



Position Statement
Interim Executive Director
Waterside School

Stamford, Connecticut
Start Date: July 1, 2023

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Waterside School is a magical place with an amazing history. With 150 students in grades JK-5, the school is coeducational with 100% of the students receiving financial aid. The bedrock and fundamental beliefs of the school are that the true measure of children is not to be found in what they are given but rather in what they have worked to overcome; talent, hard work and character should ultimately determine every child's destiny; and the American dream is alive and well, manifest every day in the spirit and function of the extended Waterside community. The school is currently seeking an Interim Executive Director to serve for two years. The Interim Executive Director will be primarily external-focused yet have ultimate responsibility for all the operations of the school, overseeing and working closely with a primarily internal-focused Head of School.

Located in a beautiful new building in Stamford, Connecticut, close to Long Island Sound, Waterside School emerged from the imagination and planning of Konrad "Chip" Kruger, former Co-Head of Greenwich Capital. Founded in 2001, the first decade for the school was characterized by stubborn struggle. With the completion of a \$24MM capital campaign, the school moved into its current facility in 2011. Accredited initially in 2008 by the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools, the school was glowingly reaccredited in 2018. Waterside today remains grounded in its founding mission to attract and inspire students of academic promise and families deeply



invested in their children's success, and to instill in its students a belief in their own worth, cultivate in each a commitment to excellence, and ensure the fullest development of every child's character. Waterside has engendered deep support and respect from Stamford and surrounding communities. The future of the school is bright and there is determination to make the third decade of the school mirror the inspirational trajectory of its first 20 years.

Financially healthy, the school now has the security of an endowment of close to \$50MM. The annual fund is robust, delivering \$4.5MM to underpin the operating budget of just over \$5MM. Only 7% of the operating budget comes from tuition. In 2020 Waterside acquired a vacant lot (.6 acres) immediately adjacent to the existing campus, providing opportunity and options for future planning and growth.

Waterside School graduates go on to attend local independent schools. The list of placements is highly impressive, and almost all graduates receive full financial aid packages. Remarkably, 92% of Waterside students read at or above grade level in grades 4 and 5, and 100% are proficient in mathematics. Since 2011, all Waterside graduates have graduated from high school, and over 95% of Waterside graduates have gone on to college. Most significantly, Waterside students go on to positions of influence, leadership and mentorship in their communities and places of employment – the positive ripple effect of a Waterside graduate is profound.

To learn more about the unique and inspiring program, philosophy, staff, and curriculum of Waterside School, please explore the school website at:

<https://www.watersideschool.org/>



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Interim Executive Director at Waterside School should be prepared to work closely with a skilled and dedicated team of educators, engaged and caring parents, and devoted trustees to fulfill the school's mission and productively bridge the two-year period between the tenures of permanent Executive Directors, from July of 2023 through June of 2025. While much of this role is external-facing, the Interim Executive Director will also have responsibility to oversee and mentor the Head of School in carrying out his primarily internal-facing responsibilities. The major challenges and opportunities for leadership for the Interim Executive Director include, but are not limited to the following:

- After a founding epoch over the last two decades that resulted in the realization of many of the dreams held by those who conceived of and built the school, including the construction of a beautiful school building; the fostering of a remarkable and highly motivating school culture; and the establishment of stable finances, Waterside School seeks to articulate a bold strategic vision for the future. This will include the assertion of Waterside's ambition to be a national leader in equitable education, provision of remarkable opportunity, and high achievement for children from more challenged backgrounds.
- While Waterside functions well and children are wonderfully served by dedicated staff and faculty, guided by incredibly generous and dedicated governance, there is nevertheless a need to study and improve the systems and operations of the school, from the level of the work of the school staff up to the board of trustees, with an eye to future effectiveness and sustainability.



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- There are many exceptionally bright and talented administrators, teachers, and teacher-leaders employed at the school who hunger for both active mentorship and inspired leadership. There is a need to bring that to the community and to make Waterside a more productive hub of collaborative energy in support of the mission and future advancement of the school.
- Waterside has a unique and potent financial structure, one that makes attendance possible for every child regardless of need. There is an opportunity for the school, as part of its strategic planning, to think through the future relationship between annual giving, endowment, and other sources of revenue. Fundraising will remain a critical component of this planning and the future of the school; the cultivation and stewardship of both current and new donors will be central to the role of the Interim Executive Director.
- The historical mission and philosophy of the school are essential to Waterside's identity and function. Yet there is a need to adapt those ethics and imperatives to the current and future circumstances of the school, and to use them more effectively to inspire the extended school community, as well as those outside the school to invest philanthropic energy and resources.
- Waterside owns a large empty lot immediately adjacent to the existing campus that will be critical to the strategic future of the school. Thought must be invested into planning for the future of that space.
- Serve as a resource, collaborating with consultants, the search committee, and trustees, in understanding the needs of the school and in the search for a permanent Executive Director to start in July of 2025.



KEY QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES

The successful candidate to be the Interim Executive Director of Waterside School will be a mission and values-driven leader who will demonstrate most, if not all, of the following skills, qualities, characteristics, and experiences:

- Demonstrated success as a visionary and inspirational educator.
- Exceptional administrative, organizational and time management skills.
- Comfort with serving, and notable success, as a manager of highly motivated and deeply engaged people in complex schools and communities.
- Financial acumen and experience.
- Fundraising acumen and experience.
- A firm and fair leader who can understand and empathize with students, parents, teachers, staff, and administrators, holding them in partnership, while also setting and upholding high, clear, and appropriate expectations and boundaries.
- Significant training and experience with building and managing diverse, equitable and inclusive communities, along with the ability to convey respect, empathy and understanding across all constituencies.
- Talent for identifying, hiring, retaining, mentoring, and inspiring outstanding teachers, staff, and administrators, as well as for supervising them and encouraging their professional growth.
- Strength as a community and relationship builder.
- Confident, courageous, self-possessed, and non-defensive character.
- Superb communication skills, including the ability to balance engaged listening with clear, timely and appropriate oral and written communication, and with notable public speaking ability.
- A compassionate nature with high emotional intelligence and genuine collaborative skill, accompanied by sophisticated instincts regarding when to make clear decisions.
- Ability to serve as a visible, energetic, active, and engaged leader.
- Prodigious energy and a strong work ethic.
- Personal integrity and inspirational spirit, along with warmth, a sense of humor, and the ability to spark both high achievement and joy in others.



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TO APPLY

Waterside School retained the firm Resource Group 175 to support its search for an Interim Executive Director to serve from July of 2023 through June of 2025. If you wish to apply, please do so at:

<https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>.

Application includes:

- Letter of interest (cover letter)
- Resume or CV
- A writing sample that is indicative of your personal, leadership and/or educational philosophy
- Names of four current references and their contact information

The **deadline** for receipt of full application materials is **Monday, January 23**.

For questions or further information, please contact:

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