



Job Title: School Director

Location: IDEA School, 325 W 2nd Street, Tucson, AZ 85705

Job Type: Full-time, Exempt

Reports To: Board of Directors

About Us: The IDEA School is a non-profit K-5 independent school (private school) now in our 12th year of operations. We aim to foster an environment of creativity and emotional growth in which students grow to take ownership of their own learning. We serve about 40 students in three mixed-age classrooms, K-1, 2-3, and 4-5, with an emphasis on hands-on, project-based learning, small class sizes, social-emotional development, and community involvement. Our FY26 operating budget is \$630,000. We employ a Flex Tuition model, based on families' ability to pay. Half our student body qualifies for Free or Reduced Lunch and attends with *zero out-of-pocket tuition obligation*. We participate in the Arizona private school tuition tax-credit programs and the Arizona ESA program to be financially sustainable while maintaining Flex Tuition and full accessibility to all families, regardless of income. **We are seeking an experienced, compassionate, and visionary leader to serve as School Director, to guide the school into its next phase of growth and success.**

Mission: The IDEA School provides a child-centered education that nurtures competence, creativity, collaboration and compassion, through work that is meaningful to students and promotes lifelong learning.

Vision: IDEA School students grow to take charge of their learning and therefore their lives, both in and out of the classroom.

Core Values / Guiding Principles:

- 1) We cultivate a nurturing environment where students' present and future happiness are central to their growth. We foster a lifelong love of learning through a dynamic and engaging, creative academic foundation, grounded in children's intrinsic curiosity and desire to learn about the world.
- 2) By integrating social, emotional, and intellectual development, we guide each student to discover their unique interests and potential, to think critically, and to cultivate a deep sense of joy in learning.
- 3) We empower students to build meaningful connections, develop emotional resilience, be empathetic, and gain the confidence to navigate an ever-evolving world.
- 4) We place our students' well-being and growth at the center of all decision-making.
- 5) We do our work with integrity, honesty and openness; are not afraid to experiment; and are committed to collaboration and the idea that, *"People support the things they help create."*
- 6) Our "collaborators" (teachers) enjoy autonomy and creativity in their teaching practice, modeling the kind of learning and active problem-solving we are developing in our students.

7) We are accessible to, and inclusive of all families, regardless of income.

8) We value diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, and want each of our students to be able to see themselves reflected and valued in their school experience.

Job Overview:

The School Director will serve as the leader of the school, responsible for overseeing all aspects of the school's academic, student development, administrative, fundraising, and community programs. This includes fostering a positive school culture, supporting students' holistic development, managing staff and other resources, and engaging the families, staff, Board and broader community in a collaborative manner to support student learning and growth. The School Director is responsible for ensuring that the school operates in accordance with its mission, vision, and values, and will work closely with the collaborators (teachers), administrative and fundraising staff, the Board of Directors, and parents/families to create a safe, inspiring and effective learning environment for all students. **POSITION OPEN UNTIL FILLED.**

Key Responsibilities:

Collaborative Leadership & Vision:

- Provide strategic leadership for the school, aligning academic and social-emotional development goals with the school's mission, vision and values, and centering students in their learning process.
- Develop and maintain a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all students, families, and staff.
- Foster a culture of collaboration, creativity, and continuous improvement among faculty and staff, including implementing inclusive decision-making processes that center the needs of students and encourage broad input, diverse points of view, open communication and transparency.
- Lead the school's strategic planning efforts, in collaboration with all stakeholders and in alignment with our mission, vision and values.

Oversight of Teaching and Learning:

- Ensure we create student-centered learning experiences that reflect the diverse needs of all students while ensuring we maintain general alignment with the Arizona State Standards/ Common Core Standards for English/ Language Arts and Math for grades K-5.
- Support the collaborators in making curriculum and instruction decisions to enhance student learning, meet the needs of diverse learners, and support student well-being and growth.
- Ensure we meet the specific needs of each student with an IEP or 504 Plan, in close collaboration with the classroom collaborator, the family, and the student.

- Help the collaborators assess student learning and progress, including using diagnostic and formative assessments.
- Ensure we document student learning and progress, including through the provision of twice annual progress reports and parent-collaborator conferences.
- Ensure the maintenance of up-to-date student files to include annual Flex Tuition/financial aid information, vaccination and medical care information, twice annual progress reports, and any special learning or behavior plans, IEPs or 504 plans, incident reports, or other necessary documentation.

Staff Development, Management and Support:

- Recruit, hire, train, onboard, evaluate, and develop faculty and staff, ensuring that the school maintains a high-quality, passionate, and dedicated team.
- Work alongside collaborators to help them reflect on their teaching practice, set and revisit individualized professional goals, ensure accountability and achieve growth. Facilitate ongoing professional development, based both in their classrooms and as participants in professional learning communities.
- Supervise, support, and oversee the work of the school's administrative employees and contractors, ensuring the school stays on top of all HR, payroll, accounting, insurance, School Tuition Organization (STO) and ESA requirements, and other compliance requirements; maintains up-to-date written policies and procedures; and maintains clear communication with families, prospective families, donors, STOs, and other stakeholders.
- Promote a positive work environment and address any personnel issues in a timely, professional and effective manner.
- Encourage creativity and leadership from all levels of the organization, recognizing and cultivating individual strengths and contributions.
- Maintain an up-to-date Staff Handbook, to be reviewed with the staff annually.
- Ensure the maintenance of complete staff files, including all hiring paperwork, employment contracts, annual proof of review of the Staff Handbook, professional development plans or goals, annual evaluations, and documentation of promotions, disciplinary actions, etc.

Student & Family Engagement:

- Develop strong, positive relationships with students, parents and guardians, built on open lines of communication, accessibility and mutual respect.
- Ensure that the school communicates regularly with families about student progress, student needs, school activities, parent engagement opportunities, and community-building initiatives, and encourage active family engagement and communication.
- Manage student behavior and discipline in a fair and consistent manner, ensuring a focus on restorative justice, respect, accountability, and community cohesion.

- Facilitate parent engagement in school governance and support, including participation in school and community events, service on the Board of Directors, fundraising, and advising the School Director as needed.

Budget & Resource Management:

- Working with the Board's Finance Committee, oversee the school's budget and ensure effective use of resources, prioritizing the needs of today's students while maintaining efficiency and building operating reserves for long-term sustainability.
- Work with the Board of Directors and administrative and development staff to secure and expand funding sources, including STO and ESA funding, as well as direct charitable giving, donor advised funds, and grants, to ensure the long-term financial health of the school.
- Ensure that the school's facilities and other assets are safe, well-maintained, and conducive to learning.
- Support community partnerships to leverage resources in service of the school's mission.
- Oversee the annual Flex Tuition/financial aid process, with the support of the administrative staff, to keep the policy up-to-date and ensure that all families who are income-eligible apply annually for the STO "low-income corporate" scholarship funding for which they are eligible.

Community Relations & Advancement:

- Build relationships with the local community and external organizations to enhance the school's visibility and reputation; broaden its base of support; increase opportunities for collaboration; and build its pipeline of future kindergarten and early elementary families.
- Represent the school at community events, forums, meetings, educational conferences, and within local educational and civic networks, enhancing visibility and long-term sustainability.
- Lead fundraising efforts, with the support of a development professional, including donor cultivation and engagement, reporting, tax credit giving, and other development initiatives.

Qualifications:

- Master's degree in education, nonprofit leadership, or a related field (preferred).
- Minimum of 4 years of experience in school or nonprofit leadership, with a focus on team development and facilitation, strategic planning, and resource management.
- Strong understanding of K-5 educational practices, child development, literacy development, academic assessment and/or social-emotional learning.
- Proven track record of building a positive organizational culture and fostering collaboration.
- Experience in budget management, project management, and fundraising.
- Exceptional communication skills and the ability to engage with a diverse range of stakeholders (students, families, prospective families, staff, and community members).

- Passion for working in a small, non-profit, alternative educational environment and a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
 - Ability to work flexibly and manage multiple tasks in a dynamic, fast-paced environment.
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Personal Attributes:

- Strong leadership, interpersonal skills, and decision-making skills.
 - Compassionate, empathetic, open-minded, kind, and committed to ethical leadership.
 - Strong organizational skills with the ability to prioritize and manage competing demands.
 - Visionary and innovative thinker with a commitment to creativity & continuous improvement.
 - The ability to inspire and motivate others to achieve a shared vision and goals, and to hold all team members accountable.
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Compensation and Benefits:

- Salary Range: \$60,000 to \$76,000 depending on experience
 - Strong support from a highly engaged, experienced Board of Directors and Staff
 - Paid school holidays totaling 8 weeks (320 hours) per academic year (during Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer breaks)
 - Additional paid PTO during the school year totaling 80 hours (10 days) per year
 - Paid Sick Leave totaling 40 hours per year
 - Health and Vision insurance benefits
 - SIMPLE IRA Retirement Plan, with 3.0% School Match
 - Worker's Comp and Basic Life Insurance (employee only)
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How to Apply:

Interested candidates should submit a resume, a cover letter describing their qualifications and vision for the role, and three professional references, to **Board President David Higuera**, david@explorebuildlearn.org.

Applications accepted on an ongoing basis; position open until filled. No social media inquiries please. Questions? Call Administrative Director Gaby Vidal at (520) 589-4933. IDEA School is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applicants from diverse backgrounds to apply.

We look forward to finding a passionate and dedicated leader who will continue to inspire and nurture our students and community while guiding our school into its next chapter!