



Director of School Operations

FORWARD Girls Leadership Academy

Cleveland, Ohio

Reports to: Head of School (CEO/Principal)

Position Summary

The Director of School Operations (DSO) is a senior leadership role responsible for ensuring the smooth, compliant, and efficient daily operations of FORWARD Girls Leadership Academy. The DSO serves as the operational backbone of the school, enabling instructional leaders and educators to focus on teaching and learning while ensuring that systems, processes, and resources are aligned to support student success.

In alignment with FORWARD's mission to empower young women through leadership, innovation, and academic excellence, the Director of School Operations builds and manages high-quality operational systems across finance, human resources, facilities, enrollment, compliance, and school operations. This role requires a proactive, detail-oriented, and mission-driven leader who thrives in a start-up environment and is deeply committed to equity, accountability, and organizational excellence.

Key Responsibilities

Operational Leadership & Strategy

- Serve as a core member of the school leadership team, partnering closely with the Founder & Head of School to operationalize FORWARD's vision, strategic plan, and growth trajectory.
- Design, implement, and continuously improve operational systems that support a high-performing, student-centered school environment.
- Develop annual operational goals, timelines, and performance indicators aligned to board priorities and authorizer expectations.

Finance & Budget Management

- Oversee day-to-day financial operations, including budgeting, forecasting, purchasing, accounts payable/receivable, and cash-flow monitoring.
- Collaborate with external fiscal agents, accountants, and auditors to ensure accurate reporting and compliance with all federal, state, and local requirements.
- Prepare financial reports for the Founder & Head of School and Board of Directors, supporting transparent and data-informed decision-making.
- Ensure strong internal controls and responsible stewardship of public and philanthropic funds.

Human Resources & Talent Operations

- Manage operational aspects of human resources, including onboarding, payroll coordination, benefits administration, personnel records, and compliance with employment laws.
- Support recruitment, hiring, and retention processes in collaboration with school leadership.
- Maintain systems for staff attendance, timekeeping, evaluations (as applicable), and professional compliance requirements.

Facilities, Safety & School Operations

- Oversee facilities management, including maintenance, vendor contracts, cleanliness, safety protocols, and space optimization.
- Ensure the school meets all health, safety, and emergency preparedness requirements.
- Lead the development and implementation of operational policies and procedures that promote a safe, welcoming, and efficient school environment.

Enrollment, Compliance & Data Systems

- Manage enrollment operations, including application systems, lotteries (if applicable), registration, student records, and compliance reporting.
- Ensure accurate submission of data to state and local agencies, including attendance, enrollment, and operational reports.
- Maintain compliance with charter authorizer requirements, Ohio Department of Education and Workforce regulations, and applicable federal laws.

Vendor & Partnership Management

- Manage relationships with operational vendors and service providers (e.g., transportation, food service, technology, facilities, HR, finance).
- Negotiate contracts and monitor performance to ensure quality, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with school needs.

Qualifications

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in business administration, education, public administration, or a related field.
- Minimum of 5 years of experience in school operations, nonprofit operations, charter school management, or a comparable organizational setting. Demonstrated experience managing budgets, systems, and compliance in a complex, regulated environment.
- Strong organizational, analytical, and project-management skills.
- Commitment to equity, inclusion, and the mission of serving historically underserved students and communities.

Preferred Qualifications

- Master's degree in educational leadership, business administration, public administration, or a related field.
- Experience working in a charter school or start-up educational environment.
- Familiarity with Ohio education policy, charter school compliance, and public school finance.
- Experience supporting enrollment growth and operational scaling.

Core Competencies

- Systems-thinking and operational excellence
- Financial acumen and fiscal responsibility
- Attention to detail with the ability to manage multiple priorities
- Strong communication and collaboration skills
- Solutions-oriented mindset in a fast-paced, evolving environment
- Deep belief in the potential and leadership of young women

Why Join FORWARD

Joining FORWARD Girls Leadership Academy offers the opportunity to help build a transformative, mission-driven school from the ground up. The Director of School Operations will play a critical role in shaping the systems, culture, and sustainability of a school designed to change life trajectories for girls and strengthen the broader Cleveland community.