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Executive Search

Council for Exceptional Children

Executive Director

Client Overview

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) located in Arlington, VA is conducting a search for their next Executive Director. With a revenue budget of nearly $7 million and a full-time staff of 16, CEC is a professional association of educators dedicated to advancing the success of children and youth with exceptionalities. CEC is an exciting, evolving organization that accomplishes its mission through advocacy, standards, and professional development. Through the dedication of more than 20,000 members, CEC sets the standard for high quality education for children and youth with exceptionalities.

CEC seeks an Executive Director with a fast-paced style who has the ability to see and keep the big picture front and center. S/he should be a bold thinker who brings a critical eye to the status quo while working closely with the Board and Officers in making changes. The Executive Director is an externally focused role that involves significant in-person interaction with CEC's state/provincial units, special interest divisions, partnerships with professional associations, and state/federal government agencies. As such, significant travel for this position is involved.

The Executive Director should exhibit a direct approach to communications and be able to execute decisions made in a vigorous manner. CEC seeks an executive director who is both transformational and a servant leader. In addition to interfacing with many of CEC's external partners, motivating, energizing, and engaging CEC's staff is essential. Sterling Martin Associates has been retained to assist with this search.

For more information on CEC, please visit www.cec.sped.org. As of August 1, 2019, CEC will be relocating to a new headquarters office located directly above the Clarendon Metro in Arlington, VA.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for CEC's consistent achievement of its mission. The candidate should be forward-thinking and courageous in decision making and will embody integrity through transparency, accountability, and ethical, responsive behavior. The Executive Director will be committed to diversity, caring, and respect for the dignity and worth of all individuals. The candidate will be accountable for consistently improving CEC's financial results, driving membership growth and loyalty, and enhancing CEC's position as the preeminent authority and advocate for the education of children and youth with exceptionalities.

Primary responsibilities will include but are not limited to:

Membership

- Working with the staff and the Board to assess the changing needs and preferences of CEC's members and respond with relevant solutions.
- Proactively leading initiatives to improve individual, unit, and division member engagement, as well as new member acquisition through the use of technology, social media, and learning management systems.
- Continuously monitoring membership trends employing tools/processes that measure CEC membership engagement and satisfaction.
- Using relevant metrics to implement best membership engagement practices.
- Producing consistent messaging to individual, unit, and division members affecting the education of children and youth with exceptionalities.
- Promoting advocacy, standards, and professional development as aligned with the strategic plan.

Financial

- Promoting sound financial practices.
- Initiating the development of new and sustainable revenue streams.
- Working with the staff and the Board in developing an annual budget that ensures that adequate funds are available to permit CEC to achieve the goals outlined in its strategic plan.
- Monitoring the fiscal status of the organization to ensure that CEC operates within budget guidelines.
- Seeking opportunities for better efficiencies leading to fiscal flexibility that promotes

innovation and the ability to deliver high-quality programs and services to CEC members.

Marketing and Revenue Generation

- Overseeing marketing and revenue generating activities for the organization.
- Maintaining ongoing contact and communication with CEC members, clients, and stakeholders in various capacities of the association to better target marketing and revenue generation efforts.
- Continually collecting, analyzing, and using data to guide marketing decisions and revenue generation.
- Leveraging innovative marketing practices to potential and current strategic partners in order to maximize CEC's mission and revenue streams.

Strategic Support & Board Relations

- Working closely with the Board President, Officers, and the entire Board to keep them apprised of emerging issues and trends affecting the profession and the organization.
- Being knowledgeable of and working within existing governance structures and policies.
- Working actively with the entire Board to maintain, monitor, and execute CEC's strategic plan.
- Providing leadership in establishing goals, prioritizing actions, and setting timelines for successful completion of work.
- Providing the Board with ideas for capitalizing on opportunities and/or managing impact factors.
- Working with the Board and other CEC leaders to build consensus for new directions and initiatives.

Strategic Partnerships & Advocacy

- Actively promoting and expanding CEC's position as the premier authority and advocate for special educators to policy makers, business/academic leaders, and government agencies.
- Continuing to promote CEC's visibility and presence in bi-partisan governmental affairs and legislative matters affecting the education of children and youth with exceptionalities.
- Promoting active and broad participation across the organization by engaging CEC members, units, and divisions in all aspects of the association.
- Pursuing new strategic partnerships with federal and state governmental agencies and other education associations and organizations that align with CEC's mission and goals.

Staff Performance

- Completing staff performance reviews that assess productivity, skill acquisition,

professional capabilities, and then developing action plans to ensure optimal staff performance.

- Engaging an effective staff management team to support leadership and guide the organization.
- Ensuring that staff job descriptions and duties are developed that are aligned with organizational need.
- Creating professional development opportunities for staff that build capacity for the organization.
- Fostering a high-performing work environment built on teamwork, open exchange of ideas, and respect.

Requisite Qualifications, Characteristics, and Experience

Advanced degree required; Business Administration, Public Administration or related area preferred. Knowledge of special and gifted education or education-related fields a plus. Prefer at least 10 years of relevant leadership experience including at least five years of senior association or other organizational management experience.

The Executive Director will possess:

- A strong commitment to leading with integrity, accountability, fairness, and respect.
- A tenacious energy with an engaging, optimistic, and collaborative manner that inspires confidence and facilitates consensus.
- Active listening skills as part of effectively communicating with people representing widely diverse backgrounds and points-of-view.
- Persuasive public speaking and writing abilities.
- Strategic visionary skills honed from well-rounded leadership experiences, commitment to life-long learning, and a deep understanding of trends/policies affecting professionals serving children and youth with exceptionalities.
- Proven financial management and over-sight skills with the ability to develop opportunities for new and sustainable revenue streams, successful investment strategies, and the use of out-sourcing and other strategies to create cost efficiencies.
- Ability to attract talent that meets the needs for optimal organizational performance.
- Experience should reflect data-based decision-making that optimizes organizational performance using technology and the deployment of human resources that leads to membership growth, engagement, and awareness of and support for CEC's mission.

- Demonstrated ability to build/leverage strategic partnerships to advance CEC's mission and preeminence.

Compensation

A competitive compensation package will be offered to attract an outstanding candidate.

To apply, please send a cover letter and current résumé (Microsoft Word® format preferred) to CEC@smartinsearch.com. A well-written cover letter, outlining how your experience fits the requirements of the position, will be an important factor in considering your candidacy.

CEC is an equal opportunity / affirmative action employer committed to inclusion and cultural diversity in the workplace. Employment selection and related decisions are made without regard to sex, race, color, age, disability, religion, national origin, sexual preference, genetic information, or any other protected class.

For more information, contact:

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