



**Position Description**  
**Director, System Planning and Design**  
**August 24, 2018**

**SCHOOLSMARTKC BACKGROUND**

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SchoolSmartKC (SSKC) is a charitable, non-profit organization that seeks to dramatically improve the performance of schools in the Kansas City Public School system. With significant funding from key investors including the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Hall Family Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation, SSKC aims to close the performance gap between students in our local District and Charter schools and their higher performing peers across the state of Missouri and the nation. Our efforts are designed to build common purpose within our local community, including parents and families, district and charter schools, resource providers and others to ensure young people reach their incredible potential. Working together, we seek a school system that in ten years will have more than double the current percentage schools showing performance on par with the state on key educational measures.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

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To support our goal of eliminating the achievement gap, SSKC seeks to build strong partnerships across our school system that help schools more effectively work toward common aims and benefit from greater operational and programmatic efficiencies. While our school system and families benefit from a wide array of school models and approaches, too frequently schools are duplicating efforts in areas where they could derive substantial cost and time benefit through greater coordination. Areas including transportation, food service, enrollment, special education, alternative schooling and others appear ripe for collaboration, and SSKC seeks to build cooperation in these areas through new mechanisms that allow for joint design, purchasing and oversight of programs and services by schools.

Working closely with SSKC's team, the Director of System Planning and Design will play a critical leadership role in defining focus areas of these partnerships and the development of highly effective collaborative mechanisms that meet the needs of local District and Charter schools. At the outset, through needs assessments and highly participatory design efforts with local schools and administrators, the Director will identify partnership areas that can gather the support of school leaders, families, students, supporters, governing bodies and regulators. As such areas are defined, the Director will then lead the development and testing of operational models for such partnerships and cultivate relationships with key actors to ensure these partnerships come to fruition. A key metric for success will be the development of collaborative mechanisms that both fortify the performance of quality schools in our school system as well as further accelerate the improvement of schools that over time can meet SSKC quality metrics.

***Key Areas of Focus:***

- Build strong relationships with all SSKC team members and critical partners, including schools, educational support organizations, social service organizations, families, faith communities and others that are foundational to the success of this work.
- Work closely with SSKC's CEO and team to define prospective areas of focus for partnership dialogues with local schools and the metrics of success that ultimately ensure new partnerships advance SSKC's quality goals.
- Lead user-centered design dialogues with District and Charter schools, associated administrative units and current school partners to understand common areas of need, potential approaches and incentives to spur collaboration.
- Define scopes of work with external contractors to undertake research to better define needs and make the case for cooperation amongst schools and ecosystem partners.
- Develop feasibility assessments and operational and cost models related to prospective partnerships, and develop prototypes for collaboration among pilot groups of schools.
- Design cooperative platforms that operationalize partnerships among schools, engaging key partners and vendors that are well positioned to support management of these partnerships and lead key workstreams.
- Define protocols for schools to participate in partnerships, including the governance approaches necessary to ensure long term vitality of such mechanisms.
- Work closely with schools to develop evaluative protocols and approaches that ensure continuous improvement of cooperative services being provided.
- Draft and support finalization of overall evaluative framework of all efforts undertaken toward system level partnerships, working closely with SSKC team, funders and external evaluators.
- Represent SSKC at events related to core responsibilities.
- Filling the gap – taking the initiative, overcoming obstacles to address any challenge presented and being a fundamental link in ensuring our mission is accomplished.
- Other duties and projects as assigned.

## **EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE**

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Education: Bachelor's degree and Master's degree required; MBA, MPA or similar degree strongly preferred. Other degrees combined with relevant experience will be considered.

Work Experience: At least 7 years of experience in efforts mobilizing diverse stakeholders in support of partnerships and the development and operationalization of mechanisms to cement these partnerships. Candidates should have strong analytic skills and be adept at sophisticated financial and operational modeling. They should also possess strong interpersonal, organization, management, research, writing, and communication skills.

Travel: Requires significant local travel around Kansas City and occasional business travel regionally and nationally.

## **PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

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Qualified incumbents for this position must be highly motivated, capable of self-direction, and

detail-oriented. They must also work well in a highly collaborative, team-oriented, quick moving startup environment. He/she must exhibit a keen sense of responsibility and enjoy working with multiple demands, shifting priorities and constant change. A successful candidate will also possess:

- Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to work closely and build relationships of trust with school leaders, administrators and partners from all types of backgrounds within Kansas City.
- Leadership skills, with the ability to establish and develop credibility quickly and create collaborative relationships at all levels within the community.
- Excellent writing and speaking skills.
- Outstanding organizational skills with the ability to effectively manage in a fast-paced environment.
- A high level of ethics with a strong sense of integrity and committed to the values of SSKC and maintenance of confidentiality.
- Confident in his/her abilities, while being grounded with humility.
- Demonstrated skills at building relationships and leveraging existing relationships to improve outcomes of SSKC initiatives.
- An ability to maintain a calm and competent demeanor in uncomfortable or difficult situations.
- Strong financial acumen and experience managing budgets.

All of the statements in this position description are intended to describe the general nature of the work being performed, and are not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required. This document describes the position currently available. The organization reserves the right to modify job duties or job descriptions at any time.

## **COMPENSATION**

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A competitive compensation package, including base salary and an outstanding benefits package will correspond to the experience level, credentials, and personal characteristics of the candidate.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

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SSKC firmly supports the principle and philosophy of equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of age, race, gender, creed, national origin, disability, veteran status or any other protected category pursuant to applicable federal, state or local law.

## **TO APPLY**

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Interested applicants may apply for this position by submitting a cover letter and resume to [HR@schoolsmartkc.org](mailto:HR@schoolsmartkc.org).