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MIAMI LEARNING EXPERIENCE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (Miami, FL)

BACKGROUND

Established in 1977 the Miami Learning Experience School (MLE), is a private non-profit school for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As one of the leading schools in South Florida, MLE's operates its various programs on a lush 3.5 acre campus in the heart of South Miami. With a budget of approximately \$2.3M, MLE currently serves 110 individuals with varying disabilities from age 5 through adulthood.

MLE practices sequential, theory-based, developmentally appropriate instruction at each level of a child or adult's life. Carefully planned and individualized programs of learning in a safe and secure environment prevent secondary disabilities and expand each student's growth and abilities. As a collective and powerful unit, the administration, faculty, students, and families continue to create history and build a bridge into a rich and meaningful tomorrow:

MLE believes that:

1. Understanding the individual needs of students, and providing excellent programs inside and outside of the classroom, ensures student learning success.
2. Parents and teachers are partners in the educational process of the students.
3. Learning and enrichment programs should be provided in a state-of-the-art facility.
4. To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.

VISION

Research and experience clearly indicate that developmentally disabled individuals have vast potential. The Miami Learning Experience School fosters intellectual and emotional growth through personal care and attention, carefully developed programs, and objectives that can help achieve milestones. In an atmosphere of trust and dedication, MLE seeks the active learning of all students.

MLE believes that all children with developmental disabilities have the potential for learning and that all adults with developmental disabilities can step out into the community and be as independent as possible. MLE promotes and strives to achieve meaningful life experiences for its students; to encourage academic, social/emotional growth, confidence, and general overall development of wellness for all children and adults with special needs.

The school upholds a commitment in three pillars of strength for individuals with disabilities during their infant to adult life cycle: academics, independence and community involvement. The school's strategic plan promotes new and meaningful community-wide relationships.

Please visit the school website at www.thelearningexperienceschool.org to learn more about their programs.

POSITION

As the chief professional officer of MLE and reporting directly to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will ensure that school is properly equipped and staffed to accomplish its mission of creating an environment that encourages individualized academic, social, and emotional growth for all children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Professional leadership is the integral component of the position. The Executive Director must have the ability to mobilize others towards excellence in both thought and action. Knowledge and expertise in organizational planning, communications, operations, and management, as well as a strong entrepreneurial vision, are important to the success of this individual.

S/he is expected to be a leader and resource to the Board and staff in addressing organizational opportunities and challenges. The Executive Director must display the leadership capacity to institute policies and procedures necessary to the effective management of the school.

The Executive Director must be a strong communicator in groups and with individuals, able to interpret issues clearly, and effectively persuade others in a manner that leads to agreement and action. It is also incumbent upon the Executive Director to ensure that policies are appropriately communicated to multiple audiences (faculty, parents, community, Board, funders, etc.).

It is expected that the Executive Director will play a highly visible role in the community as the primary voice to government officials, media, donors, community leaders, parent groups and other supporters. The Executive Director will be tasked with leading the effort to enhance MLE's reputation in the region as a premier school for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Expected outcomes from these activities will result in increased enrollment, greater levels of community engagement, and rise in public and private financial support of its activities.

Lastly, as the chief professional officer, the Executive Director is responsible for the sound management of the school as it relates to ensuring:

- A dedicated and well trained faculty,
- State of the art programs,
- A safe and well run school buildings and grounds,
- A balanced budget, and
- A positive environment for work and continual learning for staff and students alike.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Organizational Leadership

- Provide leadership to faculty and staff in the implementation of MLE's mission. Set strategies, devise action plans, and establish goals. Gain "buy-in" with all constituencies before launching initiatives. Review and evaluate progress and implementation.
- Directly supervise the administrative and academic management team in the smooth operations of the School, mentoring them to ensure excellence and developing a steady pipeline of internal talent. As necessary, revise the management team structure, reassign responsibilities and recruit external talent.

- Serve as the driving force in ensuring that MLE adheres to best practices in all aspects of its work with students, faculty, administration, board and community.

Communications

- Ensure clarity of all staff roles and expectations throughout the organization. Hold staff accountable and create an environment of self-improvement through annual staff performance reviews that among other items, stress the need of all staff for continual learning, team building, and commitment to each other and to their students.
- Ensure accurate, timely, and appropriate communications to staff, board, and parents.
- Ensure that MLE's story, mission, and program success are effectively developed and disseminated to the appropriate audiences.

Academic Programs

- The Executive Director will be committed to education and will demonstrate a genuine passion and appreciation for students and their well-being. S/he will have a deep understanding of pedagogy, curriculum development and implementation, and progressive educational movements and educational technology trends.
- As a continual learner who stays ahead of educational trends, the new Executive Director will work closely with the Head of Academics to institute real and innovative program enhancements by providing training, leadership, motivation, and mentorship to faculty and administrators.
- Establish goals consistent with being a leading school for the intellectually and developmentally disabled, considered among the best in the country. Maintain highest standards for existing programs.
- Resource to the Board and faculty of best practices in the field and lead efforts in the adoption of those practices.
- Expand programs to meet the changing needs of the target market, with likely significant growth in the Adult Program.

Community Development and Fundraising

- Lead the cultivation of productive relationships with legislators, government agency leaders, news media, and other non-profit organizations.
- Serve as the chief development officer of the organization and work with board and other volunteers to successfully secure new private sources of contributed revenue.

Student Recruitment and Admissions

- Through the direction and supervision of the Admissions Officer, ensure that MLE services are appropriately marketed to relevant audiences, generating interest of parents and students within the target market.
- Ensure that all available classroom seats are full at all times and build consumer demand resulting in admission waitlists

Finance and Administration

- Provide direction to the Finance Director to ensure sound financial and risk management of the organization, including the receipt of a “clean” audit from the School’s external accountants.
- Lead the preparation of the annual budget by outlining priorities, clearly defining changes and establishing financial goals. Make recommendations on all key aspects of revenue generation (including tuition, student recruiting and development) and expenditures (including compensation and program expenses). Operating within the approved budget is one of the major responsibilities of the Executive Director.
- Oversee the preparation of reports, records and other documentation that presents the progress and status of MLE’s plans and activities, as requested by the Board.
- Ensure sound management and maintenance of all facilities on the MLE campus.

Board & Volunteer Development

- Make recommendations to board, report status on key initiatives, highlight issues requiring Board attention and identify opportunities.
- Serve as professional advisor and resource to the Board in all areas of programs, risk management, development, finance, policy, and governance.
- Be proactively involved in building and maintaining a strong Board to ensure that individual members understand and fulfill their volunteer commitments.

QUALIFICATIONS

Professional

- At least 10 years progressive senior level management and organizational leadership experience.
- Demonstrated track record of performance excellence in a similarly-sized school or non-profit institution.
- Strong leadership skills with a philosophy and style that encourages creativity, accountability, growth, collaboration, and problem solving.
- Proven effectiveness in serving as a spokesperson and representative with funders, business leaders, media, and other stakeholders.
- Exceptional leadership, communications, supervisory, and team-building skills that involves significant volunteer participation.
- Track record of successfully working with a Board of Directors.
- Financial management experience (budget development and management).
- Bachelor’s degree required. Graduate degree in education, or related field, preferred.

Personal

- A creative and skillful professional able to motivate others and instill a positive work ethic.
- Ability to present as a confident, informed, and inspiring leader and spokesperson.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Superior active listening, observation, analytical, and problem recognition and solving skills.
- Ability to make sound judgments independently and to take initiative.
- Well-disciplined and results-oriented self-starter who is extremely resourceful and resilient.
- Extroverted, outgoing, and entrepreneurial.
- Fluency in Spanish language helpful, but not required.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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