



Chief Executive Officer
Phi Delta Kappa International
Arlington, VA

THE SEARCH

Phi Delta Kappa International (PDK), a professional association for educators, seeks a dynamic, entrepreneurial Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to lead the organization. Founded in 1906, PDK International is a 501(c)(3) charitable association with a rich history of supporting educators and others in K-12 and higher education. Historically, PDK has provided professional learning opportunities, targeted networking, and relevant research to help researchers and practitioners deepen their expertise, elevate their careers, and experience enhanced work results throughout their careers. Today, its targeted mission is to inspire and grow current and rising educators to become community leaders and advocates for high-quality education for all students. The next CEO will join PDK International in a changing educational landscape, providing strategic leadership as the organization grows the impact of its existing programs and seeks the means to amplify its mission with new products and services.

PDK International is deeply invested in growing and developing the next generation of educators through *Educators Rising* (EdRising), a vibrant career and technical student organization (CTSO) with over 20,000 student members across 38 states. PDK also publishes *Kappan* magazine, an influential publication featuring articles about classroom practices, policy, research, professional issues, and innovations in education. PDK is further known for the PDK Poll, which, for over 50 years, has been a reliable resource for families, education professionals, researchers, and policymakers. PDK's family of education associations includes the original member and namesake, Phi Delta Kappa, and Pi Lambda Theta (PLT). Together, these two associations, in addition to EdRising, support the full spectrum of the education profession. A recent addition to the PDK membership levels is PDK Prestige, an exclusive, complimentary membership to honor currently practicing educators who have been recognized by their school, district, state, or professional organization for exceptional dedication and impact.

The next CEO, working closely with PDK's staff and board of directors, will implement the organization's three-part strategic plan to grow the impact of existing programs, seek new growth opportunities, and cultivate PDK International as a great place to work. The CEO will champion an entrepreneurial culture characterized by innovation and data-driven risk-taking to ensure the organization continues to adapt to

an increasingly competitive landscape. They will seek and develop partnerships with other education-focused organizations, working to understand and respond to key needs of the marketplace and determine how PDK can realize its greatest impact. Harnessing the organization's core assets — *Educators Rising*, *Kappan* magazine, and the PDK Poll — the new CEO will promote a clear identity for PDK by championing what it does, why, and for whom. This will require fostering an innovative, nimble, entrepreneurial, and results-oriented culture.

PDK has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm with expertise in higher education, K-12 education, and public policy, to assist in the recruitment of the chief executive officer. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain highly confidential, should be directed to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

PHI DELTA KAPPA INTERNATIONAL

PDK is deeply dedicated to developing the pipeline of teachers through its current family of associations, programs, and assets:

Educators Rising (EdRising)

[EdRising](#), a grow-your-own pathway, just celebrated its 10th anniversary as the re-imagined Future Teachers' Association. It is a co-curricular, career and technical student organization (CTSO). Chapters provide EdRising students with a place for support and networking. A strong curriculum emphasizes the fundamental teaching practices high school students need to acquire as they take their first steps to becoming accomplished professionals. Aligned micro-credentials offer performance-based assessments to allow students to demonstrate their growing skills, and competitions give students a chance to showcase themselves as professionals. An annual conference provides a national stage for students to network and be recognized for their emerging achievements in the profession. EdRising is an opportunity for school systems to stem the teacher shortage and establish the next generation of educators for the communities they serve.

[Educators Rising Collegiate](#) provides teacher prep and education policy programs with a reliable pipeline of passionate, aspiring educators from high school programs. Collegiate chapters help grow the profession by offering support to ensure students remain on the path to graduation and certification. Members and chapters are encouraged to help their communities build a strong pipeline of future educators by connecting PDK with their school districts via stakeholders, state partners, institutions of higher education, and funding sources, including foundations, local businesses, and chambers of commerce.

The Kappan

PDK publishes the quarterly *Phi Delta Kappan*—a professional magazine connecting educational research, practice, and policy—which has been in print since 1915. Copies of the *Kappan* are provided for PDK members and those interested in K-12 education. The *Kappan* aims to provide a civil forum for honest debate about how best to govern and improve our nation's public schools. It features lively articles and

commentary — written in an accessible style — on a wide range of themes from elementary education, middle grades reform, and high school improvement to new research and trends in educator preparation, effective instruction, curriculum design, assessment, education technology, student health and wellness, college transitions, family and community engagement, and many other topics. *Kappan* is a benefit of membership in PDK International. Digital members receive access to *Kappan's* online articles. Professionals, graduate students, seniors, and life members receive the print version in the mail.

PDK Poll on the Public's Attitudes Towards Public Education

The [PDK Poll](#) has been a steady reflection of U.S. opinion about public education since 1969. Education policymakers use the poll's findings to inform their decisions, and educators across the country use the results to guide planning and action in their communities. The poll is financed solely by the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, permitting PDK to offer an independent and unbiased report of American public opinion about its public schools. Since 2016, Langer Research Associates has produced the poll for PDK.

Governance

PDK International is governed by the [PDK International Board of Directors](#), whose members are appointed by the board. There are 12 PDK International Board members, including the officers: the chair, vice chair, and past chair. The CEO is a voting member of the board. There are three committees: Executive, Governance, and Finance, with the latter two chaired by appointed board members. The board strategically functions as the non-profit's governing board, not a management board.

Finances

Capitalizing on the success and growth of Educators Rising, PDK will continue to accelerate and scale its work by making data-driven decisions for fiscal sustainability. The organization has an annual operating budget of approximately \$7.3 million and anticipates ending FY 2025 with \$318K in unrestricted gains, resulting in just over \$1 million in reserves. While membership dues have historically supported a large part of PDK's activities, this revenue stream has declined steadily over the past decade. Approximately 26 percent of PDK's revenue comes from membership dues, including annual fees, conferences, and related products. The bulk of the revenue is drawn from grants, fundraising, and fees for program sales. The incoming CEO will engage in focused development activities to sustain and enrich the financial base of PDK International.

ROLE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The next leader will join PDK at a critical moment in the organization's long and proud history. PDK strives to be flexible, adapt to changing market conditions, and maintain fiscal sustainability and revenue growth. Harnessing the organization's core assets — Educators Rising, *Kappan* magazine, and the PDK Poll — the new CEO will, as the public face of the organization, promote and position PDK by communicating what it does, why, and for whom at the national, state, and local levels. It will require fostering a culture that is

innovative, nimble, and entrepreneurial. Additionally, the CEO will address the opportunities and challenges below.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CEO

Ensure ongoing fiscal sustainability and continue engagement with regional and national funders.

PDK seeks a leader who resonates with the organization's core focus on education and can stay ahead of the ever-changing education landscape across the nation and in states. As PDK focuses on growing its impact, the organization must solidify its financial model and sustainability plan. The next Chief Executive Officer will cultivate effective income streams defined by a diversified portfolio that includes membership, fee-for-service, and philanthropic support to achieve long-term economic sustainability, building upon successful existing programs, such as EdRising. The CEO will invest heavily in ongoing relationship-building with key funders, stakeholders, and partners to meet the mission of PDK. The next CEO will collaborate with the staff and the board to build a sustainable business model and develop a compelling case to funders about the unique value position of PDK as it leverages profitable assets and programming.

Leverage the success and momentum of Educators Rising to build the next generation of highly effective educators and leaders.

The next PDK CEO will prioritize the growth and presence of Educators Rising, expanding its reach to become the predominant CTSO in the Education and Training Pathway. The CEO will cultivate new partners and work with existing ones (associations, such as the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers; foundations, such as the Peter and Carmen Lucia Busch Foundation; university teacher education programs; ETS; and others) to establish new local sites and additional state partnerships. The CEO must work to continuously improve and deepen the program's impact as it ensures an increasing number of students have access to their first steps in the teacher education pathway while they are still in high school. Additionally, the CEO will emphasize the benefits of being a member of EdRising and PDK, including the relationships and development opportunities available for rising educators.

Cultivate a culture of care and support to ensure a high-performing staff team and board.

The successful CEO will manage the organization internally, including recruiting, overseeing, developing, and retaining PDK's results-oriented staff. The CEO must remain attuned to the benefits and challenges of a remote environment, working thoughtfully to build community internally and offering meaningful opportunities for professional learning and growth to all staff. This leader will orient themselves toward continuous improvement of work processes and communication channels and engage the staff and board as active contributors to the organization's decision-making processes. Success will require a dedication to transparency in communication, clear articulation of organizational goals and expectations, and high emotional intelligence to build upon the existing culture of care among staff.

As a consultative partner to the board, the CEO will set and deliver on strategic priorities for the organization. Additionally, the CEO will work collaboratively with the board to ensure it is fully cognizant of the strategies and activities designed to meet the mission, while simultaneously operating within a system of accountability. The leader will appropriately engage the board, support board operations and governance, and maintain effective partnerships with board members. Additionally, the CEO will work with the board's committees to ensure alignment with the organization's mission and goals.

Elevate PDK's public profile, nurture partnerships, and codify its value proposition to highlight field effectiveness.

Now more than ever, there is a critical need and unique opportunity to engage leaders across the national, state, and local public education landscapes. Furthermore, there is an unprecedented opportunity to increase awareness of PDK's work and unique programming and assets. To accomplish this, the CEO, as the public face of the organization, must strategically frame the organization's story and highlight the value proposition of PDK and its partnerships. The CEO will seek out and embrace opportunities to collaborate with other organizations aiming to improve public education and address its challenges. It will require strategic and effective collaboration among multiple stakeholders and engagement in public discourse to elevate the PDK brand.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

This is an opportunity to lead and strengthen one of the nation's premier education societies. The next CEO of PDK must be a strategic, visionary, and entrepreneurial executive who can lead a nonprofit organization undergoing continuous adjustment and transformation with respect for its history.

The successful candidate will bring executive experience in education and/or business fields that may incorporate K-12, higher education, career and technical education, and/or nonprofit organizations. A master's degree is required, with a doctorate preferred. Additionally, the successful candidate will possess many of the following professional experiences and leadership characteristics:

Visionary Leadership in Education

- Knowledge in the public K-12 education sector at national, state, and local levels, paired with a passionate commitment to educational excellence and equity for all students.
- Working knowledge of state and local education funding streams and budget processes, including federal and state revenues.
- Deep expertise in Career Technical Education (CTE), education and training career pathway programs, career technical student organizations (CTSOs), and the CTE policy and leadership landscape.
- Familiarity with national and regional education policy trends, research, and priorities.
- Excellent political judgment, cross-generational fluency, and a nuanced understanding of the education landscape.

- An articulate, compelling, and persuasive public presence, capable of effectively and enthusiastically delivering PDK's mission and message to a wide range of stakeholders.
- Translate the belief that highly effective teachers are critical to providing an excellent education to all students and that *Educators Rising* can assist in eliminating teacher shortages.

Strategic & Entrepreneurial Thinking

- Proven ability to think strategically and entrepreneurially, with the organizational discipline to implement plans and achieve measurable outcomes.
- Demonstrated skill in identifying and growing mission-aligned new revenue streams, as well as optimizing and scaling existing assets.
- Familiarity with national and regional philanthropic funders, with the capacity to cultivate, maintain, and expand philanthropic support.

Financial & Operational Stewardship

- Capacity to manage all aspects of a complex, multi-million-dollar nonprofit membership organization with transparency and accountability.
- Proficiency in applying practices to ensure organizational performance, efficiency, sustainability, growth, and impact.
- Experience directing fast-paced, multi-faceted operations that collaborate with and empower a senior leadership team for maximum impact.

Collaborative & Inclusive Leadership

- Ability to lead and work in a primarily remote work environment while maintaining a presence in Washington, D.C.
- Committed to maintaining a positive and supportive work culture by embracing PDK International's five core values of service, leadership, excellence, optimism, and community with PDK's board and staff.
- Demonstrated ability to build consensus and challenge the status quo with courage and diplomacy.
- A natural collaborator and network weaver, skilled at engaging diverse individuals and institutions to co-create solutions and foster partnerships.
- Track record of leading a respectful, inclusive organizational culture that values input from staff, board members, organizational members, and community stakeholders.
- Demonstrated success in leading a high-performance, remote work environment.

Governance & Board Relations

- Proven ability to recruit, engage, and work successfully with a high-impact Board of Directors.
- Skilled at supporting effective non-profit governance and leveraging board leadership and expertise toward the organization's strategic goals.

LOCATION

The organization has a physical presence in the Washington, D.C. area but operates as a primarily remote organization with staff working from a variety of approved locations. While the CEO is not required to live in the D.C. area, it is expected that the CEO and the PDK staff will meet in person on a regular cadence.

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: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/phi-delta-kappa-international/chief-executive-officer>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Sean Farrell, Partner
Janette Martinez, Senior Associate
Drew Chang, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Phi Delta Kappa International is an equal-opportunity employer.