



Position Description





## Principal & Executive Director

### OVERVIEW

Position:	Principal & Executive Director (ED)
Department:	Administration
Reports to:	Board Chair / Planning Committee Chair
Job Classification:	Full time, 12 month exempt position

The Principal /Executive Director (hereafter referred to as Principal) will lead the Gates School, a newly established charter school for students with dyslexia. This Leader will instinctively know how to create a child-centric environment. This mission-aligned, thoughtful, and experienced leader will be instrumental in establishing the school, its protocols, its team and its culture in order to achieve success for its students.

### MISSION

The mission of the Gates School is “to provide an exceptional, evidence-based, multi-sensory education for students with dyslexia to open the gates to their academic potential in an environment that empowers students to develop a positive and socially conscious self-image.”

### POSITION SUMMARY

The Principal will carry out the policies established by the Board to ensure that the Gates School mission and vision are thoroughly implemented. The Principal will determine the methods for carrying out Board policies, create operational policy, oversee the business operation, develop and evaluate student programs, services, and curriculum, provide administrative and professional leadership for faculty and staff, orchestrate external relations, and assume responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the school. The Principal will serve as the liaison between the Board and the School.

The Principal will inspire, lead, guide, and direct every member of the instructional and support services in setting and achieving the highest standards of excellence, so that each individual student enrolled in the school may have a complete, valuable, meaningful and personally rewarding education. The Principal is responsible for providing a supportive environment for all Gates School employees and must promote academic freedom, trust, and respect among all employees.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### LEADERSHIP:

##### **Institutional Image**

- Interpret the school and its programs to the public
- Function as the spokesperson for the school

##### **Organization**

- Create and nurture an appropriate and strong administrative team
- Promote an internal organization that permits effective communication
- Work to produce smooth day-to-day internal operation

##### **Planning and Analysis**

- Develop tactical plans in coordination with key members of the team, and initiate studies of pertinent data to facilitate such plans
- Develop perspective through testing, comparison with similar schools, and external analysis, critiques, and evaluations
- Remain abreast of trends and research in education
- Advise the Board to concerning perceived needs for periodic, systematic, long-range planning

##### **Enrollment**

- Recommend enrollment objectives and execute programs to achieve them
- Remain abreast of effective marketing concept and oversee their implementation
- Establish standards and procedures for student admissions and dismissals

##### **Fundraising**

- Advise the Board with respect to the fundraising needs of the school
- Propose realistic goals for annual giving and other fundraising projects
- Support the Board in its efforts to raise funds for the school

##### **Environment**

- Hold general operating responsibility for the safety and well-being of all students under the School's jurisdiction
- Approve and administer rules and procedures governing the student body
- Work to promote constructive relationships among and between the students, faculty, and administration
- Strive to create and maintain an aesthetically attractive environment that is compatible with the culture of the School

**FINANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT:**

**Finance**

- Present financial plans and annual budget to the Board to support the objectives of the school
- Maintain a system of cost control to foster efficiency consistent with high standards of education and within the budget
- Oversee the staff / contractor to ensure cost-effective system of purchasing, billing, accounting, and insurance
- Recommend potential revenue streams and salary adjustments annually

**Plant Management**

- Supervise the operation and maintenance of all school facilities
- Recommend changes, additions, or improvements necessary to meet the needs of the student programs
- Endeavor to see that the plant accommodates the programs

**Personnel**

- Define the teaching and non-teaching positions needed to implement the School's programs, and select and employ competent personnel to fill those positions
- Administer equitable systems of compensation, working conditions, training, and development for all school employees
- Determine standards and take appropriate steps to measure and maintain reasonable performance and professional growth among all employees
- Establish practices and procedures to promote constructive relationships among all personnel

**PROGRAM & SERVICES**

**Program and Service Support**

- Serve as the school's instructional leader, modeling and implementing curricula based on "best practices" that are aligned with standards of the South Carolina Department of Education and also consistent with inquiry-based approach to instruction
- Administer efforts that provide sufficient support for student programs
- Assure that a comprehensive set of records is maintained in accordance with the needs of the school, its constituents, and the government
- Design, implement, and administer programs, services, and curriculum appropriate to the needs of those enrolled and develop systems of scheduling to accommodate those programs
- Recommend for Board action the school curriculum, textbooks and annual school calendar.

- Provide leadership for the school’s professional development activities in collaboration with the faculty
- Plan and implement the master schedule in collaboration with the faculty

### **Academic Achievement**

- Establish high expectations for student achievement and communicate these expectations through a variety of methods (newsletters, presentations, memos) to internal and external stakeholders on a regular basis
- In conjunction with LED Coordinator, monitor and analyze program effectiveness and identify areas needing improvement and intervention
- Communicate academic progress to stakeholders on a quarterly basis and provide an annual summary to the Board of Directors and the State Department of Education, Charter Association and all appropriate agencies
- Monitor and evaluate staff to ensure quality instruction and student achievement
- Coordinate curriculum development activities that increase staff expertise
- Ensure that continuous improvement is guided by student academic standards; school performance standards; and concrete data from all appropriate assessments

### **QUALIFICATIONS:**

The ideal candidate will have most, or all, of the following qualifications and attributes. In addition, s/he must be able to adapt to a continually evolving environment and thrive in a deadline-oriented workplace. The ideal candidate will be collaborative, resilient, flexible, diplomatic, confident, patient, and possessed of a sense of humor and professional presence.

- Master’s degree from an accredited educational institution
- Significant experience in, or knowledge of, charter school and/or nonprofit leadership
- Ability to think strategically
- Experience with dyslexic learners, Orton-Gillingham and other research-based multisensory programs / curriculum
- Experience with charter school / nonprofit board management
- Excellent analytical and abstract reasoning skills
- Substantial knowledge of applicable federal and state regulations
- Familiarity with current best practices in schools
- Ability to be flexible, balance priorities, schedules meetings and meet hard deadlines
- Ability to work independently in a multi-tasking environment employing organizationally sound decision-making and flexibility
- Strong interpersonal, presentation and written communication skills facilitating work with all constituencies of the school community
- Enjoys being an active team member of an administrative team



## Principal & Executive Director

This description is intended to describe the general content of and requirements for the performance of this position. It is not to be construed as an exhaustive statement of duties, responsibilities, or requirements. All personnel may be required to perform duties outside of their normal responsibilities to meet the ongoing needs of the school.

The Gates School is an equal opportunity employer.

The charter school and all school board operations will conform to state and federal laws and regulations, school policies, and professional ethics, including the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The Gates School Board of Directors, Principal, or the Principal's designee (and Program Director) will consult with legal counsel in any instance in which a FOIA information request appears to conflict with a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99 regulation.

### COMPENSATION:

Salary for this position is inline with South Carolina Charter School matrix and commensurate with experience beginning at \$75,000

### TO APPLY:

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this position
- A current résumé
- A one-page statement of educational or leadership philosophy and practice
- A list of five professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission)

TO: Rob Harrahill / Gates School Planning Committee: [dyslexiacharter@gmail.com](mailto:dyslexiacharter@gmail.com)

### TIMELINE:

January 10	Applications Due
Late January	Semifinalist Interviews
Early February	Finalist Interviews
Start:	July 1, 2021



## Principal & Executive Director

### GATES SCHOOL FAST FACTS

OPENING:	Fall 2021
APPROVED:	Charter Institute at Erskine <i>Aug. 2020</i>
ENROLLMENT:	125 (2021)
CAPACITY:	300 (2030)
CLASS SIZE:	15
GRADES:	1-5 (2021) K-8 (2030)
ADMISSION:	Open Enrollment /Lottery Open enrollment for 2020-21: October 1, 2020 -December 22, 2020 5:00 PM

### GATES SCHOOL OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

A great deal of excitement has been generated because the Gates School will provide an evidence-based, multi-sensory, structured language-based instructional program to students with dyslexia in the South Carolina Counties of Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester (Lowcountry). The founding planning committee recognized the need for such a unique charter school as community parents were frustrated with the ineffective individual educational services that were being provided to their reading disabled children. Those conversations attracted the attention of other community members with relevant backgrounds in education and related fields. In response, the Planning Committee conducted a number of community informational meetings about the formation of a dyslexia-specific public charter school in the Lowcountry.

The Gates School will provide a high-quality educational environment for students who need specialized instruction in reading, spelling, writing and who would benefit from a well-resourced and supportive school environment. While public schools have historically devoted resources and attention to serving students who are failing to read at expected levels, there is clear evidence that too many failing students are either overlooked or are inadequately served. Estimates vary as to the severity of this problem. The International Dyslexia Association (IDA, 2002) suggests that as many as one in five (20%) students are struggling readers while the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2013) suggests that 5 to 15% of school-age children suffer from severe reading disabilities.

The Gates School will broadly serve the South Carolina Lowcountry as Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester Counties have a large pool of students in grades 1 – 5 as evidenced by the most recent headcount data taken by SCDE in July 2019. Among Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties, there are almost 12,000 students with disabilities who have IEP's. A majority of these students have documented difficulties in reading. *The Post and Courier* reported on August 20, 2018 that 4,059 third grade students failed the reading test administered by the state. This is a serious concern as national studies have shown that students who struggle with reading by the end of third grade have significantly lower graduation rates. In fact, 35% of these students do not graduate and for students of color the rate is a staggering 65%.

Early identified challenges in reading acquisition often forecast further academic difficulties in later elementary and secondary grades. Considering the potential personal lifetime impact of a childhood diagnosis of dyslexia and that potential impact on meeting the needs of a well-educated and productive workforce in South Carolina (South Carolina Talent Pipeline Project, 2016), it is apparent that there is an urgent need to identify children early who may suffer dyslexia, provide them with appropriate intervention and address concurrent academic or social challenges they may face.

The key features of the educational program at the Gates School are reflected in its three broad Goals and their measurable objectives. *(1) Gates School Charter School students will demonstrate increased academic performance and mastery of SC College Ready Curriculum Content Standards in core subject areas during each year of the schools' operation (7 measurable objectives); (2) Through consistent and accurate implementation of evidence-based practices of instruction and support, Gates School will assist each student to increase leadership, prosocial behaviors, and to reduce or eliminate behaviors that interfere with learning (3 measurable objectives); and (3) Gates School Charter School students will demonstrate increased competence in their use of technology and increased mastery of student standards adopted from International Standards for Technology Education (ISTE) by SC STEM aligned standards (4 measurable objectives).*

Most important in achieving these goals are the fidelity and intensity of instruction, the use of recursive assessments to guide instruction, differentiation of instruction to meet individual needs and teaching to mastery. All teachers and classroom assistants will be trained in multi-sensory, structured language pedagogy, such as the Orton-Gillingham Approach and will be committed to using evidence-based methods in their instruction. Ongoing professional development will focus on continuous training in instructional best practices, multi-sensory instruction, use of student data analytics, technology and social skill development so that all teachers have sufficient knowledge to adjust their teaching to the needs of each student.



Students at the Gates School will strive to master the South Carolina College and Career-Ready Standards in order to build strong educational foundations that will enable them to succeed in their high school coursework, chosen college major and career paths. In addition to academic classes, students will have weekly social skills classes studying the values put forth in *The Leader in Me* which teaches 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership and life skills and creates a culture of student empowerment based on the idea that every child can be a leader. Students will also have technology instruction infused into all classes. Student progress will be tracked with universal screening benchmarks such as but not limited to, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing. Progress monitoring to assess students' academic growth will include standardized and curriculum-based measures such as AIMSweb, DIBELS Next, weekly informal testing, and student work. Teachers, administrators, students, and parents will share information regarding students' progress and will constantly track rates of learning and performance.

The Gates School will fill the void that students with dyslexia historically encounter in traditional public schools. With this strong commitment to meeting the unmet needs of so many struggling readers, the Gates School aspires to unlock the potential of each student with dyslexia and serve as a regional model charter school that is a beacon to educators and parents as to what can be accomplished through dedication, service and a supportive educational foundation.

### THE LOWCOUNTRY / CHARLESTON

Charleston has a rich 300-year history and is America's most beautifully preserved architectural and historical treasures. *Conde Nast Traveler* has named Charleston the #1 Best U.S. city in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 and Travel + Leisure has ranked Charleston as the best city in the U.S. perpetually over the last few decades. Known for its quality restaurants, warm climate history and architecture, Charleston is one of the most livable cities in America. Charleston is South Carolina's largest city and is located on Charleston Harbor, surrounded by the Ashley, Cooper and Wando Rivers.