

POSITION PROFILE

Chief Executive Officer

The Aurora Institute

Flexible Location/Virtual Organization



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 that they support all learners for the rapidly changing future that awaits them following K-12 education.

Since our founding, the Aurora Institute has led 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.



Hand in hand with educators, school leaders, students, and communities, 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 by 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.



Allison Shelley, Verbatim Agency for EDUImages

Annually, Aurora hosts a symposium that stands as the field's premier gathering of education innovators relentlessly working to transform K-12 education. 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.

LEARN MORE

Visit the [Aurora Institute website](#)

Aurora Institute Values



STUDENT-CENTERED

We do everything to focus on what is best for all students. We believe that learning environments should begin and end with the learners in mind, empowering them to participate in shaping their learning experience.



EQUITY-DRIVEN

Our moral purpose is to transform education such that each child has what they need to develop their full academic, social, and personal capacity. We strive to disrupt the structural inequities driving the systems we've inherited. Access to high-quality, appropriately designed learning models and technologies can and should drive equitable opportunities and outcomes.



FUTURE-FOCUSED

We are a forward-leaning, dynamic organization committed to pushing and leading the field beyond incremental improvement towards transformation, inspired by domestic and global innovations and advancements in learning sciences and technologies.



CREDIBLE

We are non-partisan. We serve with objectivity and integrity. We activate change by being proximate and responsive to the field.



KNOWLEDGE-DRIVEN

We are a learning organization that is grounded in research in learning sciences and technologies. We contribute to and amplify the knowledge base to inform and influence both policy and practice.



COLLABORATIVE

We are part of a larger community. We work together with stakeholders and allies to transform conditions and advance the field.



THE OPPORTUNITY

The Aurora Institute is seeking a bold and experienced leader to serve as its next CEO and to push the field forward by identifying, researching and supporting new and disruptive approaches to learning. This is a rare and exciting opportunity for an experienced leader who brings demonstrated organizational leadership and a deep commitment to the power of education to change lives and communities. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the next CEO will have proven experience across key internal and external functions including team leadership, operational excellence, fundraising, policy work, change management, and advancing equity. This leader will recognize the tremendous opportunity in front of the organization at this time and be inspired by the opportunity to position the Aurora Institute as a premier innovator in the education transformation ecosystem moving forward.

Internally, the CEO will set bold and ambitious goals, motivate and retain a top-notch staff, and drive programming and policy change that best meets the needs of the students and communities it serves. Externally, the CEO will embrace serving as a policy advocate and thought leader, as well as the chief communicator and ambassador for the Aurora Institute, in order to elevate the organization's profile and reach. They will inspire, broaden, and deepen support from donors, including foundations, high-net-worth individuals, and other key stakeholders. The CEO will understand the unique value of the Aurora Institute and be able to articulately differentiate its contributions from others in the field. They will also recognize the value of partnerships and position the Aurora Institute as a trusted collaborator to others working to make the educational field more innovative and equitable. By developing strong relationships at the highest levels, the CEO will strengthen the base of support for the organization and lead it into a new era of impact. Finally, the CEO will be a vocal advocate and champion for systems change and practices that advance education equity and racial justice.



Key responsibilities for the CEO include:

- Leading strategic planning processes and establishing an overall vision for the organization's future and a plan for executing on that vision.
- Proactively identifying, embracing and advocating for the integration of innovative practices and policies that will advance the goal of educational transformation.
- Urging the field to consider how best to apply research findings and learnings in a variety of communities and contexts in real-time.
- Promoting the organization's values of advancing equity and working to ensure that all students have access to effective learning opportunities.
- Inspiring and motivating staff through collaborative and empowering leadership that maximizes staff talents and skills.
- Leading a comprehensive fundraising strategy that builds on existing networks and pursues new funding avenues.
- Maintaining the financial health of the organization by ensuring diverse and sustainable revenue streams.
- Ensuring the success and growth of the annual Symposium that serves to build and drive the field forward.
- Representing the organization externally and partnering with like-minded organizations to help to move the field forward.
- Increasing the visibility and recognition of the organization through thought leadership and participation in the field.
- Encouraging an organizational culture of respect and cooperation.
- Develop, maintain, and support a strong Board of Directors.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

The successful CEO will exhibit a deep background in the following skills, characteristics, and competencies:

PASSION FOR THE MISSION AND CHAMPION FOR EQUITY:

The CEO will bring a demonstrated commitment to advancing equity and innovation in education and a belief in the power of competency-based, personalized learning. With deep experience in, and knowledge of, K-12 education the CEO will be recognized as a creative and forward-thinking leader who is driven by the desire to positively impact the lives of children. They will demonstrate a successful track record in amplifying the voices of people of color and advancing organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion objectives.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE:

The CEO will be a forward-thinking strategist and visionary leader, who will build on the past work of the organization and its standing in the field to forge a path forward. With experience leading organizations through growth and/or transition the CEO will demonstrate an ability to identify the unique value the Aurora Institute can play in the sector and put a plan in place to embrace that role fully. A track record of orchestrating strategic planning initiatives and executing on those initiatives, coupled with the capacity to collaborate with diverse stakeholders toward a shared vision, will be key. The CEO's exceptional interpersonal and communication prowess will facilitate positive, ongoing connections with funders, partners, school districts and the broader community. They will partner with the Board in meeting its governance responsibilities in a productive, efficient, and collaborative manner.



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND POLICY ADVOCACY:

The CEO will bring a strong belief in the power of policy to effect change and a commitment to ensuring that the research work produced by the Aurora Institute is best in class. A creative thinker and inspiring speaker, the CEO will be a strong representative for the organization at the Symposium and other industry events as well as with policy makers. Committed deeply to the principles of student-centered learning, they will be comfortable seeking out and advocating for new and innovative approaches to education that are on the leading edge.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND PEOPLE MANAGEMENT:

The CEO will be a proven leader with extensive staff, operational and financial management experience. The CEO will possess the ability to clearly articulate the organization's strategy and inspire and empower a mission-driven staff to execute on that vision. The CEO will foster and encourage a culture of accountability through a relationships-first mentality, leading through deep listening, empathy, humility, and respect. With clear priorities and strong communication, the CEO will encourage collaboration across functional areas and help all staff to understand their role in achieving the organization's strategic goals, leading to strong team cohesion and respect. The CEO will ensure the financial sustainability of the Aurora Institute through strong fundraising, budgeting, and effective financial management. The CEO will work to establish a powerful organizational culture through listening, observing, and consistently using the organizational values as a guiding star for decisions and behavior.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience. The estimated salary range for this role is \$225,000 – \$275,000 with a generous benefits package. The exact salary that will be offered to the CEO will be determined based on a consideration of the successful candidate's skills, experience, and geography and aligned with 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. 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 and cfarrell@koyapartners.com. All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

The Aurora Institute is an equal opportunity employer, and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, ethnicity, disability, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, sexual orientation, age, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

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.

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