



# THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

## Chief Talent Officer The School District of Philadelphia Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

### THE SEARCH

The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) seeks an experienced, mission-oriented, and transformational leader to serve as its next Chief Talent Officer (CTO). The CTO will be a critical member of the District's leadership team and will develop and oversee a comprehensive strategic approach to strengthening all human capital and human resources (HR) functions. This work, along with the CTO's ability to lead effectively through change, will be essential to achieving Superintendent Watlington's ambitions for SDP to be the fastest-improving public school district in the nation. This is an exciting opportunity for a human resources executive with a record of strengthening systems and teams to positively impact the District's human capital functions, benefiting all District employees and, by extension, the thousands of students across Philadelphia. Recently, educational outcomes, graduation rates, and more have improved across SDP, and the CTO will play a key role in ensuring staff have the support they need to sustain this momentum and drive student success.

As reflected in the District's strategic plan, [Accelerate Philly](#), people are at the center of SDP's momentum and success. SDP, the largest school district in Pennsylvania, enrolls over 198,000 students and employs over 22,000 people. During the [2024-2025 academic year](#), SDP reduced student dropout rates, increased the percentage of third- and eighth-grade students who scored proficient or advanced in math and reading, and increased the four-year graduation rate. Additionally, SDP recorded the second-highest growth in pandemic recovery in eighth-grade math, outpacing students nationwide and most large urban districts.

Reporting to the Superintendent, the Chief Talent Officer will address areas of underperformance and elevate the work across the entire unit, ensuring all employees across the District have sustained opportunities for professional growth, development, and success. The CTO will drive meaningful transformation of HR policies and programs, guide organizational structure to ensure efficient workflows, and manage a coordinated, high-functioning talent organization. They will also establish a culture that celebrates innovation and expects best-in-class delivery of essential services, including across payroll, benefits, staffing, hiring, and data reporting.

The successful candidate will bring an entrepreneurial, action-oriented mindset and experience leading complex teams and systems through periods of growth. They will possess strong HR technical expertise, experience with large and diverse workforces, and the ability to work effectively in a unionized environment. Success will be reflected in a high-performing, efficient talent function, where all teams understand and work in service of a shared vision of excellence. The office will be a reliable partner for teams across the District and will deliver consistent, user-friendly HR services and transactions, including accurate data and reporting.

The School District of Philadelphia has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

## KEY OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS FOR THE CHIEF TALENT OFFICER

As a member of the Superintendent's leadership team, the CTO will oversee the Office of Talent's functions and supervise five direct reports (Deputy Chief of Talent Management and Recruitment, Deputy Chief of Employee Services and Operations, Deputy Chief of Employee and Labor Relations, Executive Director of Educator Effectiveness and Evaluations, and the Director of Strategic Projects). The successful candidate will drive the transformational change needed to update the Talent office's policies and procedures to respond to and meet the needs of constituents across the District. The CTO will communicate clearly and build strong, productive relationships across teams and with union partners. They will foster a cohesive, coordinated, and people-centered culture that supports effective collaboration and consistent operations across the District.

The CTO plans, organizes, and oversees the work of a comprehensive human resources program through the following objectives and functions:

### **Provide strategic, forward-looking leadership to strengthen and advance operations in support of the District's goals and academic excellence**

The Chief Talent Officer will set and execute a clear and ambitious vision for the Office of Talent by developing, communicating, and implementing its priorities and objectives, while overseeing all administrative and mission-critical functions within the division. In close partnership with the Chief Learning Officer and the academic office, the CTO will play a central role in strengthening the district's academic excellence by building and sustaining an exceptional teaching core and leadership pipeline. The CTO will drive improvement across the division by leading the development and execution of a strategic plan aligned with the District's broader mission and goals, and by making continuous, strategic investments in systems of adult learning, development, and supervision to improve classroom instruction and school leadership. This work will incorporate prior findings and recommendations from external partners to ensure coherence, rigor, and continuous improvement across talent and academic systems.

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**Direct the design and implementation of policies and programs that support the Office of Talent's business objectives**

The Office of Talent interacts with offices across SDP, and its work is key to the success of employees and students. The next CTO must understand the District's strategic and tactical objectives and the associated Office of Talent implications to successfully identify and resolve complex problems impacting the office and/or the District. The CTO will develop proposals to resolve key operational challenges and lead the design and implementation of an organizational planning and development process. The successful CTO will take time to understand the current process challenges within the office and work with the team to update or create processes and policies that streamline workflows and drive success.

**Elevate and champion the operations of a comprehensive human resources office**

The CTO will support the senior management team that oversees the functional areas of the Office of Talent and will encourage and promote collaboration across all functional areas, as well as with internal and external partners. The CTO will work with their team to ensure clarity and excellence in all policies and practices. Additionally, the CTO will ensure that the Office of Talent leadership teams work effectively and that all necessary resources are available and accessible. The CTO, as a member of the District's Leadership Team, will disseminate information related to the impact of short- and long-range strategic plans both up and down. The CTO will also keep abreast of and ensure that all Office of Talent activities and programs comply with legal and contractual requirements, in addition to overseeing and managing all divisional fiscal resources

**Promote and communicate clearly about the Office of Talent's services and programs**

The Office of Talent offers various programs and support that may not be well-known. The CTO will promote strong public relations and effective marketing of the Office of Talent's services and programs by strengthening inter-divisional relationships and designing tactical plans to ensure the Office of Talent is viewed as a valued partner to the District's leadership. Additionally, the CTO will cultivate and maintain partnerships and alliances with external stakeholders. Finally, the CTO will develop reciprocal relationships with the regional HR community in areas such as training and development.

**ABOUT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA**

The School District of Philadelphia's history dates back to 1818, when the city established the first public schools in the country. The District grew rapidly, and by the 1850s, it had become one of the largest public school systems in the country. Today, SDP is the largest school district in the state of Pennsylvania. [SDP currently serves](#) a diverse enrollment of over 198,000 students from kindergarten through 12th grade in 330 District-operated schools. Students are supported by more than 22,200 employees.

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In 2023, SDP launched its current strategic plan, [Accelerate Philly](#), which focuses on five priority areas:

1. Improve safety and well-being (physical, social-emotional, and environmental)
2. Partner with families and the community
3. Accelerate academic achievement
4. Recruit and retain diverse and highly effective educators
5. Deliver efficient, high-quality, cost-effective operations

The District plans to undertake 62 strategic actions aligned to the focus areas between 2023 and 2028 to accelerate student achievement.

## ABOUT THE OFFICE OF TALENT

The Office of Talent oversees all teams responsible for the talent lifecycle for every District employee, in partnership with the Office of Academic Supports and other key District functions. The core functions of the office include Talent Management, Recruitment and Selection, Employee Services and Operations, Employee Effectiveness and Evaluations, Employee and Labor Relations, and Strategic Projects.

### Talent Management

- Supports Principals with all talent-related needs, as well as budget planning, development, and retention to align academic goals and talent strategy in support of Accelerate Philly.
- In partnership with the academic team, leads and oversees the recruitment, selection, placement, and management of district leaders, including principals, school leadership, and school-based substitute staff.

### Recruitment and Selection

- Plans and communicates the District's brand and value proposition, executes recruitment strategies and activities, screens candidates based on minimum qualifications, and guides selection processes for external and internal candidates.

### Employee Services and Operations

- Central point of contact and service for all SDP employees, and is a shared service center supporting every stage in the employee life cycle from onboarding through offboarding.
- The following teams fall under the umbrella of Employee Services and Operations: Onboarding, Employee Movements/Transfers, Classification and Compensation, Certification, Customer Service, Employee Records and Compliance, Benefits, Leaves Administration, Wellness, ADA Accommodations, Retirement, and Offboarding.

### **Employee Effectiveness and Evaluations**

- Sets standards for employee performance; develops, administers, and monitors evaluation systems; and provides support to principals and central office supervisors to promote accurate, meaningful evaluation of employee performance.

### **Employee and Labor Relations**

- Leads the District's labor relations activities; provides direction and guidance to ensure employees follow laws, regulations, and collective bargaining agreements; and investigates and resolves concerns from and regarding employees.
- Manages the reassignment room and employee investigations.

### **Strategic Projects**

- Leads special projects with operational or organizational impact, cross-departmental initiatives, activities, committees, and collaborative spaces.
- Coordinates the Office of Talent's leadership team
- Fulfills recurring and ad-hoc internal & external talent data requests.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The successful candidate will bring at least ten years of full-time, paid, professional operational management experience in a large, complex organization, of which at least five have been in human resources in an administrative capacity. The successful candidate will also have a master's degree from an accredited college or university. Finally, the successful candidate will possess many of the following:

### **Demonstrated knowledge of:**

- The principles, practices, and philosophy of human resources administration and management.
- Administrative and business management principles and practices.
- The principles and techniques of organizational planning, development, and analysis.
- The various functions commonly found in a human resources organization including employment, recruitment and selection, employee/labor relations, retirement, and compensation.
- The laws and regulations that apply to human resources.
- Budgeting and the associated record keeping.
- Supervisory methods and techniques.

### **Ability to:**

- Plan, direct, and coordinate the activities of multiple functional areas through subordinate administrators.
- Plan new or revise existing Office of Talent and Development programs in response to the changing needs and priorities of the District.
- Identify, develop, and support effective teachers and school leaders.

- Establish an effective communication system between the Office of Talent and the balance of the District.
- Evaluate and assess the effectiveness and efficiency of operations.
- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships.

## 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/school-district-philadelphia/chief-talent-officer>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Katie Rockman, Partner  
Tiffany Weber, Managing Associate  
Janette Martinez, Senior Associate  
Maria Connor, Managing Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

*The School District of Philadelphia provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, disability, pregnancy, marital status, gender identity, or genetic information.*

*Please refer to Board Policy 348 for further information regarding the District's commitment to Nondiscrimination in Employment Practices.*

*This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by SDP would supersede any conflicting information in this document.*