

Organization: Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Schools
Title: Chief Academic Officer
Reports to: Chief Executive Officer
Location: Memphis, TN
Application Deadline: February 29, 2024

Background

Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Schools (Freedom Prep) is a growing network of five charter schools in Memphis, TN, currently expanding to Birmingham, AL in the fall of 2024 and Montgomery, AL the following school year. Freedom Prep's mission is to prepare all students in grades K-12 to excel in college and in life. Freedom Preparatory Academy opened in August of 2009 with a class of 96 6th graders. The network now serves over 2000 students in grades PreK-12. Freedom Prep students have exceeded local and state averages in math and local averages in English language arts on the state exam.

There are three core beliefs that drive Freedom Prep's mission: every child deserves the right to a high-quality public education, a foundation in character development is essential, and direct exposure to an array of opportunities and experiences provides each child with the self-confidence and social knowledge to compete globally. Freedom Prep schools accomplish their mission by providing a highly structured, academically rigorous environment where students master the core subjects, develop advanced academic skills, and demonstrate the school's core values of: Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Excellence, and Community.

You can read more about Freedom Prep [here](#).

Opportunity

Freedom Prep is seeking a seasoned, systems-minded, results-driven instructional leader to serve as the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and set the vision and direction for academics in support of the organization's mission. The CAO is responsible for overseeing the academic performance, instructional leadership, and school culture across the growing Freedom Prep network of schools. The CAO will supervise and support Freedom Prep's school leaders and members of the network academic team. The CAO will also ensure consistency of all academic functions across the network and oversee professional development for instructional leaders and teachers.

The CAO will serve as a key member of Freedom Prep's Leadership Team and report directly to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Academic Officer will collaborate closely with the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief of Staff, Chief of External Affairs, and Chief People Officer to ensure that Freedom Prep's schools meet the highest standards of excellence and equity. The CAO's primary focus is to deliver exceptional academic results, eliminate disparities, and foster a culture of success for all students.

In the first year, the new CAO will be expected to:

- Assess Freedom Prep’s academic systems and create, modify, and scale systems and structures to support the current organization and expected growth of the network;
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Academic Team members and clearly define their partnership with schools and school leaders;
- Develop a strong instructional vision, plan, and corresponding strategies for the next 3-5 years;
- Coach, develop, mentor, and retain a high-performing team of school leaders.

This role represents an exciting opportunity to be the architect of critical academic systems that will carry forward the vision for a growing, equitable, and high performing charter school network. The ideal candidate is a current or former successful school leader and/or has experience managing charter networks and/or districts to procure, refine, adopt, and progress monitor curriculum, instruction, and academic systems. Strong CAO candidates have a track record of leading teams to improve student outcomes within a high-performing charter network or school district that serves a similar student population as Freedom Prep and are personally aligned with the organization’s mission and vision.

Responsibilities:

Academic Leadership

- Provide visionary academic leadership, ensure vision and mission alignment to Freedom Prep’s school leaders and the network academic team;
- Collaborate with the CEO to set and drive the academic vision for all Freedom Prep schools;
- Implement research-proven, standards-based instructional practices and curriculum;
- Support school leaders in implementing effective instructional cycles and data-driven decision-making;
- Collaborate with the CEO on region-wide and individual professional development for Heads of Schools and direct reports.

Network Leadership

- Set the vision for network-wide academic achievement and build out a network academic team to operationalize this vision and drive school academic growth and success;
- Lead the development and selection of high-quality curricular materials and aligned assessments across academic disciplines and grade levels that are designed to serve students at all levels and abilities in partnership with the academic team, regional teams, and schools;
- Oversee program design, implementation, and achievement of all specialized learning groups, including students with IEPs, emergent bilingual and multilingual students;
- In partnership with the Head of Schools, oversee the support and development of teachers and school academic leaders to implement curriculum in a highly effective way, including professional development for teachers in pedagogy and their specific content areas;
- Use data effectively to drive instructional practice and improve and adjust academic strategy and programs.

School Management and Performance

- Oversee the academic and cultural performance of all Freedom Prep schools;
- Coach and manage a team of Heads of Schools to ensure they consistently deliver a rigorous, supportive academic environment;
- Build trust-based relationships across organizational layers to achieve goals and navigate challenges;

- Foster collaboration among school leaders to ensure network-wide alignment;
- Support new incoming school leaders and founding school leaders on school design, planning, and implementation.

School Culture and Equity

- Ensure that each school maintains a positive, engaging culture of excellence and college-focus;
- Champion equity and work to eliminate racial disparities in school performance;
- Monitor the implementation of behavioral consequences to align with the network's mission and vision.

Compliance and Special Needs Support

- Ensure compliance with city, state, and federal regulations related to Individualized Education Plans and English Language Learners;
- Work with Heads of Schools, families, and the CEO to manage risks and crises related to student safety;
- Innovate and partner with the operations team to improve academic data systems and curriculum.

Talent Development and Professional Development

- Coach, develop, and manage school leaders and the network academic team;
- Design and deliver ongoing professional development for school leaders and school culture teams;
- Lead talent development structures to support ongoing leadership and coaching.

Qualifications

Experience

- A minimum of ten years of professional experience and a minimum of five years as a successful principal, with at least two years supervising school leaders with strong results or at least three to five years of experience managing charter networks and/or districts to procure, refine, adopt, and progress monitor all aspects of curriculum, instruction, and academic systems;
- Experience teaching and leading at a high performing charter or district elementary, middle, or high school in an underserved/low-income community with a similar student population to the communities Freedom Prep serves;
- A proven track record of improving student achievement in a challenging context using data to drive student achievement results;
- Proven experience coaching senior leaders and school leaders in an educational setting;
- Extensive experience in the design, integration, implementation and management of a school including knowledge of curriculum, instructional practices, assessments, pedagogy, school management, and leadership development;
- Demonstrated success fostering a strong student and adult culture across a school or network of schools.

Skills

- Demonstration of cultural competence with a commitment to equitable practices and systems;
- Reflective, analytical leader who makes data-based decisions;
- Relationship builder who effectively interacts with a variety of stakeholders including students, parents, teachers, principals, and community leaders;

- Ability to set strategic vision and direction and lead a team to execute on ambitious goals;
- Exceptional coach who can identify, develop, and retain outstanding talent;
- Strong project manager and multi-tasker who can work effectively, prioritize, and adapt in a fast-paced, high accountability, entrepreneurial environment;
- Ability to give and receive feedback and thrive in a feedback-rich organizational culture focused on continuous improvement;
- Outstanding organizational skills and attention to detail;
- Strong written and oral communication skills;
- Proactive problem solver;
- Excellent computer skills, including Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

Mindset

- Commitment and unwavering belief in Freedom Prep’s mission and vision;
- Strong growth mindset and self-awareness;
- Ability to maintain a calm, professional demeanor in the face of competing demands and external pressures;
- Personal qualities of maturity, humility, self-reflection, and a strong work ethic;
- Intellectually curious and willing to learn and grow alongside others.

Education

- Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited four-year institution;
- A Master’s degree in education or a related field, or comparable management-level experience preferred.

Commitment to Diversity: Freedom Preparatory Academy is actively seeking to build a diverse and experienced team of educators. Freedom Prep does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, handicap, age, religion, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin. Freedom prep is an equal opportunity employer.

Compensation Range: \$150,000 to \$170,000 annually with a performance-based bonus structure of up to 10% based on progress to goals. A relocation stipend is available for qualifying candidates.

To apply, please send your resume to jobs@k12searchgroup.com with the subject line of “Freedom Prep CAO” no later than February 29, 2023.