



School in the Square

Head of Schools

New York, New York

Introduction and Background

School in the Square (S2) is a fast-growing charter school currently serving elementary and middle school students, which will serve families from Pre-K through High School by 2023. S2 engages, educates and empowers its students to respond mindfully and creatively to life's opportunities and challenges. Drawing its name from the concept of the public square or "la placita", S2 is where communities come together to solve problems and celebrate successes. Here, students, families and educators are seen, heard, and inspired.

School in the Square began in 2016 as a middle school serving grades 6-8 with a vision of growing into a comprehensive K-12 school. In 2020, S2 opened dual-language Dos Amigos Elementary School and added a Pre-K program in 2022. Currently serving through grade 2, Dos Amigos will continue to expand one grade a year until grade 5. Reports from middle school alumni that they did not feel known or seen in their high schools only solidified S2's commitment to "engage, educate, and empower" each student through grade 12. S2 expects to open a high school, beginning with grade 9, in the fall of 2023. By 2027, School in the Square expects enrollment to grow to 1,400 students, largely of Dominican descent.

S2 students build the academic foundations, social-emotional intelligence, and the leadership skills necessary to excel in college and professional life. The S2 community is grounded in principles of justice, equity, diversity and inclusivity (JEDI), enacting a culturally responsive and sustaining lens to pedagogical practices and consistently examining ways to walk firmly in the pursuit of social justice and against injustice of any kind. S2 provides a progressive and rigorous learning community in which students thrive physically, emotionally, and academically through differentiated and personalized education and adults grow through rich and robust professional development.

School in the Square receives financial support from the New York State Education Department and is tuition-free and open to all students. Currently serving the Washington Heights and Inwood neighborhoods of northern Manhattan, S2 is a deeply embedded local anchor institution that believes in creating a culture of care through strong community and family partnerships.

Governance and Administration

School in the Square is overseen by a Board of Directors. The founding Executive Director, Evan Meyers, has experience in finance and education, most notably establishing high school programs and partnerships with community organizations. Under the direction of the founding Executive Director, the current leadership team consists of the acting Head of Schools, Founding Principal (who now serves as the Elementary School Principal), the Middle School Principal, and soon to be announced HS principal. Also critical to the school's operation is the Executive Leadership Team: Director of Talent, Director of Development, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Programs and Engagement Officer.



The Head of Schools will report to the Executive Director and will be instrumental in the growth of the high school. In addition, the Head of Schools will have several direct reports that include the current building principals and other program leaders.

Academic Philosophy

School in the Square's educational philosophy is steeped in the belief that a student's academic success can most easily and successfully be achieved with close teacher/staff/student/family relationships, distinct learning experiences beyond the classroom, and a democratic and highly collaborative learning environment where students are actively engaged in using their minds and voices well.

School in the Square's core academic tenets:

- 1) **A culture of care leads to a culture of achievement**—A caring and collaborative school community where all participants are embraced and valued so that the highest level of academic success can be attained, known, seen and heard.
- 2) **Academic achievement is the key focus**—Data-driven work and practices inform teaching pedagogy and curriculum across all classes.
- 3) **Learning extends beyond the classroom**— Educational opportunities and partnerships exist with community-based organizations that are focused on student interests and passions.

- 4) **Building a democratic community**— A highly engaged and interactive environment where faculty, staff, students, and parents can provide direct input on important school, community, and social issues.
- 5) **Staff are all lead learners**—As educators, teachers can build on their passions and interests in the context of student learning opportunities. Competitive compensation and good working conditions (i.e., extended planning time, curricular freedom) support the idea that teachers are valued.
- 6) **Strong commitment to continual redesign**—School in the Square continually looks to re-evaluate itself and adapt to the changing needs of its community and its students

Family Support Program

The Family Support program is critical to S2's relationships first ethos and provides information that is designed to promote greater understanding of the student school experience as well as offer larger community resources. In addition, under the direction of the Chief Program and Engagement Officer, S2 supports approximately 30% of its families every month with bi-monthly food pantries and other essential services. Through its helpline dedicated staff supports run the gamut including internet hotspots to keep students connected to the academic program and, in some cases, rent relief during the pandemic.

Opportunities and Challenges for the Next Head of Schools

The new Head of Schools will lead the day to day operations of a robust school community with an exceptionally committed faculty who are focused on personal relationships with students and creating a learning environment that fosters intellectual curiosity and creativity. In addition, the new Head of Schools will shape the educational direction of all three divisions (elementary, middle, high) and ensure the school delivers on its promise to provide a differentiated and inclusive learning environment.

The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the inequities faced by the students of School in the Square and challenged teachers to provide quality instruction amid uncertainty and unrest. With those challenges now receding, School in the Square is well-resourced and eager to reconnect with the community, establish a new high school, and select its new Head of Schools.

School in the Square is seeking a strong, experienced, and



entrepreneurially minded leader who will inspire confidence and embrace the school's largely Spanish speaking community. A successful Head of Schools is a consensus-builder, skilled at communicating a comprehensive strategic vision to teachers, administrators, and partners. Initial priorities include: developing a shared identity across all school functions; establishing credibility with teachers and the broader community; building organization-wide systems and processes; analyzing qualitative and quantitative data to assess program quality and drive decision-making; and supporting teacher development.

Desired Leadership Qualities

- A strategic leader who works collaboratively with the school and wider community
- A skilled administrator who will bring clarity, consistency, and accountability to the management of people and programs
- An educator committed to academic excellence and evidence-based curricular innovation
- Mission drive with a full understanding and commitment to School in the Square's mission and purpose
- A strong work ethic, high energy, and deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Comfortable using both qualitative and quantitative data to drive decision-making
- Unafraid to embrace high expectations and motivated to meet challenges head on

Role Responsibilities

- Run the day to day operations of all three divisions of School in the Square.
- Supervise and coach elementary, middle, and high school principals in goal setting, planning, development, implementation, and monitoring of action plans that will guide school leaders in meeting their instructional leadership objectives and for their schools to meet performance targets
- Conducts regular formal and informal classroom walk-throughs aligned to student achievement and strategic goals
- Provide feedback on successful leadership practices, such as effective management of instructional staff, use of data, and establishment of school culture
- Deepen a data driven approach to looking at instruction that is focused on growth as well as results
- Assist school leaders in interpreting student test scores and recommending prescriptive materials and techniques to improve student performance
- Participates in staff and other district meetings to maintain alignment between all three schools
- Performs any other duties as assigned. Responsibilities and tasks outlined in this document are not exhaustive and may change as determined by the needs of the network

Skills and Qualifications

- Senior level administrative experience in K-12
- A high appreciation for and ability to lead a diverse community
- Outstanding communication skills (written and verbal)
- Experience interpreting and using data to inform educational practice
- Experience running or creating a complex organization

Application Requirements and Search Process

Candidates should submit as soon as possible the following materials:

- A cover letter indicating why you are particularly interested in and qualified for the position
- A current resume
- Application materials should be uploaded directly on the DRG website (www.drgtalent.com) by visiting the School in the Square listing

Salary and Benefits

School in the Square takes as much care of its staff as it does of their students. S2 is committed to supporting their leaders by helping them build sustainable, rewarding careers that center on each educator's passions and multi-disciplinary interests. All of the faculty and staff are valued professionals and are proud to provide extended planning time, team-building and collaboration, comfortable and friendly working conditions, and more to ensure their team members all have the tools they need to succeed.

School in the Square has budgeted an annual salary of \$220,000-\$250,000 for this role.

In addition to the competitive salary and meaningful work, S2 provides an excellent benefits package with employer paid life insurance, a 401K program with a 6% organizational match, longevity bonus, generous paid time off, access to a federal student loan debt reduction program and a friendly work environment.

Anyone who joins the team must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

To apply for this position, please click [HERE](#).

DRG is conducting this search on behalf of School in the Square. To discuss the



opportunity in more detail, contact the lead consultants:

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This position description is based upon material provided by School in the Square, an organization that values diversity and is an equal opportunity employer