



NEW SCHOOLS FOR NEW ORLEANS

Excellent Public Schools for Every Child in New Orleans

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER POSITION DESCRIPTION

CONTEXT

“New Orleans’ disastrously low-performing school system was almost entirely washed away in the flood. What is being built in its place is an educational landscape unlike any other, a radical experiment in reform that directly confronts the issue of providing equitable educational opportunities to all students.”

~ As described by Paul Tough in a New York Times Magazine profile of school reform in our city.

New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO) was developed in 2006 to support this quickly accelerating school reform effort. As the landscape in New Orleans is utterly unique, NSNO developed an innovative model to support and enhance these transformations. NSNO believes that the best way to accomplish systemic change in public schools is by providing exceptional human capital and developing excellent new schools.

In order to accomplish our vision, NSNO has partnered with the best human capital groups in the United States today—New Leaders for New Schools, The New Teacher Project, and Teach For America. Additionally, NSNO invests heavily in the development and support of public charter schools with the shared core values of serving all children by preparing students for college and beyond; no excuses in the pursuit of achievement; and an intense focus on results.

No other local organization is providing the type of support to New Orleans public charter schools that we offer. NSNO’s model of partnership, investment and support, combined with our extensive knowledge of the best practices of high performing urban charter schools and in-depth knowledge of New Orleans schools, positions us as a driving force behind the success of the present reform efforts. If these reforms are successful – and NSNO will work tirelessly to ensure that they are – New Orleans can prove to the nation that all children, regardless of race and class, can achieve academic excellence.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The mission of New Schools for New Orleans is to achieve our vision of excellent public schools for every child in New Orleans by:

- *Attracting and preparing talent to teach and lead:* Excellent schools are staffed by excellent educators. NSNO is supporting the development of human capital in our city’s schools by recruiting outstanding teachers and leaders through partnerships with teachNOLA and New Leaders for New Schools.
- *Launching and supporting open-enrollment public charter schools:* NSNO operates with an intense focus on student achievement, and this focus guides us as we invest in schools. We recruit and select exemplary school founders to launch new public schools and provide extensive support for existing charter schools and charter management organizations by way of funding, training, and partnering to develop new service providers.

- *Advocating for accountable and sustainable high-quality public schools:* NSNO serves as a voice for excellent open-enrollment schools in New Orleans, and advocates on their behalf in the community, the school district, and the state. Additionally, NSNO believes that the autonomy of school-based governance is a cornerstone of successful charter schools. To help support autonomy and quality in public charter schools, New Schools for New Orleans provides the only board governance support services in the city of New Orleans.

Among the accomplishments to date that we are most proud are:

- **10** schools launched that make up **15%** of New Orleans public schools
- **Over 250 new teachers and school leaders** placed in New Orleans schools, impacting 96% of all open enrollment public charter schools in the city
- **36** charter school boards trained to support the management of **91%** of charter schools citywide
- **1** parent organizing network incubated which has published over **50,000** parent guides
- **21** start-up grants given to support the development of over **90%** of newly approved charters

POSITION OVERVIEW

In order for NSNO to achieve its ambitious mission, its own operations must be highly functioning. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is a newly-created senior management position designed to address this organizational need. The COO will manage and lead a team that will drive NSNO's financial planning, human resources, communications, accounting, legal, technology and operational functions, all of which are currently managed by the CEO & Founder, whose day-to-day focus will shift toward external partnerships and development. Further, along with the CEO and the Chief Strategy Officer, the COO will serve as a key part of the organization's senior management and strategic planning team.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The COO will manage staff and systems and be accountable for nurturing the efficiency and effectiveness of both.

Specifically, in terms of **managing internal systems**, the COO will be responsible for:

- Assessing organizational infrastructure (including financial procedures, administrative systems, staffing needs, and programmatic assessment) and making substantive recommendations for change if necessary;
- Collaborating with other members of the leadership team to plan, develop, and implement a strategic plan for operational management and execution of NSNO's mission and contributing to the establishment of strategic planning as an ongoing function of this growing organization;
- Overseeing daily operations and establishing and maintaining appropriate systems for measuring necessary aspects of operational management, including those related to finance, communications, development, human resources, legal, benefits, compliance, and technology;
- Developing and implementing NSNO's financial modeling and forecasting processes;
- Monitoring and reporting on operational issues, opportunities, and achievements within agreed formats and timelines; and
- Identifying improvements in use of data-driven decision-making and ensuring that data is collected, integrated, and communicated effectively across the organization.

Specifically, in terms of **leading staff**, the COO will be responsible for:

- Modeling NSNO's core values at all times and fostering a culture that reflects them;
- Developing, coaching and mentoring NSNO team members;
- Establishing, facilitating, and executing effective and open communication with staff, particularly related to internal decisions, business practices, and organizational strategy;
- Developing systems to share organizational decisions with the board, senior management team and staff members;
- Identifying capacity gaps and creating hiring plans that acknowledge and plan for possible organizational growth and shrinking;
- Evaluating employee position bands, delineation of career paths, specific job responsibilities and related salary ranges;
- Overseeing regular analyses of staff utilization;
- Implementing systems for new employee orientation, on-boarding, and ongoing training/professional development designed to ensure that NSNO remains a continuous-learning organization;
- Developing and implementing systems to tie performance appraisal and compensation to competencies;
- Organizing employee performance goals and reviews and maintaining permanent employee files, financial files, and other legal documentation; and
- Overseeing the revision of the organization's employee policy manual and updating the manual as needed.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

Initially, the COO will have two direct reports -- the Director of Operations and the Manager of Special Projects -- but the current organizational chart is subject to change as the NSNO team is likely to evolve and the COO will be responsible for recruiting and hiring top talent accordingly, building and managing a highly functioning team. While not all are direct reports, all other staff and external consultants related to NSNO operations will fall under the purview of the COO. Further, the development position on staff (which is currently vacant) has a dual reporting structure to both the COO and the CEO & Founder. Finally, the COO will report directly to the CEO & Founder.

REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS

This is an outstanding opportunity to play an indirect, yet critical, role in public education reform in New Orleans. Therefore, first and foremost, the COO must be committed to the mission of NSNO and be in alignment with NSNO's beliefs that:

- Every child deserves an excellent education and it is the responsibility of adults to ensure that this occurs;
- Charter schools and parent choice are critical to the education reform landscape; and
- The successful creation of an excellent system of schools in New Orleans has the potential to be a model for urban school reform nationwide.

Additionally, the successful candidate will be able to demonstrate:

- A minimum of 10 years work experience including 5 or more years of proven operations and management experience;
- The executive presence to inspire confidence and passion in both internal and external audiences;
- A track record of leading, inspiring, and developing high performance teams in diverse functions while contributing as an integral member at the executive level;

- Advanced strategy and planning skills and a demonstrable ability to think ahead and plan over a 1-3 year time span including financial and budget modeling;
- Ability to thrive in a fluid, unstructured, entrepreneurial environment without formal training;
- Flexibility and the ability to work autonomously as well as take direction as needed;
- Experience creating, implementing, and/or revising sustainable, efficient and scalable systems and processes to support a growing organization;
- Strong analytical and critical thinking skills;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills (written and oral); and
- A high degree of integrity and ethics.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- An MBA;
- Experience in a start-up environment;
- Professional knowledge of urban public education; and
- Familiarity with New Orleans

COMPENSATION

Compensation for the position is competitive and commensurate with experience. In addition to competitive salary ranges, NSNO provides a comprehensive benefits package that meets or exceeds that provided by many of the most respected organizations in our industry. Benefits are largely subsidized by the organization, including 90% premium coverage for individual health insurance. With a generous 4% retirement match, as well as subsidized dental and short-term disability insurance, NSNO compensation measures at the top end of similar organizations according to a leading national study.

START DATE

On or, ideally, before February 1, 2010

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Search Committee is soliciting nominations and expressions of interest **immediately**. Nominations or applications (with current resume and letter of interest) should be sent confidentially, *electronically*, and **ideally before November 20th** to:

Monisha Lozier

President & Founder, Cobbe Place Consulting

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For more information about NSNO please go to www.newschoolsforneworleans.org.

New Schools for New Orleans is an equal opportunity employer.