Highly competitive base salary and rich benefits

Location

Boston, MA

Start Date

ASAP

III. APPLY

To assist with this transition, the BES Board of Directors is partnering with [Bellwether Education Partners](#), a national, nonprofit consulting and executive search firm focused exclusively on K-12 education. Together, we are excited to tell the story of BES and the vision for its next chapter. In that spirit, we welcome inquiries, ideas, and expressions of interest. ***All applications should be sent to BESEDsearch@bellwethereducation.org. Inquiries can be made to Leslie Nair, leslie@bellwethereducation.org.***
