



**Search for the Executive Director
The Academy for Teachers
New York, New York**

[The Academy for Teachers](#) (or 'The Academy'), a not-for-profit organization that improves education by cultivating a culture of prestige and intellectual joy for teachers, seeks a visionary and results-oriented leader to serve as its next executive director. The Academy was founded in 2011 to honor and support teachers as respected professionals. Specifically, the Academy provides teachers from public, charter, and private schools in the New York City metro area with professional development of the highest quality; organizes special events and activities that bring public, charter, and private school teachers together in community; and supports new teachers with mentoring and workshops led by experienced veteran teachers who are "Fellows" of The Academy. As it approaches its fifteenth anniversary, The Academy is considered the gold standard in professional development in New York City and has built a growing, vibrant community of 3,200 of the city's strongest teachers.

It is often said that teachers have the most important job in the world, but in fact, the profession is dangerously underserved and undervalued. Studies show that the tenure of more than fifty percent of teachers is five years or less, a rate of burnout that results in a staggering national annual cost of \$8 billion. The Academy addresses the teacher retention crisis with meaningful results. An impact study published in a peer-reviewed journal found that teachers who participate in The Academy's programs become four times more likely to continue teaching than teachers who don't. The executive director, serving as an ambassador of The Academy to the world at large, will be tasked with increasing awareness of its work.

Partnerships with other organizations are key to The Academy's success. The city's leading universities and cultural institutions partner with The Academy through access to leading experts and artists and by hosting programs in their finest rooms, so that teachers feel dignified the moment they walk in the door. Although 75% of The Academy's Fellows work in public or charter schools, private schools in the Academy's Private Schools and Public Education Partnership make annual contributions to support The Academy's ability to offer programs that bring private, charter, and public school teachers together.

The Academy is well-positioned to grow. It currently has 3,200 “Fellows” from 650 public, charter, and private schools in the metro area, but New York City alone has more than 100,000 teachers working in 2,500 schools, which leaves a lot of room for growth. While the executive director should work to deepen The Academy’s presence in the city, there are also significant possibilities for regional, national, and online growth. As the organization’s leader, it will be important for the executive director to think strategically about managing future growth, overseeing staff, creating new partnerships, and developing new revenue streams.

The Academy for Teachers has engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this important search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE ACADEMY FOR TEACHERS

By respecting teachers and giving them the support they need, The Academy works to ensure educators remain in the profession, inspiring children for years to come. The Academy executes this mission by providing engaging experiences, enriching programming, and a supportive community for teachers.

Master Classes

The Academy’s flagship program is the master class. These day-long programs are led by luminaries, scholars, and artists, and give teachers an opportunity to learn more about the subject they teach from a world class expert. Equally important, master classes also give teachers a rare opportunity to learn from each other. Those who have led master classes include Ta-Nehisi Coates, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Jane Goodall, Jill Lepore, and Gloria Steinem, in addition to leading academics, cutting-edge scientists, university presidents, Pulitzer-Prize winners, and Nobel laureates. Held mostly in-person but also online, master classes provide participants with thrilling new ideas, innovative teaching strategies, and renewed excitement for their work.

Early Career Fellowship

Over fifteen years, The Academy has identified 3,200 of the strongest teachers from public, charter, and private schools who became Academy “Fellows” by virtue of their passion, creativity, and devotion. These veteran teachers are eager to pass their hard-earned experience onto a new generation. In 2021, The Academy launched The Early Career Fellowship to support promising early career teachers, particularly teachers of color who are underrepresented in the profession. Now a two-year program, the Early Career Fellowship supports new teachers by welcoming them into intimate cohorts of other teachers just beginning their careers and providing them with mentoring and workshops led by exceptional and experienced Academy Fellows, who are still in the classroom and still in love with the work.

Other Events

The Academy also brings teachers together after school for larger programs that are intellectually, culturally, and pedagogically interesting, and which also ease the loneliness of teaching. The Academy organizes lectures, salons, concerts, stand-up comedy nights, music festivals, art workshops, and other programs designed to support them creatively, intellectually, and socially. Weekly community activities include a chorus, softball team, book groups, and writing groups. Additionally, Fellows have the opportunity to lead workshops in which they present their favorite lessons, teaching strategies, and resources.

Good teachers are always thinking about ways to improve their teaching. When you bring them together with brilliant experts as well as with other inspirational teachers, the benefits to students are both immediate and long-lasting. Teachers find The Academy's programs *vastly* more useful than most professional development and quickly incorporate what they've learned into their teaching. The programs have also led to inter-school collaborations, the introduction of entire new units, and new initiatives in their schools. The afterlife of a single master class can be long. Even years later, teachers report using what they learned.

For more information about The Academy, please visit <https://www.academyforteachers.org/>.

LEADERSHIP

Since founding The Academy nearly fifteen years ago, Sam Swope has worked hand-in-hand with a dedicated board and a devoted staff to inspire and support teachers. His top priority has always been giving teachers programs of the highest quality because the world's most important job deserves nothing less. Not surprisingly, teachers want to be part of this, and The Academy has had a remarkable impact in New York City. The incoming executive director will have the opportunity to build on this foundation and continue the organization's upward trajectory with support from the founding leader as Sam steps into an advisory role.

The Academy for Teachers is supported by its board of directors. This group of fifteen leaders brings together a wealth of experience, leadership, and passion for education and supporting teachers. Board members participate in standing committees that include Finance, Marketing and Development, and Governance. The Board leverages their expertise and personal and professional networks, oversees The Academy's finances, offers guidance for programming initiatives, and serves as ambassadors for the Academy.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reporting to The Academy's Board of Directors, the executive director serves as The Academy's strategic leader, setting a vision for the entire organization and executing it successfully. As The Academy's primary

spokesperson, ambassador, and advocate, the executive director will increase awareness of its important mission and work to expand its revenue streams. The executive director, acting as a trusted collaborator and visionary thinker, will use a strategic approach to all efforts, leverage fundraising expertise, generate internal and external buy-in, and provide leadership guidance for fellow stakeholders. The combination of these skills and areas of expertise will prove critical to advancing The Academy's impact and sustainability.

The executive director will be supported by a talented staff, including the chief operating officer, an associate director of programming and the Early Career Fellowship, an associate director of programming and community, a director of development, an operations manager, a program assistant, and an executive assistant. Each staff member works with the executive director to execute both day-to-day operations and large-scale projects. The executive director will oversee a budget of roughly \$1.8 million.

More specifically, the executive director will address the following set of key priorities:

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Develop a strategic vision that elevates The Academy's impact, engagement, and support

Showing teachers respect and providing them with exceptional programs are critical to The Academy's mission. To ensure continuity, the executive director will work with the board of directors and staff to plan the organization's growth, create new partnerships, evaluate and develop programs, and increase opportunities for the community of Fellows. The Academy's next leader should continue to engage all staff in these conversations and uphold the values that inspire and empower the work and people of the organization. The vision for the Academy should empower staff, energize both current participants and alumni, and support the organization's mission.

Ensure The Academy's long-term fiscal sustainability with increased fundraising and partnerships

As The Academy grows, fiscal sustainability is a central priority. The executive director will monitor The Academy's budget, revenue, and expenditures, while leading its fundraising efforts. The executive director will need to cultivate long-term relationships and partnerships with foundations, cultural institutions, universities, school districts, independent schools, corporations, and individual donors. A successful candidate will have demonstrated success and a wealth of experience in fundraising, scaling resources, and developing and maintaining long-term partnerships to ensure continuous and strategic support for The Academy and its work.

Increase access, participation, and programming

With upwards of 100,000 public, charter, and private school teachers in the New York City area, The Academy is in a prime position to deepen its reach locally. As such, the executive director will have the

opportunity to grow the Academy through program expansion (covering the vast range of subjects and activities of importance to teachers), staff development, and other new areas. The Early Career Fellowship, in particular, is desperately needed by thousands of new teachers each year. The executive director will work to partner with new schools, organizations, and districts and explore the creation of new programs that support The Academy's commitment to serving teachers of all kinds. Additionally, as The Academy continues to grow, the Executive Director will lead efforts to consider the establishment of a physical location that will serve as a permanent site for staff as well as hosting programming, workshops, and other events.

Expand awareness of The Academy's work

To accomplish these goals, it's essential to increase awareness of The Academy's innovative work and success. The executive director will lead a communications effort designed to reach teacher communities, partner institutions, and funders and will oversee the development of marketing strategies across platforms and social media, as well as pursue creative, out-of-the-box ways of sharing The Academy's stories.

Strengthen engagement with The Academy's current Board of Directors

Board Members serve as ambassadors for The Academy's work, and the executive director will encourage current members to leverage their networks and expertise for both short- and long-term goals and partnerships. Simultaneously, the executive director will be tasked with developing new board members and thought partners. Successful candidates should bring experience with board engagement and development.

Develop and retain staff through professional development and capacity building

Increased growth requires careful attention to the needs of current and future staff. The executive director will anticipate staffing needs and provide all staff with whatever professional development they need. The executive director will nurture a welcoming and collaborative culture, paying particular attention to the challenges of a remote working environment.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one candidate will embody every quality and characteristic, the successful candidate will have a balanced combination of the following:

- A deep commitment to The Academy's mission and values;
- Previous experience in a senior leadership role ideally within an organization of similar structure and vision to The Academy;

- Deep understanding of public education and teacher issues, with a nuanced understanding of the New York City education landscape;
- Expertise and demonstrated success in leading fundraising efforts and diversifying revenue for a mission-based organization;
- Strong interpersonal skills; experience collaborating effectively across various internal and external stakeholders;
- Experience working in partnership with a Board of Directors;
- Demonstrated commitment, attention to, and care for issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- A work ethic that champions collaboration and organizational success over personal and individual goals;
- Leadership capabilities and qualities that contribute to a positive remote-work culture and professional development for staff;
- Strong verbal and written communication skills.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The Academy for Teachers currently operates within the Greater New York City area. Those who are interested in the position must currently live or be willing to relocate to New York, or be within a reasonable, regularly commutable distance. The anticipated salary for this role is \$180,000 annually.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/academy-for-teachers/executive-director>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Katie Rockman, Partner
Jaime Morgen, Managing Associate
Alexis Ditaway, Associate
Harley Bartles, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Not sure you meet every requirement? Studies have shown that women and people of color are less likely to apply to jobs unless they meet every single qualification. The Academy for Teachers is dedicated to building a diverse, inclusive, and authentic workplace, so if you're excited about this role but your past experience doesn't align perfectly with every qualification in the job description, we encourage you to apply anyway. You may be just the right candidate for this position.