



## **Position Description: Chief Executive Officer**

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### **POSITION**

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Carmen Schools of Science and Technology (Carmen) is a high-performing charter management organization in Milwaukee, Wisconsin seeking a new Chief Executive Officer to uphold its rigorous standards, maintain a focus on excellent results, and drive its growth. The next CEO will inherit an organization driven by high expectations for academic achievement for *all* students. Led to-date by a well-respected and highly effective founder, a strong and dedicated management team, and a deeply committed Board of Directors, Carmen is primed for a new leader to capitalize on its momentum, shape the organization through its next era of growth, and take it to new heights of performance so that all families in Milwaukee—regardless of their zip code—have a neighborhood school that prepares students for a life of choice and opportunity.

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### **OVERVIEW**

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According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Wisconsin is home to the largest achievement gap in the country for African American students (44 points). The gap between White and Hispanic students is not as large comparatively, but by the 8th grade, Hispanic math students are still 23 points behind their White peers. Public education is supposed to be the great equalizer, and yet in Wisconsin, and particularly in Milwaukee, most public schools are failing to equitably educate children and teens, particularly those of color who come from low-income backgrounds. Carmen Schools of Science and Technology was established to close these achievement gaps by addressing the serious educational disadvantages students bring to middle and high school in Milwaukee.

Established in 2007, Carmen has grown to five schools - including two middle and three high schools - at four campus locations, all with a singular *mission of graduating all students as critical thinkers and self-directed learners prepared for success in college, meaningful careers, community involvement, and family life.*

The Carmen education model features a rigorous STEM-focused college preparatory curriculum, supportive intervention programs, and a focus on developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in students. Carmen students consistently perform in the top quartile of public high schools in Milwaukee on all performance measures, including ACT scores, attendance, mobility, and college enrollment. Carmen's first high school, Carmen South, has been ranked among the top ten Wisconsin schools on one or both of the U.S. News & World Report's Best High Schools listings, and the Washington Post's Most Challenging High Schools listings. Carmen Northwest, Carmen's second campus, scored highest among all public schools in Milwaukee that serve grades 6-12 or 9-12 on the annual Wisconsin State Report Card "Closing the Gap" score in 2017. Additionally, Carmen is the only charter network in Milwaukee to be awarded expansion and replication grants from both the U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program and the national Charter School Growth Fund.

#### Highlights:

- 100% of graduates are accepted to at least one 4-year college or university annually.
- 85% of 2018 graduates (86% low-income) enrolled in college in Fall 2018, compared to 39% of low-income graduates in Wisconsin and 29% of low-income graduates nationally.
- 40% of 2018 graduates passed at least one Advanced Placement exam while in high school, compared to 25% in Wisconsin and 22% nationally.

- Six-year graduation rates from 4-year colleges have been 2-3 times higher than national rates for Carmen graduates' low-income peers.

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## **ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

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### **Develop and champion a clear organizational vision and strategy by:**

- Working with the Carmen Board and leadership team to develop a strategic vision, create an implementation plan to accomplish it, and adapt to internal and external changes as needed, and
- Widely and regularly championing and inspiring people with the organization's vision, goals, plans, results, and success stories.

### **Recruit, support, and retain a strong, diverse, and culturally competent team by:**

- Recruiting and developing high-performing talent for all levels of the organization;
- Promoting and modeling cultural competence, equity and inclusion;
- Implementing effective talent management strategies throughout the organization;
- Building a strong, cohesive culture of openness, transparency, fairness, and respect for all employees;
- Nurturing and developing a high-performing, collaborative executive team, and building out a strong distributed leadership model;
- Coaching and mentoring direct reports, ensuring the clarity and resources they need for success, and
- Ensuring the organization is able to sustain and retain its people.

### **Drive effective execution and accountability for programmatic, operational, and financial results by:**

- Working with the Board of Directors and leadership team to set clear academic, financial, organizational growth, and operational goals;
- Implementing effective accountability systems to assess and drive progress toward goals, key strategic priorities, and implementation plans;
- Ensuring that decision-making rights and processes are clear and well-implemented;
- Maintaining very high standards of excellence and ensuring that Carmen's schools are consistently excellent and preparing all students to graduate ready for success in college, family-sustaining careers, community engagement, and family life;
- Promoting the innovation, testing, piloting, and scaling of new solutions that drive student achievement;
- Ensuring operations and facilities are safe and support the academic program;
- Maintaining legal compliance, and
- Ensuring that Carmen has a viable long-term financial plan, attains and sustains financial sustainability on public funding, manages resources strategically, and has clean audits.

### **Build a strong partnership with the Board of Directors by:**

- Engaging the Board collaboratively and productively, and promoting rigorous board-management discussion to solve key challenges and realize Carmen's mission;
- Communicating information transparently and in a timely manner, and
- Working with the Board Chair and Executive Committee to recruit and train new Board members and meaningfully engage existing Board members.

### **Develop strong external relationships and presence by:**

- In conjunction with the Board and a small development team, developing new and nurturing existing individual and foundation philanthropic relationships, and leading all fundraising efforts;
- Developing meaningful partnerships and relationships with key local and national leaders, government officials, Milwaukee Public Schools and other local public school districts, national charter management organizations, and community-based organizations, and
- Promoting Carmen's brand through presentations, publications, and social media presence consistent with Carmen's mission, core values, and vision.

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## NEAR-TERM STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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Among other activities, the incoming CEO will work with the Board and leadership team to develop plans for addressing the following near-term priorities:

- Evaluate the existing Carmen network leadership team structure and identify where core organizational functions are well supported and where they are not, then create a leadership plan that will ensure the success of the network through the next five years.
- Clarify and further develop alignment between the middle school and high school education models.
- Create goals and an action plan for middle school academic performance.
- Address discrepancies in academic performance among the high schools.
- Manage the assimilation of a local elementary charter school into the Carmen Schools of Science and Technology organizational structure to set the stage for building elementary to middle to high school feeder pathways under the Carmen network.
- Finalize plans for purchasing buildings for some of the Carmen schools that are currently operating in leased buildings, and for the elementary school to come under the Carmen network management structure.
- Create a plan for obtaining more funds for Carmen’s charter schools operating under MPS.
- Build out the apprenticeship program at all Carmen high school campuses by strengthening and expanding partnerships with higher education (partnership focus: dual enrollment courses in STEM career pathways) and businesses (partnership focus: apprenticeships in STEM fields including health care, information technology, and engineering/advanced manufacturing (mechatronics)).
- Create a diversity, equity, and inclusion action plan that addresses organizational culture, core course and advisory curricula, and talent recruitment and development.

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## QUALIFICATIONS

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The next CEO must be genuine and committed, and will possess these **personal skills and characteristics**:

- the executive presence and integrity to inspire confidence and passion;
- the persistence, zeal and entrepreneurial spirit to lead a growing, mission-driven organization toward realizing ambitious goals;
- the gravitas and sophistication required to be the public face of Carmen Schools of Science and Technology and the eloquence and persuasiveness required to serve as a spokesperson to a wide variety of audiences;
- a commitment to continuous self and organizational improvement;
- the strong work ethic and grit required to do *whatever it takes* to fulfill Carmen’s goals;
- the ability to maintain calmness and self-confidence under pressure;
- humility even with success; and
- a collegial style that reflects mutual respect and engenders trust and teamwork.

## BELIEFS AND MINDSETS

The next CEO needs to demonstrate the following foundational principles and mindsets:

- Belief that all students can succeed.
- Commitment to achieving breakthrough student results.
- Commitment to uphold the organization’s core values.
- Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Growth mindset.
- Empathy, motivation and courage.
- Openness to change.

## **PREFERRED BACKGROUND AND WORK EXPERIENCE**

While not required, the following skills, experiences and credentials are desired:

- central city public charter school leadership experience;
- familiarity with both Milwaukee and Wisconsin statewide education reform issues;
- relationships with Milwaukee area, Wisconsin state level, and national education reform leaders;
- business skills including financial modeling, business plan development and contract negotiation;
- hands-on experience in hiring and developing leaders – ideally in the education sector; and
- Master’s degree or higher in Education, Business Administration, Policy, or a STEM field.

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## **REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS**

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The CEO reports to the Board of Directors and oversees a growing senior leadership team that currently includes the Chief Schools Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief College Officer, Director of Special Projects, Director of Talent, Director of Development and Marketing, and Senior Director of Apprenticeships, Internships, and Partnerships.

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## **TO APPLY**

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The review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position has been filled. For best consideration, please submit a cover letter and resume to Leslie Nair at [leslie@promise54.org](mailto:leslie@promise54.org) by Friday, April 26.

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## **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY AND COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY**

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Carmen Schools of Science and Technology is an equal opportunity employer and seeks to employ qualified individuals based on individual merit. Carmen does not discriminate against any individual with respect to the terms and conditions of employment based on that individual’s race, sex, age, religion, color, national origin, disability, genetic information, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, housing status, or any other non-merit factor protected under state, local or federal laws. Equal Employment Opportunity applies to all personnel actions such as recruiting, hiring, compensation, benefits, promotions, training, transfer, termination, and opportunities for training. Carmen is committed to a fair and equitable workplace where everyone is a respected and valued member of the team.