



## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Founded in 2004, The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (“The Alliance”) is the premier national nonprofit organization committed to advancing quality, growth and sustainability for the public charter school movement. The goal of The Alliance is to lead public education to unprecedented levels of high academic achievement for all students through fostering a strong, high-quality charter sector.

With more than two million students attending charters and hundreds of thousands hoping to do the same, the work of The Alliance and the charter school movement itself has never been more current, visible and vital. With increased growth, public awareness, and recognition, the stage is set for much bigger impact signifying some of the most important reforms of the public education system in generations. Fueled by that sense of possibility, the organization is seeking a new leader to capitalize on this opportunity and fulfill its potential.

### **The Alliance: Overview**

The Alliance works to ensure that priorities for high-quality public charter schools receive the attention, respect and support they deserve in the nation’s capital and that “charter” is synonymous with “quality” as a brand. The Alliance takes an integrated approach to advocacy, allowing it to make significant impacts at both the federal and state levels on key issues such as lifting arbitrary caps on charter growth and securing the sustainability of quality charter schools by moving toward fiscal equity in public funding. Specifically, three areas of focus comprise The Alliance’s work:

1. developing and advocating for improved federal policies and the passage of key legislation,
2. serving as the united voice for this large, diverse movement and being a credible source of information and analysis for policymakers and other stakeholders, and
3. providing direct assistance to state charter school associations and resource centers.

Since its creation in 2004, The Alliance has established a track record that reflects these priorities and includes the following accomplishments:

### ***Fostering Public Charter School Growth***

- Contributing to the development of resources and laws enabling the national movement to grow from fewer than 3,400 public charter schools to nearly 5,600 public charter schools, serving more than 2 million students across the nation, many of whom were underserved by traditional public schools;

### *Establishing a Commitment to High Quality*

- Creating the “Task Force on Charter School Quality and Accountability” in 2005, which established the principle that the movement will flourish if charter schools grow in quality as well as in numbers;
- Creating a model state charter law, developed through extensive consultation with policy experts and charter movement leaders;
- Releasing the first-ever national ranking of state charter school laws based on the full range of values in the public charter school movement, including quality and accountability, funding, and growth; and
- Developing a framework for redesign of the Federal Charter Schools Program with a new emphasis on quality startups and replication of effective charter models.

### *Developing Clear Accountability Standards for Charter Schools*

- Advancing high-quality chartering through the “Building Charter School Quality” project with respected charter partners; and
- Creating standards and training for state charter associations, helping them play a more effective role in serving and representing public charter schools.

Additional information about The Alliance can be found at [www.publiccharters.org](http://www.publiccharters.org).

### **The Alliance: Today**

The Alliance today is a recognized leader and resource at the forefront of a movement which is growing exponentially. The charter movement will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year in an environment which now includes more and more parents clamoring for access to charters and increasing numbers of superintendents and policymakers who see high-quality charters as crucial not just for closing the achievement gap, but also for getting public school students college and career-ready and, in turn, ensuring the global competitiveness of America.

Even so, the movement has its detractors. The Alliance will be called upon not only to promote the charter school movement, but to defend it; not only to advocate for continued progress, but equally as important, to defend the progress that has been achieved to date. The Alliance and the charter school movement are in the national spotlight. Expectations are high.

In the fall of 2011, recognizing a unique moment in time and intending to catalyze the growth and increased support of the movement in many regions, The Alliance engaged in a strategic assessment to position the organization for even greater effectiveness representing the charter school movement nationally. The result of this exercise is a revised emphasis within The Alliance’s three historic strategic priorities. Specifically, it is clear that stakeholders across the nation expect The Alliance to focus on developing federal advocacy strength and winning key policy battles that play out in Congress and within the U.S. Department of Education. Concurrently, it is apparent that The Alliance will be able to become stronger in Washington only if it is able to leverage – and deepen – its existing relationships with high-quality charter school partners that have an extensive grassroots presence in Congressional districts across the nation.

Therefore, moving forward, The Alliance will prioritize programs and activities that have a distinctly national orientation; those directly anchored in advancing its federal advocacy agenda. This approach

will position The Alliance to fill a large sector void, capitalize on the advantage of its geographical location, and amass a larger evidence base from which to draw policy positions and messaging.

Second, in order to accomplish this new federal focus, The Alliance must strengthen its ability to serve as a voice for the national movement. This will require: implementing media strategies which influence opinion elites, utilizing social media, communicating more effectively with charter school organizations across the country, aligning and energizing grassroots efforts in support of advocacy priorities, and interacting with the national press, all in an effort to better educate and build increased support for high-quality charter schools.

Third, The Alliance will continue to leverage its nationally-recognized expertise in the area of state policy and advocacy by engaging in focused sets of activities where its impact can be greatest. Specifically, The Alliance is committed to initiatives that allow and assist state organizations to “cross-fertilize” and learn from each other through both new and existing vehicles, such as Alliance-conducted Master Classes, its State Leaders Council, and its Model Charter Law work, among others. Additionally, The Alliance will continue to leverage its distinct expertise in activities that improve charter laws and build local advocacy infrastructure in states with weak or non-existing charter laws.

Finally, and across each of the three areas of focus, the strategic assessment process affirmed that The Alliance will continue to advocate on behalf of the rich variety of schools represented in the charter sector, be they single-schools, CMOs, EMOs, or schools yet to open - as long as they are high-quality and performing academically and operationally at a high level. The Alliance will adopt a zero-tolerance policy for low-performing charter schools.

While the strategic assessment process has completed its initial phase, the work of refining strategic focus will continue. This effort will require more engagement with stakeholders from across the nation. Meanwhile, members of the Board of Directors are committed to ensuring the long-term success of the organization and are reflecting on how to optimize their collective contribution towards effective governance, including insuring flexibility for the next CEO to help populate the Board. Ultimately, both the Board and staff are confident that the organization is poised to play a vital role in ensuring that the national charter school movement becomes the most transformational reform of our public education system, and unified in their desire to attract a top-tier leader with the skills and expertise needed to take the organization to new levels of effectiveness and impact.

### **The Search for a Chief Executive Officer**

As the charter school movement celebrates [20 years of innovation](#) this summer, the next CEO will inherit an organization that is at an exciting and critical juncture in its evolution. On the one hand, The Alliance has squarely established itself as a leader in the national charter landscape. It is uniquely poised to partner strategically and collaboratively with like-minded organizations to increase charter school performance and advance student achievement. It can play a major role as schools and districts face new challenges and opportunities such as incorporating common core standards, ensuring college-readiness, and evaluating cutting-edge blended learning models. On the other hand, in the dynamic and complex environment of education reform, The Alliance must now execute its mission in the face of well-funded and well-organized opponents.

Therefore, first and foremost, the new leader will need to believe in the transformative power of quality charter schools and possess the grit and tenacity to champion them. Further, s/he will need to collaborate with the board to regularly review and assess the ongoing strategy, partner with the staff to operationalize the vision, engage proactively in the field, and execute the three strategic objectives outlined above, all of which present a tremendous personal and professional opportunity to serve students and their families.

### ***Position/Responsibilities***

The CEO will also be expected to:

- serve as “the face and the voice” of the charter sector by championing quality charter schools, increasing visibility and stature of the charter school community, and responding swiftly and effectively to attacks from antagonists ;
- assume ultimate oversight and responsibility for effective management, staff and infrastructure, including optimizing policies, practices and systems required to manage financial resources and the annual operating budget of \$7M toward the achievement of the core mission;
- partner with the Board and senior staff to design and implement multi-year programmatic, strategic, and financial plans;
- identify and secure funding from foundations, corporations, and individual donors and increase the Board’s contribution in this process;
- work closely with the Board to strengthen existing relationships and develop innovative new partnerships across the states and nationally;
- create federal and state advocacy agendas that capitalize on political opportunities and address sector needs (with support from a Vice President of Federal Advocacy who will be hired by the new CEO and the Vice President of State Advocacy & Support);
- oversee a viable and potent national communications strategy to drive public understanding and awareness of the national charter school movement (with the support of a Vice President for Communications, who will be hired by the new CEO);
- assume ultimate oversight of the national conference; the nation’s largest annual convening of charter school stakeholders;
- develop and manage staff performance and professional development plans;
- attract, develop, and retain highly qualified employees and foster a productive, self-motivated, and a team-oriented culture that empowers the work of the entire team; and
- work closely with Board leadership to ensure that the board has the capacity for maximum impact.

### **Qualifications**

The Alliance seeks a thoughtful entrepreneurial leader to enhance a high impact organization positioned to achieve ambitious goals for increasing the size and quality of the charter school movement at the national level. Specifically, the successful candidate will have the following experience:

- passion and personal commitment to education reform and quality education for public school children;
- deep knowledge of and familiarity with charter schools and their history, funding, successes, and failures; specific experience in areas such as charter school development and operations, federal grants, facilities, and education law and policy is a strong plus but not required;
- at least 10 years of proven executive-level management and operational experience – in either a non- or for-profit context – which includes ultimate accountability for strategic planning and tactical execution experience as well as making resource allocation decisions;
- a proven ability to attract, recruit, retain, and develop excellent staff.
- experience building and working with a Board of Directors;
- an understanding of the operations and nuances of federal/state public policy, and demonstrated experience at effectively advancing a political agenda utilizing and mobilizing grassroots support;
- experience with identifying new sources of funding from foundations, corporations, investors, and/or individual donors, and a successful track record of securing those resources through relationship-building and nurturing;
- a track record for building alliances among diverse stakeholders;
- impressive and persuasive public speaking and media communications skills;
- excellent interpersonal and relationship building skills; and
- the personality, work ethic, and personal integrity to inspire others to perform at a higher level and to embrace change.

### **Compensation**

Highly competitive and commensurate with experience. The potential for a performance-based bonus exists, and benefits include a full suite of medical and disability benefits, 403b matching, and a transportation subsidy.

### **Location**

Washington, DC

### **Start Date**

May 2012

### **To Apply:**

The review of candidates will begin immediately. Applications should consist of a cover letter and resume and be **submitted by March 1**. Applications, suggestions, or inquiries about the position and/or the search process should be directed to the [Bellwether Education Partners](#) Talent Services team managing the search:

**Monisha Lozier, Partner, and Leslie Nair, Associate Partner**  
*via:* [leslie@bellwethereducation.org](mailto:leslie@bellwethereducation.org)