

Director of Communications

Aurora Institute

ORGANIZATION

The Aurora Institute is a 501c3 nonprofit with the mission to drive the transformation of education systems and accelerate the advancement of breakthrough policies and practices to ensure high-quality learning for all. Aurora is shaping the future of teaching and learning in K-12 education nationally through its work in policy advocacy, research, and field-building/convening. Aurora works on systems change in K-12 education, identifies root causes in structures, promotes best practices, examines policy barriers, and makes recommendations for change. Aurora has a national and global view of the future of education innovation and lifts up promising policies and practices that yield improved outcomes for students. Aurora envisions 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.

Through its strategic work to advance student-centered learning policies, research, field-building and knowledge creation, and to catalyze change at all levels by convening and connecting education leaders, the Aurora Institute has established itself as a leading voice and trusted source in the field of K-12 education. It is particularly recognized as a leader in the field around education innovation for advancing future-focused policies and practices. Recognized as a premier thought leader in personalized, competency-based education, Aurora drives policy change for personalized learning, competency-based education, and student-centered learning ecosystems and catalyzes change at every level. Aurora has published more than 100 research reports, issue briefs, and publications on the leading edge of K-12 competency-based education. Partner organizations, systems leaders, and policymakers across the country rely heavily on the Aurora Institute's thought leadership and policy expertise.

To learn more about The Aurora Institute, please visit www.aurora-institute.org.

OPPORTUNITY

The Aurora Institute is seeking an experienced and passionate Director of Communications to join the leadership team at the organization to develop and implement communication strategies to broaden the awareness and impact of Aurora's programs and evolve Aurora's brand. The Director of Communications will lead all external communications, foster brand alignment, and deliver high-quality, on-brand messaging. This individual will be a strategic communications professional with demonstrated success in thought leadership, content development, brand strategy, project management, and relationship building in K-12 education.

The Director of Communications will be responsible for consistent branding across varied and targeted communications products and services including: print publications; web presence, social media, and other online communications; media and public relations; e-blasts and other marketing; marketing of the Aurora Institute Symposium annual event, and other events, such as webinars, throughout the year.

Reporting to the CEO and working collaboratively with senior leadership, this position will oversee external and internal strategic communications including public outreach, media relations, and organizational messaging. This is an exciting role for a senior-level communications professional to help drive the future impact of the organization, empower policymakers and leaders across the field of K-12 education, and effect system change that will increase opportunities for learners everywhere.

The Director of Communication is a full-time remote position. An ability to travel periodically is required.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Key Responsibilities of the Director of Communications include:

Leading Strategic Communications:

The Director of Communications leads the development and implementation of the organization's communication strategies, targeting key audiences (K-12 education state leaders, system leaders, school leaders, educator leaders, innovators, community



leaders, strategic partners, advocates, policymakers and funders). The Director of Communications can translate complex topics on the future of learning into clear messages and shape a vision for learner-centered education. The Director of Communications works on integrated communication initiatives that cross the organization, supporting the goals and programs within our Strategic Plan and its initiatives to help accelerate achieving our mission, vision, values, and goals. They will also be responsible for developing an annual and multi-year comprehensive marketing and communications plan and program to build the brands of the Aurora Institute and CompetencyWorks (an initiative of the Aurora Institute). The Director of Communications will oversee implementation and track progress of the communications plan with annual goals, activities, and outcomes.

✍ **Leading Media Relations:**

Serving as a spokesperson and lead point person on media interactions that help promote and/or impact the organization, the Director of Communications will write effective press releases and manage incoming media requests, prepare key messaging talking points, and prepare for interviews. This role will develop proactive media pitches, such as letters to the editor, op-eds, blog posts, and prep and coordinate interviews on key education topics, tracking all Aurora media relations outreach, placements, and mentions.

✍ **Managing Publications and Materials:**

This position will oversee the creative production and dissemination strategies for publications, including managing timelines, graphic design, editorial calendars, launch plans, and outreach. This role will also work with various lead authors and vendors to manage stages of producing Aurora publications, oversee major publications publishing processes, including Symposium Program Book, ensuring accuracy and consistency with approved style guide and “look and feel”. Other marketing materials will include: annual report, e-blasts, newsletters, press releases, blog posts, articles and publications in support of organizational and programmatic goals; manage relationships with associated vendors and partners; assisting with the creation of materials to meet organizational outreach and development needs including, but not limited to, education philanthropy, funders and donors (such as case statements, annual reports, etc.).

✍ **Managing Social Media Strategy and Website:**

The Director of Communications will create a social media strategy to strengthen the Aurora brand, expand thought leadership, and engage Aurora's community on social media by collaborating with staff to plan, create and publish new, creative, and compelling content that resonates with Aurora's audience and builds thought leadership. This individual will manage blog postings, establish social media campaigns as necessary, including capturing and analyzing social media data/metrics which are then used to refine future campaigns. This role will also manage the website, including making content updates and ensuring platforms meet key constituent needs and promote Aurora Institute core work and priority messages. This work will also include managing external vendors (including website developers, Salesforce, and other vendors) with relation to the website and updates.

PRIORITIES

A successful first year in this role for the new Director of Communications will include:

- ✍ Developing an annual and multi-year comprehensive marketing and communications plan
- ✍ Creating a social media strategy and managing blog postings
- ✍ Working collaboratively with lead staff on communications related to the annual Symposium
- ✍ Working collaboratively with the CEO on outreach
- ✍ Managing publications, social media platforms, and website development

QUALIFICATIONS

In order to fulfill these responsibilities, the ideal Director of Communications candidate will have:

- ✍ 7+ years of communications and marketing experience. Nonprofit sector and/or K-12 education experience strongly preferred.
- ✍ Experience in the field of education innovation, student-centered learning, personalized, competency-based learning, and an understanding of K-12 education policy, practice, and key audiences is strongly preferred.



- ✍ Ability to write and edit using consistent messaging, tone, and organizational style with attention to requirements for different audiences (policy leaders, researchers, practitioners and educators) and the ability to simplify complex information.
- ✍ Possess a track record of championing diversity, equity, and inclusion at the individual, team, and organizational levels and implementing the structures and processes necessary to support these values.
- ✍ Demonstrate an ability to think strategically, collaborate with diverse stakeholders, and build relationships.
- ✍ Prolific and exceptional verbal and written communication skills; well versed in public speaking (both planned and extemporaneous). Must have good copy editing/editing skills.
- ✍ Proficiency with Microsoft Word, Google Drive, Excel, PowerPoint, Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign), Wordpress, and selected database (Salesforce) and email targeting tools (Marketing Cloud, Constant Contact).
- ✍ A self-starter and highly motivated, possessing the ability to be proactive and accomplish goals on time, with high-quality outcomes, with minimal supervision.
- ✍ Highly organized, capable of prioritizing, multi-tasking, and keeping multiple strands of work moving forward all while producing timely, high-quality deliverables.
- ✍ Excellent interpersonal skills.
- ✍ Good judgement and decision-making ability; attention to detail, accuracy, and flexibility.
- ✍ Commitment to Aurora's stated values of being Student-Centered, Equity-Driven, Future-Focused, Credible, Knowledge-Driven, and Collaborative
- ✍ Ability to manage vendors and to delegate (such as consultants, outside communications firms, graphic designers, copyeditors, interns, junior staff, etc.).
- ✍ Bachelor's degree required. Master's degree expected.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

This position offers a competitive salary range of \$125,00-\$150,000 and robust benefits including full health benefits (including medical, vision and dental), 403(b), and life and disability insurance. More details can be provided upon request.

TO APPLY

Please submit a resume online at <https://apply.workable.com/j/37E2E7699C>. For additional questions about this position or to speak with someone about your interest, please contact Serena Moy at smoy@edgilityconsulting.com or at 510.575.9635.

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.

