



Position Description: *Chief Executive Officer*

Overview

In 2002, acclaimed author Dave Eggers and award-winning educator Nínive Calegari founded 826 Valencia with a modest plan to support local students with one-on-one writing, tutoring, and homework help. Since then, the organization has grown its impact exponentially: 826 is now a thriving network of independently operated centers across seven cities (all separate 501(c)3s); each chapter offers a variety of inventive programs to provide under-resourced students, ages 6-18, with opportunities to explore their creativity and improve their writing skills, while helping teachers to get their classes excited about writing.

In 2008, 826 National emerged as a nonprofit organization created to provide strategic leadership, administrative support, and other resources to ensure the success of 826's network of writing and tutoring centers. 826 National supports the network by: sharing and leading research and evaluation; fostering collaboration and best practice sharing; lending infrastructure support, administrative assistance, and training; providing financial support; working to expand reach into new communities; and creating new resources to support teachers and out-of-school-time educators.

At 826, we strive to elevate the voices of students, especially those who are systemically disenfranchised. Each 826 chapter provides welcoming, creative spaces for students to build their writing skills and confidence and become engaged members of their communities. Of the students who attended our after-school tutoring program in 2015-16, 62% identify as Hispanic/Latinx, 17% African-American, 7% Asian, 5% White, and 4% are Multiracial. In addition, 38% of after-school tutoring students identify a language other than English as their first language. Our chapters also prioritize school partners where 51% or more of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunches. Most partner schools far exceed this requirement.

In 2016, these seven chapters served more than 32,000 students with five core offerings: after-school tutoring, field trips, workshops, Young Authors' Book Project, and in-school programs—all free of charge and fueled by a corps of nearly 5,000 volunteers.

The network's unique focus on supporting students' writing through creative lessons and attention from caring volunteers creates staggering demand for 826's services. All seven of our existing chapters are outgrowing their original locations, and many have lengthy waitlists for programs. To help meet this need, 826 National is launching a new digital platform for educators in Fall 2017 to bring our signature approach to teaching writing to urban and rural communities everywhere. In addition, there are 25 826-inspired domestic organizations and 18 international organizations in cities such as London, Sydney, and Milan.

Role Summary

The next CEO will have an extraordinary opportunity to collaborate with national staff and existing and emerging chapters to more than double 826's reach and impact. In strong partnership with an outstanding, committed staff, the CEO will ensure that 826 National is providing support and guidance to the chapters, and uphold the accountability of the National office and network to its diverse stakeholders.



Responsibilities

Leadership & external presence

The CEO will serve as an inspirational, focused leader within the 826 network and across the broader education sector, and to that end, the CEO will:

- act as the chief spokesperson for the National office and the 826 network, assuring compelling representation of 826 and its brand;
- work to integrate awareness of 826 into the national education discourse, education policy, literacy, and creativity;
- work directly with 826 chapter leadership—including chapter Executive Directors and local boards—to provide support, mentorship, and guidance;
- lead efforts to foster an equitable, inclusive culture in which diverse teams thrive throughout the organization;
- partner closely with the chapter leadership to provide mentoring, coaching, leadership development, and occasionally more direct support in the form of governance and/or administrative support;
- promote fidelity to the 826 brand, ensuring that each existing chapter, and every incoming chapter, abides by to the 826 network chapter affiliation agreement, and maintains the aesthetic, personality, and culture of the network;
- work with the leadership of organizations in the chapter development process to provide guidance, answer questions, and ensure fidelity to the 826 model;
- work with organizations inspired by the 826 model (national and international) to build relationships and create potential partnerships and/or affiliations; and
- keep abreast of developments in nonprofit management, education, and philanthropy.

Fundraising and Financial Duties

The CEO will be responsible for leading a financially stable, well-resourced organization. In that context, this person will:

- lead fundraising efforts, in partnership with the development team, by identifying and meeting with individuals, corporations, and foundations to cultivate, solicit, and steward potential philanthropic support for the National office and the network when appropriate;
- lead all national-level fundraising efforts at the \$1,000,000 + level;
- partner with the finance team to oversee the fiscal activities of the National office including budgeting, reporting, and auditing, and developing the National office operating budget for review and approval by the Board; and
- assume the role of the main signatory on all checks, invoices, and new financial relationships.



Organizational Development and Strategic Planning

The CEO will be responsible for articulating the organization's direction and guiding the team. In that context, they will:

- help the Board determine and implement the National office's values, mission, and short- and long-term goals through strategic planning;
- work with the National team to determine strategic goals most relevant to the office and the imperative work of supporting the network, and then monitor and evaluate the National office's effectiveness, relevance to the network and community, and its results;
- keep the Board fully informed of the state of the National office and the 826 network and of all the factors influencing it; and
- supervise and facilitate organization-wide support to the chapters, including the sharing of best practices among the chapters, the annual staff development conference, and visits to chapters when needed.

Management and Administration

The CEO will run an exemplary operation at the National office and model leadership across the network. To do this, they will:

- lead a team of 11 (four direct reports), as well as interns and volunteers, to achieve the National office mission and goals;
- oversee, support, and coach National staff members' work in the areas of development, research and evaluation, field operations, finance, digital platforms, publications, and communications & marketing;
- support human resources/talent development at the National office and across the network; and
- supervise all legal matters concerning the National office and, at times, the network, including chapter affiliation agreements, contracts, legal documents, trademark issues, consulting agreements and talent development.

Governance

In strong partnership with the 826 National Board, the CEO will:

- help the Board best articulate its roles and responsibilities, as well as the work of the committees and duties of individual Board members;
- assist the Board in its regular performance evaluation;
- work directly with the Board President and governance committee to support the Board in fulfilling its governance and fiduciary functions making sure Board and members work at optimal performance;
- work with the Board President and Executive Committee to establish shared vision across the organization by building consensus on long-range strategic goals and driving measurable results for greatest impact;
- identify potential new board members for the National and local boards; and
- work with Board Governance Committee on recruitment of new members.



Desired Profile

Above all, the CEO must be a seasoned, focused leader with the gravitas, focus, and levity to lead 826 to its next chapter of growth, expansion, and impact. They must come to this work with a sincere belief that 826's chapters improve students' lives by equipping them with opportunities to raise their voices as writers, to build their confidence and become engaged members of their communities. There are unique challenges to running a national, geographically-distributed organization with independent, local chapters, and the ideal CEO will be a deft interpreter and navigator of this complex landscape. Therefore, the ideal CEO candidate should have the following **experience**:

- 7+ years of senior management, ideally in a national, geographically distributed organization, with a track record of fostering an inclusive, equitable culture, hiring, retaining, and developing high performing, diverse teams;
- 7+ years as an earnest and effective fundraiser with demonstrated success cultivating, acquiring, and retaining major grants and donations from individuals, corporations and foundations;
- building, managing, and reporting to a Board of Directors;
- P&L management;
- deep familiarity with change management; ideally, has led a national organization through growth/change; and
- ideally, a professional track record in one or more of these fields: education, social justice, educational technology, nonprofit, and/or social impact.

The successful candidate will also possess the following **skills**:

- ability to inspire and motivate a diverse set of stakeholders;
- exceptional written, verbal, and storytelling ability with meticulous attention to detail;
- strong organizational and analytical acumen;
- strong active listening capacity;
- ability to build bridges among diverse stakeholders who do not always agree with each other; and
- extraordinary management capacity, including in a matrixed organization.

Finally, candidates will possess these **characteristics**:

- high level of personal and professional integrity;
- tolerance for constructive conflict and ambiguity;
- a naturally inquisitive nature; and
- authenticity, curiosity, and a strong learning orientation.

Reporting Relationships

The CEO reports to the National Board. The Board delegates responsibility for management and day-to-day operations to the CEO, in accordance with the direction and policies established by the Board. The CEO also supports the Board as it carries out its governance functions. Direct reports to the CEO are: Director of Development, Director of Field Operations, Director of Research & Evaluation, Operations Assistant.



Location & Travel

This role is in San Francisco, CA, and may include up to 60% travel.

Compensation and Benefits

826 National offers the incoming CEO a competitive salary, commensurate with experience. 826 National offers a comprehensive benefits package including: medical, dental, vision care, and retirement, paid holidays, and generous annual vacation 20 days for the first two years of employment, with increases thereafter.

826 National is an equal opportunity employer that seeks to hire those representative of the diverse communities we serve. 826 National hires without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, HIV/AIDS status, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law. All are encouraged to apply.

To Apply

The executive search team at [Bellwether Education Partners](#) is leading the search. Inquiries and applications, comprising a resume and letter of interest, should be sent to: **Rebecca Cagle, Associate Partner, and Crystal Combs, Senior Consultant**, at 826CEO@bellwethereducation.org.

***Bellwether Education Partners** is a nonprofit dedicated to helping education organizations in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors become more effective in their work and achieve dramatic results, especially for high-need students. Our Talent Services practice identifies, places, and supports education leaders through comprehensive executive searches, customized search advisory services, and individual coaching. We also partner with clients to build talent-ready organizations where diverse teams can work, develop, and thrive.*