



Executive Director

The founding group of Capital Experience Lab (CapXLab) seeks a passionate, accomplished leader to realize its vision for a radically different school for D.C.'s students, one which will enable them to take full advantage of the immense cultural resources of the nation's capital to learn and thrive. The Executive Director will lead the organization to submit a successful charter application in January 2020, and will build out the educational and enterprise structures necessary for the school to open and excel in the fall of 2021.

The Vision

What if students could experience learning not only in classrooms, but also among the rich array of cultural institutions of Washington D.C.? Our city is an incredible ecosystem of culture, knowledge, and inquiry, including the Smithsonian (the largest museum, education, and research complex in the world), the National Institutes of Health, the Kennedy Center, and countless other communities of creativity and discovery. But to what degree does each and every young person in D.C. benefit from growing up within this ecosystem?

Founded as an organization in 2015, Capital Experience Lab (CapXLab) will bridge the divide between in-school education and D.C.'s ample public resources, providing students with unprecedented access to real-world learning opportunities. Our school will aim to create a learning environment extending across institutions and spaces in Washington, D.C. in which students will be truly immersed in the language and knowledge of the real world.

CapXLab will develop linkages between school and museums and other public cultural institutions to address opportunity inequity in Washington, D.C. In order to prepare students for success in postsecondary contexts, CapXLab will help each scholar develop self-directed learning skills, strong executive functioning, and the confidence to solve problems on their own initiative. CapXLab builds knowledge and unleashes creativity by immersing students in DC's world-class museums and research institutions during our school day.

Our school will offer our students the academic and emotional support they need to mine our city's treasures in service of their dreams.

The Opportunity

CapXLab is seeking an Executive Director to build on the success of our extensive pilots and successfully shepherd the concept through the DC Public Charter School application process to founding and serving as the overall leader of a grade 5-12 (middle-high school).

The Executive Director will report to the board and will directly supervise the school's leadership team.

[CityBridge Education](#), D.C.'s incubator for innovative, equitable schools, is partnering with CapXLab to realize the school vision. CityBridge will provide startup funding for CapXLab, provide the Executive Director with training in equity by design, and connect the Executive Director with the full array of supports needed to become an approved and successful charter school.

The CapXLab School Model

Real-world, cognitively “sticky” experiences are the foundation of our instructional model. With its Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) curriculum, CapXLab will help students build vocabulary and mental frameworks that serve as the foundation for creative problem-solving. Designed to leverage research about adolescent development, our days begin with community building, followed by direct instruction and hands-on activities that build knowledge. Students investigate further at museums and community sites each afternoon. Over several days, students respond to a challenge and share final products with an audience.

Our model will equip students with the knowledge, skills, and relationships they need to navigate an ever-changing society with equity and justice at the forefront of all they do. Students will leave us with broad content knowledge, expertise in specific areas they care about, portfolios of high-quality work, and meaningful relationships with potential mentors and career advisors from across Washington, D.C.

Since 2015, CapXLab has immersed over 40 students in project-based learning experiences using DC's museums through three pilot programs conducted during school breaks and summer. The pilots have shown that student engagement during learning in museums spikes, that academic performance as measured by project rubrics is strong, and that student confidence in their own academic performance and public speaking grows.

Our pilots have resulted in 12 of our students enrolling in two or more pilots. 100% of parents surveyed after our summer 2018 pilot said that they would send students to a school run by our team. With these extensive tests of our model, we are very confident that it will meet a strong demand of students and families for truly enriched learning.

Responsibilities

The Executive Director serves as the primary leader of CapXLab School, maintaining and strengthening organizational vision and strategy, winning approval from the DC Public Charter School Board for the school, and subsequently ensuring that the school meets or exceeds performance outcomes for the students and the community it serves. The Executive Director will also partner with parents and community members and serve as the external face of the organization. The specific responsibilities of the Executive Director include:

Vision Setting and Strategic Planning

- Collaborate with the board to refine the strategic vision and implementation plan for CapXLab to achieve its mission
- Engage and invest all stakeholders including staff members, community members, and financial supporters in supporting the Public Charter School application process, the execution of the education plan, and the realization of the vision
- Establish and implement accountability and performance measures by setting clear academic, growth, operational, and financial goals and managing towards them, adapting as necessary given changes in internal and external environments

Team Management and Culture Building

- Build and manage a high-performing leadership team that is able to deliver transformational educational outcomes for students and provide staff with opportunities for professional growth and development
- Oversee operations, budgeting, finance, talent/human resources, data, and academics, taking responsibility for all major decisions
- Continue to build and support a strong, cohesive student and adult culture that leads to an aligned organizational identity across the school
- In collaboration with leadership, codify and communicate the school's core values, philosophy, and norms so they are clear and consistently practiced

External Partnership, Engagement and Sustainability

- Serve as the public face of CapXLab and effectively communicate the school's Public Charter School application aspirations as well as its pilot program accomplishments;
- Represent CapXLab in district and authorizer communications;
- Develop a strong, engaged, and active board in close partnership with the board chair;
- Ensure that CapXLab has a viable long-term financial plan and a diversified and sustainable funding base in collaboration with the board;
- Develop and lead a targeted and effective student recruitment plan to ensure the school is able to develop to full enrollment;
- Oversee community partnerships and parent/family engagement on behalf of the school to ensure CapXLab is highly regarded by the local community;
- Build coalitions, relationships, and partnerships with key stakeholders in support of

CapXLab's Public Charter School application, mission and goals.

In their first year, the Executive Director will be expected to focus on the following priorities:

- Work with the team of teacher-leaders (Bethany Fleming, Alison Gillmeister, and Patrice Jones) to build upon, refine, and clarify CapXLab's culture and academic vision
- Collaborate with the teacher-leader team and the board chair, Nik Apostolides, to round out the founding leadership group of the school.
- Lead the process for developing a high-quality charter application, including describing the educational vision in full, working out an operational and financial plan, and cultivating community supporters.
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of the leadership team, and develop systems and routines for the school that support our vision.
- Develop a staffing plan for the school startup phase
- Define facilities needs for the school and identify potential sites for its location

Qualifications

Experience

- Experience in leading teams and/or organizations with a focus on racial, class, and gender equity
- Experience with school founding or management
- Experience building systems

Skills

- Culturally competent
- People-developer
- Skilled project manager

Mindset

- Share CapXLab values of equity, learning, knowledge, relationships, and craftsmanship:
 - Equity: We believe that every student from every background deserves to be able to learn from all the city's immense cultural and community riches embedded in museums, neighborhoods, communities and school itself.
 - Learning: We believe that the best learning experiences are sticky -- grabbing students to the point where they themselves do not want to let go, and deeply enriching their souls. We believe in making time for adults to learn and develop as professionals.
 - Knowledge: We believe that deepening student background knowledge promotes achievement and creativity and engagement, and that engagement encourages student pursuit of knowledge.

- Relationships: We believe that students take risks to learn when they work with adults and peers with whom they have built trusting relationships.
 - Craftsmanship: We believe that students should take pride in what they know and create, and that they should attend to the process as much of the product of their work. We think beyond the test.
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- Believe in our instructional approach (knowledge-building, project-based learning designed around real-world experiences)
 - Interested in co-developing our adult culture
 - Enjoy collaborating!

How to Apply:

If you are interested in this opportunity, please email your resume and cover letter to amckee@citybridge.org with a subject line of “CapXLab Executive Director.”

Compensation will be set commensurate with experience.

CapXLab is an equal opportunity employer.