



**The Aurora Institute**  
**Research Director**  
Virtual Organization/Flexible Location

## Research Director

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### About The Aurora Institute

The world is changing and education must change with it. The Aurora Institute's mission is to drive the transformation of education systems and accelerate the advancement of breakthrough policies and practices to ensure high-quality learning for all. We envision a world where all people are empowered to attain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to achieve success, contribute to their communities and advance society. We add an urgent call to transform our education systems so they work for all students, regardless of background, and they support all learners for the rapidly changing future that awaits them following K-12 education.

Since our founding, the Aurora Institute has been a national leader in the field of K-12 next-generation competency-based education and personalized learning across the United States. Competency-based education, a reform led by educators, is gaining momentum in schools and districts nationwide. The core idea is simple yet profound: we measure learning by students demonstrating mastery, not by hours spent in a classroom. By redesigning education around tangible student achievement, we are preparing each student more effectively for an increasingly global and competitive future.

Collaborating with individuals and organizations at all levels of the education system, we are forging a bold, future-focused vision of education. We accomplish this through unwavering commitment to state and federal policy advocacy, creating a thriving educational ecosystem, and fostering connections and convening thought leaders. As we advance this vision of educational equity, we remain steadfast in amplifying marginalized voices and challenging power imbalances.

Annually, Aurora hosts a symposium that stands as the field's premier gathering of education innovators relentlessly working to transform K-12 education toward more personalized, student-centered approaches. This event provides a community of like-minded individuals, offers lessons in education innovation from the field, and covers the latest research and policy developments to support educational transformation. Attendees leave equipped to take immediate action in advancing next-generation learning designs in their own communities.

For nearly two decades, we've dedicated ourselves to expanding educational opportunities and securing high-quality learning for all students. Our ultimate goal is the transformation of

education systems, ushering in an era of innovation and equity. And we can proudly declare that this transformation is already in motion.

For more information on Aurora Institute, please visit our [website](#).

## The Opportunity

The Aurora Institute is seeking an experienced, strategic leader to join our team as Research Director and lead Aurora's work studying and sharing promising practices shaping the future of K-12 personalized, competency-based education. Working collaboratively with the Aurora team, the Research Director will be responsible for conducting and facilitating research and evaluation projects that answer critical questions facing the field and disseminating the findings widely. By developing and disseminating resources that equip educators, school leaders, and policymakers to catalyze and scale next-generation learning approaches, the Research Director will help inform, inspire, and advance the field.

This role is an exciting opportunity for a senior-level, experienced researcher to play a leadership role both at the Aurora Institute and in the field of competency-based education nationally. It is a full-time position with the opportunity to work virtually.

### **The Research Director will be responsible for the following:**

- Develop and manage new and ongoing research and evaluation projects including design, instrument development, data collection, analysis, writing, and communicating findings.
- Ensure that all research and evaluation projects and products reflect Aurora's values of being student-centered, equity-driven, future-focused, credible, knowledge-driven, and collaborative.
- Develop and execute strategies for accomplishing Aurora's research goals, including identifying research needs and opportunities and collaborating in development efforts.
- Serve as a national expert on the implementation and outcomes of competency-based education and a visible presence who provides support, technical assistance, and inspiration to partners in the field.
- Present Aurora's research projects and findings to external audiences and represent the organization at high-level events and meetings with funders and partners.
- Enlist and manage research team members and external vendors as needed to advance research and evaluation projects.
- Collaborate with team members to advance Aurora's internal and external strategies, events, and organizational priorities.
- Depending on background, may contribute to Aurora's practice and/or policy work.

## Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate will have the following professional and personal qualities, skills, and characteristics:

- Passion for the Aurora Institute’s mission, vision, and values.
- Deep knowledge in the field of K-12 education, with a preference for knowledge of competency-based, student-centered, deeper learning strategies.
- Demonstrated high-level research skills with experience designing, conducting, and leading all aspects of research and evaluation projects and communicating results clearly to diverse audiences through a variety of written and verbal products.
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically, manage multiple projects concurrently, meet deadlines, collaborate with internal and external partners, manage teams, build strong relationships, and manage external relationships with clients, vendors, and funders.
- Strong skills in writing, editing, presenting, and sharing research and evaluation findings with a wide range of stakeholders in ways that inspire action.
- Strong knowledge of and experience with K-12 education, nonprofit, and/or policy sectors.
- The ability to travel up to six weeks per year to collect data, manage projects, attend work retreats and conferences, make presentations, and meet with clients and funders.
- Work experience in education or social science research and evaluation or other work related to the position.
- Desire to contribute to a talented and committed team and driven by the opportunity to contribute to positive social impact and impact the lives of students nationally.

## Compensation & Benefits

Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience. The estimated salary range for this role is \$140,000-\$160,000 with a generous benefits package including full health benefits (medical, vision and dental), 403(b), life and disability insurance; substantial paid vacation, paid family leave, professional development stipend; internet reimbursement. The exact salary that will be offered to the Research Director will be determined based on a consideration of the successful candidate’s skills and experience and aligned with the Aurora Institute’s compensation policies.

## Contact

Koya Partners, the executive search firm that specializes in mission-driven search, has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Erin Reedy and Christy Farrell of Koya Partners have been exclusively retained for this search. To express interest in this role, please submit your materials by [filling out our Talent Profile](#) or email Erin Reedy and Christy Farrell directly at

[ereedy@koyapartners.com](mailto:ereedy@koyapartners.com) and [cfarrell@koyapartners.com](mailto:cfarrell@koyapartners.com). All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

The Aurora Institute is an equal opportunity employer and an organization that values diversity. Recruiting staff to create an inclusive organization is a priority, and we encourage applicants from all backgrounds. Candidates are evaluated solely on their qualifications to perform the work required.

## About Koya Partners

Koya Partners, a part of Diversified Search Group, is a leading executive search and strategic advising firm dedicated to connecting exceptionally talented people with mission-driven clients. Our founding philosophy—**The Right Person in the Right Place Can Change the World**—guides our work as we partner with nonprofits & NGOs, institutions of higher education, responsible businesses, and social enterprises in local communities and around the world.

For more information about Koya Partners, visit <https://diversifiedsearchgroup.com/koya-partners/>.