



**Search for the Dean, Graduate School of Education  
Bank Street College of Education  
New York, New York**

**THE SEARCH**

Bank Street College of Education, a national leader in progressive education and an advocate for strengths-based, learner-centered, and equitable education for all, seeks a new dean of the Graduate School of Education, a key role on the institution's leadership team.

For more than a century, Bank Street has led the charge to place student needs at the center of practice and policy in the field of education, and its Graduate School of Education has been central to this work, preparing exceptional educators to enter the world ready to make a difference in classrooms, schools, and communities. In its next dean of the Graduate School, Bank Street seeks a collaborative, creative, student-centered, and transparent leader, who can build on the school's impressive legacy and think innovatively about ways to strengthen and diversify its programmatic offerings and impact.

The dean should be a seasoned administrator and an experienced progressive educator who has the people and systems thinking skills necessary to effectively lead the Graduate School's faculty, staff, students, and alumni working in partnership with them to chart the strategic direction of the School. In addition, the dean will be an integral member of the president's leadership team and will have the opportunity to participate in conversations about the current and future direction of Bank Street, particularly regarding faculty and graduate student recruitment, academic program development, and external partnerships that align with the Graduate School's mission and have the potential to expand the reach and impact of Bank Street's philosophy and programs. The dean will be a strong voice for the value of the Graduate School experience, a compelling storyteller to alumni and donors, and will work to further increase the institution's influence in New York City and beyond.

The dean will bring a record of leadership and action that reflects the principles of anti-racism and social justice, and must resonate deeply with Bank Street's progressive, student-centered pedagogy. In addition, strong skills in team and relationship building, a knack for breaking down institutional silos and fostering cross-organizational collaboration, and a keen understanding of the strategic connections among budget, enrollment, and academic priorities will be key.

Bank Street has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important recruitment. Inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed to Isaacson, Miller in confidence as indicated at the end of this document. The target salary range for this role is \$250,000 to \$275,000 and will be commensurate with experience.

## **ABOUT BANK STREET**

Since its inception in 1916, Bank Street has been at the forefront of understanding how children learn and grow. A pioneer in improving the quality of classroom practice, and a national advocate for children and families, Bank Street is a renowned leader in education. From early childhood centers and schools to hospitals and museums, Bank Street has built its reputation on the indisputable fact that their graduates know how to do the work that is right for children.

Bank Street's approach to teaching and learning recognizes that children learn best when they are actively engaged with materials, ideas, and people. Learning becomes an active, lifelong endeavor in which children and adults alike engage as careful observers, experimenters, and creative thinkers. This approach recognizes that children do not all learn at the same rate or in the same way—effective teaching and learning demands a range of strategies to meet multiple needs.

Bank Street's mission is to improve the education of children and their teachers by applying to the education process all available knowledge about learning and growth and by connecting teaching and learning meaningfully to the outside world. In doing so, Bank Street seeks to strengthen not only individuals, but communities as well, including families, schools, and the larger society in which adults and children, in all their diversity, interact and learn. Initially founded as the Bureau of Educational Experiments, the College has a long tradition of seeking social change through educational research, policy, and practice. In the spirit of Bank Street's founder, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, "we see in education the opportunity to build a better society." Not surprisingly, Bank Street was the first institution of higher education to work actively in New York City's public schools. In addition, earlier in its history, Bank Street worked with the federal government to design the national Head Start program as well as components of the Civil Rights Act of 1965. During the same period, the College published the Bank Street Readers, the first multiracial, urban-oriented readers for young children.

Equally central to Bank Street is the institution's credo. Written by Mitchell and cited often, this credo continues to define the spirit of imaginative and critical inquiry that motivates and guides Bank Street's work today, including an unwavering commitment to the idea that "human beings can improve the society they have created." Read the full text of Bank Street's credo on the [Bank Street website](#).

To meet its mission and achieve its long-term goals, Bank Street cultivates projects that address the emerging needs of educators, children, and families, from leadership development to quality childcare to the development of residency programs to prepare future teachers. The College has major partnerships with schools, school systems, colleges, universities, and community-based organizations, and the nature of these partnerships is wide-ranging—from structural school reform and innovative curriculum design to professional development institutes and direct services to children, youth, and families.

Bank Street is organized into three primary areas: the [Graduate School of Education, Children's Programs](#) (School for Children, Family Center, Summer Camp, Liberty LEADS), and the [Bank Street Education Center](#) (K-12 Math Education, Early Childhood Education, Culture, Race & Equity, Responsive Design, and Bank Street Head Start), all three of which work to transform the way teachers and children engage in learning. These three instructional divisions are supported by the Development & Alumni Relations Office, Communications Team, and Division of Strategy & Operations, which includes teams responsible for human resources, IT, finances, and facilities. Building on the strength and breadth of its portfolio, [Bank Street](#) is well-positioned to play a pivotal role in improving the education of children, their teachers, and leaders in championing education to create a more just and democratic world.

### **ABOUT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

The Graduate School addresses what educators, in all kinds of settings, need to know, understand, and do, so that they can respond to learners strategically and sensitively. In each of Bank Street's graduate programs there is rigorous training in human development— aspiring teachers study child development and aspiring educational leaders study adult development. The Graduate School's curriculum courses emphasize the value of play and hands-on learning as children's most important work as they grapple with increasingly complex challenges. The Bank Street developmental-interaction approach promotes progressive, developmentally grounded education by recognizing that both children and adults learn best when they are actively engaged with materials, ideas, and people. Constant reflection, focused advisement, and collaboration with colleagues are key to this work. At the heart of the Graduate School's approach are conference groups, intimate cohorts of students who complete their fieldwork together, working closely whether in person or online to grapple with questions, explore their identities, and grow as educators and leaders.

The Graduate School is home to a deeply engaged and intellectually stimulating group of master's and certificate-seeking students in diverse fields that span education including schools, museums, hospitals, community organizations, and public service. Enrollment in the fall of 2023 included 616 students across the Graduate School's programs with an average age of 35, 44% of whom identified as students of color, fewer than 1% of whom were international students, and 70% of whom received financial aid or enrolled in a program with a discounted tuition rate. Serious and impassioned, Graduate School students are committed learners and future-oriented educators. In the fall of 2023, 59% of enrolled graduate students were aspiring teachers, 34% were aspiring school leaders, and 7% were child life advocates. Impressively, Bank Street graduate students have a 97% pass rate on the "Educating All Students" New York State teacher certification exam for initial certification.

In the fall of 2023, the Graduate School faculty numbered 40 with 82 overall staff, and the student to faculty ratio was 8:1. The School offers more than 50+ degree and certificate programs in-person or online that are focused on teaching and learning, educational leadership, and specialty areas such as infancy, child life, and museum studies. Whether in person or online, Bank Street's diverse offerings provide

students with the flexibility to balance work and school. These programs lead to the Master of Science (MS), Master of Science in Education (MSEd), or the advanced Master of Education (EdM). The Graduate School also offers a range of continuing education options, including professional certificate programs, short-format courses, workshops, and special events both online and on Bank Street's campus, which is located on the Upper West Side in Morningside Heights, an academic hub of New York City.

Graduate School faculty and staff have a demonstrated commitment to anti-oppression and anti-racism and to preparing educators who are able to carry these principles into their work as teachers and leaders. Grounded in both ongoing programmatic inquiry work, as well as a dedicated inquiry in which faculty and staff investigate issues of race as they affect practice, faculty engage in active review and revision of their curricula with the goal of further embedding a focus on anti-racism. In addition, every year, students who are engaged in supervised fieldwork participate in an equity event as part of their conference group. These events are planned by faculty with the goal of giving focus to issues of race that may emerge through students' practice and helping give students language to use to discuss these questions. Finally, both students and faculty are invited to participate in affinity groups that provide a forum to voice their ideas and participate in the process of interrogating and disrupting racism, oppression, and inequities.

Today's educators need the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to help all students learn deeply. Similarly, policy and practice must continue to advance to help them do so. In response, the Graduate School has built research and policy related programs including: the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), which conducts research and policy analysis to identify and share effective strategies that can help improve the lives of children and families experiencing economic hardship; the Straus Center for Young Children & Families, which advances research and practice supporting the development and learning of children from prenatal to age eight; and the Educator Preparation Laboratory (EdPrepLab), a network of preparation programs that work together to create effective models for teacher and principal preparation.

In May 2016, researchers at Stanford University completed a full-scale study of the Graduate School entitled "[\*Teacher for a Changing World: The Graduates of Bank Street College of Education.\*](#)" As the report states, the fact that Bank Street commissioned this study in the first place "is a sign of its institutional reflectiveness and the importance that the organization places on evaluating and continually improving its work." Some of the impressive results from the assessment include: 90% of employers say Bank Street graduates are "well" or "very well" prepared as teachers; 87% of Bank Street graduates enter and remain in the field of education; and 87% of Bank Street graduates feel their teacher preparation program was effective or very effective compared to only 66% of comparison teachers.

## **BANK STREET LEADERSHIP**

Shael Polakow-Suransky became the eighth president of Bank Street College of Education on July 1, 2014. Under his leadership, Bank Street is building new models for teacher education, expanding its work with

public schools and childcare centers, and translating innovative education practices into policies that work at scale. During Shael's tenure, Bank Street has become a more diverse institution with a deep commitment to supporting change in public school systems, particularly around innovative approaches to math instruction. On the policy front, Bank Street has become a national leader in efforts to build high-quality childcare settings for infants and toddlers.

Prior to this role, Shael served as Senior Deputy Chancellor in the New York City Department of Education. In the nation's largest school system, Shael oversaw teaching and learning across more than 1,600 district schools and was a strong advocate for teacher and principal autonomy, balanced accountability, and reforms designed to improve learning experiences for the city's most vulnerable students. Earlier in his career, Shael worked as a teacher and founding principal of Bronx International High School. He holds a BA from Brown University, where Ted Sizer was his mentor, and a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Bank Street. He is the first alumnus to serve as Bank Street's president.

## **THE ROLE**

The dean of the Graduate School will join the Bank Street community at an exciting and consequential moment, as Bank Street and other schools and colleges of education around the country work to address enrollment challenges that have been magnified in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The successful candidate will be a passionate, inspiring, and innovative educator-leader, who thinks creatively and expansively about the future of developing teachers and school leaders, and who listens, builds community, and informs their own ideas with the expertise and insights of their colleagues.

The dean reports to the president of Bank Street and serves on the senior leadership team along with the Chief of Staff, Chief Operating Officer, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Vice President, Bank Street Education Center, Vice President, Development, Vice President, Planning and Communications, and Dean, Children's Programs. The dean's direct reports include an administrative assistant, three associate deans, one assistant dean, and a chief of staff. The dean is also responsible for leading the Academic Policy Committee of Bank Street's Board of Trustees.

## ***Challenges and Opportunities***

The primary opportunities and challenges for the next dean will include the following:

***In consultation with the Graduate School's faculty, staff, and students, continue to foster a welcoming, progressive, and innovative community of learners, educators, and scholars with a shared commitment to improving education for all students.***

The dean will inherit a high-performing, highly collaborative Graduate School, and will have the opportunity to build on existing strengths and think creatively about what new programs or modes of

program delivery might benefit the Graduate School and Bank Street going forward. In recent years, the Graduate School has rolled out a selection of high-touch online programs, which have proven to be popular additions to the suite of on-campus offerings. The faculty remain excited about exploring additional online ventures as well as opportunities for new programs and partnerships, both within and across units of Bank Street and beyond the College's walls as well.

***Oversee and effectively manage the many complex administrative systems and processes of the Graduate School.***

As an experienced leader, the incoming dean will play a crucial role in ensuring that the Graduate School operates smoothly and efficiently. The dean will lead with both strategic vision and hands-on practicality, ensuring the administrative framework of the Graduate School is responsive and aligned with Bank Street's overarching goals and historic context. While the Bank Street budget is set and managed centrally, the dean will be closely involved in setting the Graduate School's budgetary priorities and in stewarding its fiscal health. The dean and their direct reports manage the Graduate School's \$20M budget and full suite of administrative operations, including the admissions and enrollment functions, student services, and accreditation. As a divisional lead within the larger Institution, the dean also partners closely with the Chief Operating Officer and colleagues in Strategy & Operations around grants and contracts, facilities, and IT supports and with the central Communications Team and Development & Alumni Relations Office around marketing and communications, fundraising, and alumni engagement.

***Continue and deepen programmatic re-envisioning work, building on existing strengths and bringing new ideas around questions of curriculum and program.***

Graduate School faculty are currently in the midst of re-envisioning some programs with a focus on reducing program redundancies and identifying gaps, supporting our students' preparation to enact anti-racist and anti-ableist practices, and strengthening preparation for public school contexts. This work is designed to both strengthen program offerings as well as lower barriers to access by reducing the number of credits (cost) in some programs and, where possible, the time required for program completion. In guiding the Graduate School's strategic direction and priorities, the next dean will be critically reflective while remaining clear-eyed about the school's progressive roots and its steadfast commitment to educating the whole student in its graduate school classrooms and, through its alumni, in early childhood and pre-K-12 classrooms, schools, districts, hospitals, and cultural organizations throughout the country.

***Continue to prioritize Bank Street's commitment to being an anti-racist institution in the Graduate School's curriculum, classrooms, partnerships, and beyond.***

Much work has been done to deepen the Graduate School's lived commitment to equity, including a review of the Graduate School's curriculum to ensure it is inclusive, relevant, and reflective of diverse perspectives and experiences; a commitment to recruiting and retaining faculty and staff belonging to

structurally marginalized groups (an increase from 28% to 46% over the past 10 years), and a commitment to creating space for students, faculty, and staff to discuss the importance and power of one's identity as an educator and as a member of the Bank Street community. The new dean will continue to prioritize this mission-critical work, and partner with colleagues across the Graduate School to foster a welcoming, inclusive, and reflective community of learners who will be prepared to take up the cause beyond the walls of Bank Street and work on behalf of equity and social justice in their own classrooms, schools, and organizations.

***Serve as an enthusiastic and effective fundraiser, brand builder, and engaged community member on behalf of Bank Street and the Graduate School of Education.***

There is opportunity for the next dean to sharpen the reputation and expand the reach of the Graduate School. In a crowded and competitive market—both regionally among other local colleges and universities as well as nationally among other premier colleges of education—it is the responsibility of the dean to serve as a chief storyteller for the Graduate School, enthusiastically touting the school's many accomplishments and developing compelling throughlines that will connect alumni, donors, and other prospective partners and supporters to the work happening in the Graduate School's classrooms today. With the right combination of relationship building strengths and creative entrepreneurialism, the dean will be well prepared to position the Graduate School for even greater success and deeper impact in the future.

***Continue to prioritize partnership development and growth as outlined in the 2023 strategic plan***

While the Graduate School's share of traditional, regular tuition-paying students has dropped over the past ten years, Bank Street has been able to expand access to its programs by developing partnerships with districts, non-profits, and community-based organizations. These partnerships often allow for a reduced tuition rate because of external funding sources and/or guaranteed cohort sizes. In the 2023 strategic plan, Bank Street has committed to a goal of doubling enrollment in these kinds of partnership programs over the next five years through the development of new relationships with school districts, community-based organizations, undergraduate institutions, and other non-profits. The College has dedicated new central and divisional resources to this work. The dean will be a key partner and leader in building and maintaining relationships with potential partners, developing new programs, and setting the overall strategy around partnership development.

***Serve as a member of Bank Street's leadership team, contributing to institutional planning and strategy-setting conversations, and partnering with other members of the leadership team to build bridges and break down silos within the Graduate School and across Bank Street.***

The Graduate School is situated within the constellation of instructional and non-instructional divisions at Bank Street. The senior cabinet, which is made up of the leaders of these divisions, meets regularly to

discuss Bank Street's long-term priorities, and the dean will be a key participant in these enterprise-wide, strategy-setting conversations. Additionally, there are multiple opportunities for strengthening or building new connections between the Graduate School and other units on campus, including the Bank Street Education Center, School for Children, Family Center, and Liberty LEADS among others. The dean must be a savvy observer of organizational dynamics, with the patience and persistence to work across divisional boundaries and, at times, competing interests, to drive change and improvements that will benefit the Graduate School and Bank Street as a whole.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

It is strongly preferred that the ideal candidate will both hold an earned doctorate and bring the accomplished record of a seasoned team leader with exceptional communication, administrative, and management skills. In addition to a broad intellectual perspective and tested operational abilities, the next dean of the Graduate School will:

- Formulate and communicate an academic and organizational vision of leadership in progressive education and educator preparation
- Navigate fiscal constraints collaboratively and creatively, while demonstrating financial acumen to advance the school's mission via budget management, financial planning, and resource allocation
- Be imaginative, innovative, and persuasive in the pursuit of the Graduate School's objectives, implementing solutions to meet the evolving needs of the educational community
- Build partnerships and collaborations to support Bank Street's vision, promote new programs that align with the strategic plan, and lead all assessment efforts
- Bring experience with alumni or donor relations, and/or demonstrate the potential for success in this work; strength in storytelling, and a desire to engage in fundraising activities
- Be a consummate scholar-educator with the ability to model and foster faculty creativity and collaboration
- Value Bank Street's breadth and depth, recognizing the opportunity for innovation and the challenge of managing within a small, but complex organization
- Possess a deep understanding of progressive education and its connection to social justice, as evidenced by a record of teaching and administrative success
- Articulate Bank Street's distinctive pedagogy and vision, while amplifying the progressive voice in public discourse
- Bring a commitment to disrupting institutional racism and advancing the institution's social justice priorities
- Have a demonstrated record of success removing barriers to the recruitment, retention, advancement, and well-being of faculty and students belonging to structurally marginalized groups
- Bring a track record of preparing equity-minded and action-oriented educators and leaders in the field of education
- Empower faculty and staff by providing clear expectations and the autonomy to succeed



- Showcase a commitment to sustaining a culture defined by trust, visibility, open communication, and transparency
- Exhibit a keen ability to assess and prioritize tasks to balance urgent needs with long-term strategic objectives
- Demonstrate the highest degree of personal integrity
- Approach difficult conversations with empathy, transparency, and a commitment to resolution

Research shows that people belonging to structurally marginalized groups often only apply to jobs if they meet 100% of the qualifications. As no one ever meets 100% of the qualifications, we encourage you to apply if you feel that most of the above qualifications reflect your experience and expertise.

### **INQUIRIES, NOMINATIONS, AND APPLICATIONS**

Bank Street has engaged Isaacson, Miller to assist in the search. The target salary range is \$250,000 to \$275,000 and will be commensurate with experience. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and resumes with cover letters can be sent electronically in confidence to:

Katie Rockman, Annah Wells, and Maria Connor  
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/bank-street-college-education/dean>

*Have accommodation or access needs?*

*Isaacson, Miller and Bank Street College of Education are committed to creating an inclusive environment and welcome applications from candidates with disabilities. If you have any accommodation or access needs, we are happy to provide reasonable accommodations.*

*Bank Street College of Education is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, national origin, ethnic origin, citizenship status, disability, race, religion, creed, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital status, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law in its employment policies and other college-administered programs. In addition, Bank Street College of Education will provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities.*