

EXECUTIVE SEARCH SPECIFICATION
FOR THE POSITION OF
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF EDUCATOR INITIATIVES
COMMIT!

THE ORGANIZATION

Commit! is a partnership of Dallas area organizations who are deeply committed to the transformative power of education and are working together to ensure that all students in Dallas County graduate and succeed in college, career, and life.

Founded in 2012, The Commit! Partnership has become the largest educational community-based collective impact organization in the U.S. (as measured by staff, by budget, and total students supported). With 190+ partners across Dallas County, including almost every public school district, higher education entity and large foundation in the region, the Partnership also encompasses numerous independent private schools and public charter networks, businesses and educational non-profits. The organization has been strongly supported by the Mayor of Dallas (who serves on its Leadership Council) and prominent CEOs, foundation directors, college presidents and K-12 superintendents in the region.

The challenge of the educational landscape in Dallas County is large and complex: a population of nearly 800,000 students (ages 3 thru 22); significant poverty (>70% free and reduced price lunch population within its 450,000 public school students in K-12); and suboptimal levels of college readiness (only 14% of area students are college ready at graduation, with that number declining to less than 6% for the region's African American and Hispanic students—who comprise 80% of County children in first grade). Only 28% of County students were achieving either a two-year or four-year degree within six years following their high school graduation, falling far short of Texas' statewide goal of 60%.

The driving conviction behind The Commit! Partnership is that the community will support the success of every child, every step of the way, from cradle to career. Within Dallas County, students are served by over 1,500 public and private early childhood entities, 15 K-12 public school districts, 80+ different public charter schools, and numerous two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions. While there are pockets of educational excellence throughout the region, these positive outliers often remain hidden as school districts, nonprofits, and funders work largely independently of each other with no mutual accountability structure to enhance their results. Together with its 190+ partners, Commit! is working to change that, driving student achievement throughout Dallas County by leveraging data and collaborating to measure what matters, identify effective practices, and mobilize resources to spread what works.

Led by its board of directors and advised by a diverse 70+ member Leadership Council, The Partnership effectively serves as a community navigator, elevating strategic initiatives based on robust data analysis and local expertise. The Partnership's first initiative was "Early Matters Dallas", to improve early childhood outcomes and culminate in a true north goal of substantially improved 3rd grade literacy rates. Its second initiative, "Best-in-Class DFW", focuses on growing the number of effective and diverse campus leaders and teachers in front of the 1.2 million students in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. Both initiatives are guided by community strategic plans (developed in partnership with global consulting firms, the Boston Consulting Group and Bain & Company) and are supported by dedicated 12-15 member advisory boards responsible for fundraising, advocacy, and monitoring community progress against the strategic plans.

Over 100 different local, regional and national investors have supported the Commit backbone to date. They include major foundations, high net worth philanthropists, and corporate partners, all of whom believe that investing in a dedicated backbone organization, armed with powerful data and the power to continually convene

and align stakeholders, will lead to meaningful systems change as public and philanthropic funding streams align strategically behind what is needed to grow the number of students with a post-secondary degree or technical certificate.

The evidence-based work of Commit! and its partners has resulted in overall community successes, including an increase in 24,000+ students who are proficient across the Partnership's 11 Key Indicators, and a 52% reduction in the number of Dallas County schools the Texas Education Association labeled as "Improvement Required".

Commit is a 501(c)3 organization with an annual budget of approximately \$6 million. The organization has 30 full-time talented and passionate employees as well as the support of the Boston Consulting Group and Bain & Company, who are dedicating time and resources to two of The Partnership's critically important priority areas.

While The Partnership's current geographic scope is Dallas County, its early success has led to its recent agreement to support similar burgeoning efforts in Fort Worth/Tarrant County (350,000 K-12 students) and Houston/Harris County (~900,000 K-12 students). Collectively, these three regions educate 1 in 3 children in Texas and roughly 4% of the nation's K-12 population. When aligned in the future by common data and goals, these regions could prove a powerful force to advocate for state public funding streams and key policies that can significantly benefit students.

INITIATIVE: BEST-IN-CLASS DFW

Dallas County is facing significant challenges in teacher supply on several fronts, as captured in a Bain & Company study:

- Decreasing number of graduates from Texas university education programs;
- Student interest in education careers is down 16% over the past seven years, prompted in part by low perceptions of salary, career trajectory, and lack of prestige;
- Hires from Alternative Certificate Programs (ACPs) that are filling the instructional gap are performing, on average, at a lower rate and are retained less frequently than university-certified teachers;
- The high teacher turnover rate (about 19% in 2015) and population growth in the County exacerbates the demand for educators, resulting in the need for 5,000+ teachers per year, pre-K to 12.

Research studies have repeatedly documented that qualified, effective teachers are the most important, school-related factor influencing student achievement. So given these enumerated challenges facing Dallas County, the Commit Partnership has determined there is a compelling need to address the educator pipeline crisis through a comprehensive and actionable strategy that supports targeted gains in student outcomes. Pillars of the Best-in-Class DFW strategy:

- Attract a greater number of well-prepared educators, who are increasingly representative of Dallas-Forth Worth student body demographics, to work in the region's highest need schools.
- Ensure that all educator candidates go through certification programs and induction that prepares them effectively for classroom and school leadership.
- Strengthen existing educator quality through improved, differentiated professional development supported by highly effective school leaders.
- Increase retention of quality, diverse educators by supporting schools and districts in proven retention strategies such as expanded career path options and an enhanced teaching environment.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Commit! is seeking a Senior Director of Educator Initiatives to lead the region's Best-in-Class DFW and pursue audacious goals: attract diverse, great people to the teaching profession; assure they are effective on Day 1; and once in place, keep these effective educators in the role and continuing their development. To support this work,

the Senior Director will have access to an accomplished, influential Advisory Board, project support from Bain & Company, and dedicated collaborators and influencers that comprise the Partnership. The position reports to Todd Williams, Executive Director of Commit!.

Key responsibilities for the Senior Director include the following:

- **Organizational Leadership**
 - Provide thoughtful, adaptive leadership of the Best-in-Class DFW strategy, supporting staff development and building relationships and systems that will be critical to the successful implementation of the effort.
 - Credibly represent Commit! as the public face of regional Educator Initiatives, while also knowing when to lead from behind in facilitating the collective impact bodies through which partner organizations will implement change on the ground – the Educator Initiative Advisory Board, its associated Alignment Council representing area providers, and Working Groups.
 - Work across internal teams within Commit! – including data, fundraising, budgeting, and marketing/communications – to align priorities, marshal needed resources, and provide content expertise and direction.
 - Lead and manage a dedicated team of three staff people housed within Commit! while coordinating with additional resources found within both Educate Texas (a key strategic partner, funder and collaborator in this work) and Bain & Company.
- **Relationship Management and Collective Impact Facilitation**
 - Cultivate strong, collaborative relationships with leaders of partner organizations, including school districts, institutes of higher education and other educator preparation programs, and philanthropic organizations.
 - Build and maintain productive working relationships with chairpersons of each body and help maintain their enthusiasm and energy for the work.
 - Provide data to inspire and inform actions by the Advisory Board, Alignment Council, and Working Groups, along with regular reports on progress against goals and indicators; with Educator Initiatives team, provide guidance and support to partner organizations in aligning their efforts to the Best-in-Class DFW strategy.
 - Manage staff providing facilitation of the Advisory Board, Alignment Council, and Working Groups, including assisting in meeting agenda setting, preparation of meeting materials, and ongoing group communications.
 - Build upon the Partnership’s identity as a respected, effective convener of these groups and its ability to inspire collective action without formal authority.
- **Strategic Implementation and Continuous Improvement**
 - Build deep understanding of the Best-in-Class DFW strategy; lead its implementation, including providing guidance and direction to staff members in planning for and managing execution of each key strategic initiative.
 - Drive continued alignment on and excitement about the regional strategy among partner organizations.
 - Oversee the development and implementation of a shared Best-in-Class DFW measurement system that will track outcomes and indicators and use the results to inform continuous improvement; coordinate outcome and indicator refinement with the Advisory Board, Alignment Council, and Working Groups, ensuring that all partner organizations are on board with the shared targets.
 - Oversee the work of a data team member, collaborating on the creation of regular summary reports on Best-in-Class DFW strategy progress.
 - Implement an evidence-based continuous improvement process, utilizing data on outcomes and indicators to identify improvements in strategic plan implementation and any necessary adjustments to the strategy.

- **Resource Management**

- Develop and manage the effort's annual budget.
- Identify capacity gaps within the dedicated team and create hiring plans that acknowledge and plan for possible organizational growth and contraction.
- Select, contract with, and oversee the work of consultants as appropriate.

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE OVERVIEW

Commit! seeks a strategic thinker who is bright, polished, results-oriented, and passionate about eliminating education inequality and building collaborations that dramatically increase the number of students in the County ready for and successfully achieving a meaningful education. The successful candidate will bring an understanding of systems and how various parts of the education landscape can and do work together to accomplish goals; the Senior Director also will possess distinct relational skills that are effective across all audiences.

Successful candidates will possess the following:

- Undergraduate degree required; advanced degree in educator policy and leadership, business administration, or management preferred.
- Seven+ years experience in an executive management position in an innovative public policy organization; a school district would be optimum but tenure with a state agency, federal administration, or relevant nonprofit would be valued;
- Experience as a public thought leader is a plus.
- Professional background yielding deep familiarity with education and human capital policy and practice, and the dynamics of the affiliations that shape it.
- Experience setting and executing data-informed strategy and effectively motivating outcomes across diverse, peer constituents.
- Background managing projects and team members effectively to achieve success.
- Demonstrated passion for the transformative power of education.

Victory Search Group is privileged to partner with Commit to recruit the Senior Director of Educator Initiatives. If of interest, please send resume to: education@victorysearchgroup.com.