



## Executive Director Location: Framingham, MA

Founded in 2003, the [Christa McAuliffe Charter School \(McAuliffe\)](#), located in Framingham, Massachusetts, is a regional public charter school serving middle school students in grades 6 through 8, predominately from the communities of Framingham, Natick, Ashland, Holliston, Sudbury, Southborough, Hopkinton and Marlborough.

### Overview of the Organization and Programs

McAuliffe is a credentialed EL Education school with a hands-on curriculum that focuses on three dimensions of student achievement: 1) mastery of knowledge and skills; 2) culture and character; and 3) high-quality work. At McAuliffe, students learn how to take ownership of their learning, guided by creative, passionate adults who have more autonomy and opportunities for collaboration than in a traditional middle school environment. [EL Education](#) (formerly Expeditionary Learning) is a national school transformation organization operating in 165 schools in 30 states and reaching over 45,000 students. EL partners with schools to improve student achievement through an inquiry and project-based approach.

Components of the McAuliffe's school design and practices include:

- *Habits of Work and Learning (HOWLs)* – HOWLs are skills that students need to be academically successful: perseverance, responsibility, collaboration, kindness and inquiry. These habits are modeled, taught and assessed separately from other types of achievement targets, with principles of standards-based learning and grading utilized. HOWLs are deeply entwined with core academic learning.
- *Crew* – Crew is an advisory system central to the McAuliffe culture. At the start of each grade, students are assigned to a crew of approximately twelve students who get to know one another and their crew leader through team-building activities and daily check-ins. Crew leaders facilitate goal setting, service projects and conversations about topics that include stress, peer pressure, bullying and high school transition.
- *Learning Expeditions* – Each grade level of core teachers engages students in at least two learning expeditions per year and in other units or case studies that incorporate some elements of expeditions. During expeditions students build their background knowledge, ask questions, conduct research and develop expertise on topics in collaborative pairs or small groups.
- *Portfolios & Passages* – During Crew, each McAuliffe student organizes a portfolio, a collection of work showing what a student has been thinking about, working on and learning. The purpose of the portfolio is to provide an ongoing record of 1) how a student's

thinking about significant issues and questions has grown; 2) how a student's range of knowledge and skills has developed; and 3) effort made to achieve worthwhile goals, including reflection on and revision of work. Portfolios are used to prepare for Student Led Conferences and are central to Passages, when eighth graders make the case that they are ready to move to high school by tracing their growth in a HOWL and showing work in evidence of that growth.

- *Student Led Conferences (SLCs)* – Twice annually, students and families participate in personalized meetings between a student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and the crew leader, during which the student facilitates and reflects on areas of strength and challenge in each class. Additionally, a student reflects on the development of their HOWLs and identifies both personal and academic goals to work on during subsequent trimesters.
- *Culminating Events* – Learning expeditions conclude with a culminating event during which students showcase their learning to an authentic audience. Culminating events raise the bar for high quality work since students know they will share their work with prominent audience members and that their work will ultimately be published on the McAuliffe website. As such, students are motivated to engage in revision practices. During these public speaking opportunities, students learn specific presentation skills, practice presenting and receive feedback from teachers and peers.

With an enrollment of about 400 students, McAuliffe's operating budget is \$6.6 million, and the school employs about 70 staff members. McAuliffe is overseen by a Board of Trustees currently comprised of seven members—parents, business leaders, community members and alumni of the school. In addition, McAuliffe maintains an affiliated Foundation, a 501c(3) organization which raises funds and holds long-term assets for the school.

### **Executive Transition**

Having been with McAuliffe since 2004 and served as its very passionate and committed leader since 2009, the current executive director will step down from her role in June 2020 for personal reasons. A nine-member search committee, comprised of five board members, three staff members and one parent, has been formed to lead the search.

### **Strategic Opportunities and Challenges**

McAuliffe is at an important juncture as it approaches its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and transitions from its long-serving leader. High priorities for the executive director include:

- Managing effectively and efficiently the daily operations of an EL, standalone charter public middle school with a \$6.6 million budget, a school which educates approximately 400 sixth to eighth grade students and employs more than 70 staff members.

- Strategically balancing the accountability requirements of a charter public school with the EL model, so the school is acknowledged as academically strong by traditional measures while remaining true to EL principles and practices.
- Sustaining a school culture that is accepting, inclusive, interpersonal and positive, where students are well-known and supported by a corps of committed teachers, and where issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism are embraced and championed.
- Examining and implementing improvements to McAuliffe’s organizational structure to provide clarity of roles, support for teachers and the entire school community, consistent accountability and long-term financial sustainability, while recognizing and respecting existing practices and prior choices made by highly committed board members, administrators and staff.
- Developing and implementing a talent management strategy to recruit, support and retain the highest quality teachers in a tight labor market and the inherent challenges standalone charter schools face when competing with much larger and better resourced school districts.
- Building on McAuliffe’s already strong culture, strengthening connections, teamwork and communication between administrators and teachers, so each member of the school community feels empowered to contribute independently and collectively to the success of the school and its students.
- Vigorously maintaining McAuliffe’s public presence in its sending districts, the Commonwealth, the charter community and with funders to maintain a prominent and positive profile for the school to allow McAuliffe to sustain enrollment and grow and diversify non-tuition revenue.
- Working collaboratively with the Board of Trustees to grow its membership and impact it has on the school.

### **Desired Credentials**

- A minimum of three years senior leadership experience, ideally at a school or education-related nonprofit or organization
- Experience with, training in and/or strong commitment to EL education
- Prior teaching experience
- Bachelor’s degree in education or a related field required; Master’s degree preferred

### **Skills and Experience**

#### ***Passionate and Strategic Educator Committed to Expeditionary Learning***

The executive director must be an experienced and passionate education leader with training or exposure to Expeditionary Learning, inquiry and project-based learning and/or the development of middle school-aged students. The leader must be able to collaboratively create and articulate a strategic vision and plan for the school, and confidently lead a team of professionals to consider and implement educational best practices to positively impact the development and achievement of an increasingly diverse student population with multiple learning styles and needs.

### ***Effective and Flexible Administrator***

The executive director will have experience working in a leadership role in a school, with the ability to balance the demands and accountability of a charter public school with EL principles and practices. As the leader of a standalone charter school, the executive director must be a true multitasker, able to oversee the educational program, school finances, external relations, charter regulations and accountability, governance and facilities. In addition, the leader must be adept at managing human resources and optimizing staffing patterns to create an organizational structure that best supports teachers to maximize student growth and achievement.

### ***Empowering Teambuilder***

The executive director must inspire, develop and empower others, while generating trust and respect across the entire organization. The leader will need to commit to building consensus, delegating authority and valuing the contributions of the entire school community, while also holding all accountable to high standards. In addition, the school leader must be committed to investing the time, resources, and leadership needed to develop and improve individual and collective practice, so the school sustains and retains high-quality teachers, administrators and support staff.

### ***Culture Builder and Champion***

The executive director will join a school with a very positive culture, one that is accepting, inclusive and student-centered, a place where individuality is embraced and celebrated, and where students have voice and agency. In addition, at McAuliffe students and teachers form strong bonds and relationships; students are truly “known” by teachers and are able to have “real” conversations. The leader must be aligned with and a champion of these values and must commit to growing McAuliffe’s ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism.

### ***Strong Networker with Public Presence***

The school’s leader must have a strong interest and skill in defining and cultivating the external presence for McAuliffe, with the ability to network and engage with community, business and district leaders, parents from McAuliffe’s sending districts and the state’s charter association. The executive director must be an eager public face for the school, proactively and opportunistically pursuing opportunities, while also mobilizing others (especially members of the board of trustees and the foundation board) to create and deliver on a marketing program to sustain full enrollment and a fundraising program to generate consistent resources to supplement public funding.

### ***Consummate Communicator***

The executive director must be an engaging, motivating and consistent spokesperson with excellent communication skills, possessing the ability to share McAuliffe’s vision and value to diverse audiences. Whether communicating with parents, students, staff, board members, external partners, donors or the public, the leader must listen carefully, respect and consider the

opinions of others, speak persuasively and passionately, anticipate concerns and questions and proactively respond to inquiries in a very timely manner. The ability to develop and execute on a consistent and effective communication plan that engages the entire school community is a highly desired trait.

### **Candidate Guidelines**

This search is being conducted by John Tarvin of Claremont Consulting. Interested candidates should submit materials to: [jobs@claremontconsulting.org](mailto:jobs@claremontconsulting.org). Please include a resume and a cover letter with salary requirements, where you learned of the position and a description of how your qualifications and experience match McAuliffe's needs. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled with preference given to those candidates who apply by February 21, 2020.

Salary is commensurate with experience, within the framework of the organization's annual operating budget.

*McAuliffe is an Equal Opportunity Employer and actively seeks a diverse pool of candidates.*