



## POSITION SPECIFICATION

ORGANIZATION: Para Los Niños  
POSITION: Superintendent and Vice President, Charter Schools  
LOCATION: Los Angeles  
REPORTS TO: President & CEO, Para Los Niños

### Background

#### **Para Los Niños**

Founded in 1980, Para Los Niños (PLN) is a nonprofit organization that enables academic success and social wellbeing for children. Through its early education centers and three charter schools (K-8), PLN offers high-quality education integrated with family supports, mental health services, and parent and community engagement opportunities to children and families living in poverty in Los Angeles.

#### **Para Los Niños Schools**

Para Los Niños operates three independent charters authorized by the LA Unified School District: the Para Los Niños-Gratts Primary Center (K-1); Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School (K-5); and Para Los Niños Charter Middle School (6-8). There are currently 1,050 students on three campuses, and enrollment will grow to 1,120 by the 2015-16 school year. PLN also operates an afterschool program at the Elementary and Middle schools. In addition, PLN serves 800 children ages zero to five in ten early education centers and operates a successful Youth Workforce Services program in East LA for youth ages 14 to 24, working closely with LAUSD and other community partners.

The PLN education model applies a constructivist, inquiry-based, and project-based learning approach to developing creativity and critical thinking skills. Its progressive curriculum is aligned to the Common Core and 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning skills. In addition to its pedagogy, PLN believes that wraparound services are critical to the academic performance of its students, and the agency incorporates parent and community engagement strategies to ensure its students are supported to achieve exceptional outcomes.

The population PLN serves consists of mostly emerging English language learners with a large percentage of families originating from Central America. As a result, PLN's instruction is grounded in research designed to meet the needs of predominantly economically disadvantaged students and English Language Learners. Literacy acquisition is most effective when literacy skills are initially introduced in a child's first language and then transferred in a systematic and supportive fashion into a second language. For that reason, PLN offers families a choice of a Transition Bilingual Education (TBE) and Structured English Immersion Programs for all students.



## Opportunity

Para Los Niños is seeking an experienced, outcomes-oriented leader to serve as Superintendent. As a member of the PLN executive team, the Superintendent will provide leadership, vision, and strategic direction for the PLN charter schools and will be ultimately accountable for sustaining and improving academic excellence and student achievement at PLN. The Superintendent will directly supervise the charter school principals, the Director of School Operations, all school-based special education programs, afterschool programs, and parent and community engagement activities. S/he will staff the Charter School Operations committee of the board of directors and will also coordinate the integration of wraparound mental health and family supportive services within the schools.

PLN has undergone significant transition in the last three years. A new CEO, appointed in 2012, strengthened and focused the organization's efforts and resources on its schools. In 2013, with the opening of a new facility, PLN expanded its middle school from 40 to 160 students (growing to 360 students in the '15-'16 school year). This year, two of the three principals are new, and the elementary school principal is in his second year. In this short time the organization has made great strides, but growth and change have brought challenges. As a result, there is still work to be done to close the achievement gap and push all PLN students to their full potential.

The next Superintendent will be expected to leverage the existing foundation and lead the organization to higher, sustained performance. There are several priorities the new Superintendent will focus on during his/her first year:

- Creating an academic vision and environment conducive to excellent teaching and learning, ensuring academic benchmarks are met and a high quality, rigorous instructional program is in place;
- Participating in the development/implementation of the strategic plan including evaluating the optimal governance structure for the schools and students;
- Developing a human capital focus that ensures that the organization recruits, trains, and retains its highest performers; and
- Building a culture of collaboration and accountability and ensuring fidelity to an organization-wide, consistent academic and operational model.

## Responsibilities

### **Vision Setting and Strategic Planning**

- Develop a strategic vision and implementation plan for the schools to achieve their mission;

- Engage and invest all stakeholders (including staff members, parents, and other community members, and financial supporters) in supporting the execution of the plan and the realization of the vision; and
- Establish and implement accountability and performance measures by setting clear academic, growth, operational, and financial goals and managing towards them; adapting as necessary given changes in internal and external environments.

## **Team Management and Culture Building**

- Attract, develop, and manage a high-performing team that is able to support schools as they strive to deliver transformational educational outcomes for students;
- Promote PLN Charter Schools' mission while also codifying and communicating the core values, philosophy, and norms so the academic and operational practices are clear and consistently practiced throughout the organization;
- Hold principals accountable for meeting the terms of their charters and oversee charter renewals; and
- Build and support a strong, cohesive culture that leads to an embedded and aligned organizational identity.

## **Instructional Leadership**

- Set and champion the academic vision for PLN Charter Schools and articulate PLN's educational brand, specifically the value and efficacy of inquiry-based/project-based learning and integrated arts to achieve critical thinking skills and high academic achievement in an urban setting for children living in poverty;
- Drive alignment across schools and work closely with the VP of Early Education to ensure consistency from TK to 8<sup>th</sup> grade;
- Support school leaders in creating coherency in instructional practice/routines within schools;
- Facilitate establishment of highly effective communities of practice among school leaders and teachers;
- Work with school leaders to interpret data, using this information to drive instructional practice and create action plans for school improvement;
- Direct the instructional leadership training and mentoring program for principals, assistant principals, and aspiring administrators, and supervise the development and implementation of orientation and professional development as appropriate; and
- Establish and ensure delivery of high quality academic intervention services and social-emotional supports, especially for special needs students and other vulnerable populations.

## **Operations and Finance**

- Develop and implement operational guidelines and procedures for staff and students to ensure compliance with LAUSD policies, California State Department of Education. and

- applicable state and federal laws and regulations;
- Collaborate with the PLN Chief Operating and Chief Financial Officers to coordinate appropriate resources and operational support for school operations and facilities;
  - Develop and oversee guidelines and procedures governing the use and care of school facilities;
  - Develop annual budget and monitor school/program budgets monthly. Ensure that school leaders, teachers, and parents have appropriate insight into budgeting and financial performance, including LCFF and categorical funding;
  - Establish and maintain efficient procedures and effective financial controls;
  - Conduct all financial operations and purchasing within PLN policies and applicable state and federal laws and regulations;
  - Perform effective financial forecasting and long and short-term financial planning; and
  - Meet with funders and seek out available sources for grant funding to support programs and projects.

## **External Engagement**

- Serve as the public face of the PLN Charter Schools;
- Represent PLN's Charter Schools in district and authorizer communications; and
- Build coalitions, relationships, and partnerships with key stakeholders in support of the organization's mission and goals. This group of stakeholders includes the local school district, PLN, parents, donors, community members, and leaders of community and political organizations.

## Qualities and Qualifications

The ideal candidate must have a background in K-12 education, with strong preference for experience working with low-income students and English language learners. More specifically, s/he will have experience leading a high performing school or system of schools. Additionally, the ideal candidate may have experience as a senior leader in a public school district or a CMO (Charter Management Organization) that has made significant academic gains for students of color. The successful candidate must also have a commitment to social justice and a holistic approach to supporting disadvantaged children. Specifically, the organization is seeking someone with:

- A minimum of five years of experience and a track record of success as a school principal or administrator with a significant focus on academic achievement and instruction. Strong preference for candidates with prior experience in a charter or independent school environment;
- Experience leading high-performing teams and managing staff, while providing constructive feedback and coaching to team members;
- Strong leadership abilities, including an encouraging, motivating presence to help with conflict management, team building, mentoring, and coaching, goal-setting, prioritization,

and strategic planning;

- Demonstrated success with two or more of the following: financial management, operations, human resources, strategic planning, and fundraising;
- Exceptionally strong communications skills, cultural competency and experience with Latino families — Spanish speaking strongly preferred;
- Masters degree or higher from an accredited institution in education, school administration or related field; and
- California Clear Administrative Credential preferred.

### **Other Requirements**

- Must have a reliable automobile for use on the job and a valid California Driver License and state required automobile insurance coverage;
- TB clearance to be renewed every two years; and
- Must have Department of Justice clearance.

### How to Apply:

If you are interested in this opportunity, please submit a resume at <http://searches.k12searchgroup.com/>.