



Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Commonwealth School invites nominations and applications for the position of Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

ABOUT COMMONWEALTH SCHOOL

Reporting to the Head of School, the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) will work closely with academic and administrative staff and faculty and will serve as a member of the Head's Working Group and the Student Life Committee. The Director will lead the strategic implementation of the school's diversity efforts, including in faculty recruitment, development and retention; student recruitment and retention; curriculum; student life; and alumni/ae engagement.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The mission of Commonwealth School is to educate young people from diverse backgrounds to become knowledgeable, thoughtful, and creative adults, capable of careful analysis, fruitful cooperation, responsible leadership, and deep commitment.

Founded in 1957 by Charles E. Merrill, Jr., who served as headmaster for nearly 25 years, Commonwealth aspired to "restore good secondary schooling to the city in a stimulating and realistic" setting for education. Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Morehouse College in Atlanta for fifteen years, Mr. Merrill was well known for supporting the education of African Americans. He was a trustee at Hampshire and Marlboro Colleges, and taught at Spelman, Guilford, Warren Wilson, and Moravian Colleges. Commonwealth's sports teams are Mermaids because Mr. Merrill chose the [Mermaid of Warsaw](#) as the School's emblem in hopes that it would stand as a call to conscience and action. Following in his footsteps, Commonwealth encourages its students to be "decent, socially responsible, generous people actively engaged in public affairs."

Over sixty years later, Commonwealth educates 140 students in grades 9-12, and boasts a 5:1 student to faculty ratio, an average class size of 12, and a one-on-one advisory program. Commonwealth alumni live the School's mission as they practice medicine; teach in public schools, prep schools, community colleges, and major universities; work as lawyers, neighborhood organizers, computer consultants, and business leaders; and pursue careers in the arts, television and film, and politics.

The School has developed a remarkable culture, at once intense and supportive. Teachers' office doors are always open, every voice counts in discussion-based classes, and students take pride in the School's energy, humor, and cohesion because so much of it is their own. As they move through grades 9-12, students develop a large shared frame of reference through required courses, common texts, and collective experiences. They also learn about the city around them both formally and informally, through

courses, independent projects, and community service. Engaged in diverse areas of [student life](#), students feel at home in Commonwealth's small community which values diligent work, joyous play, and friendship.

When students enter ninth grade, the program is designed to help them connect academically and socially. Faculty advisors, study halls during free periods, three 10-week courses (City of Boston, Health and Community, and Language and Ethics), and pass-fail grading are part of the supporting systems of the 9th grade experience and transition to Commonwealth.

During Project Week each January, students pursue a wide range of internships and independent projects in and beyond Boston. They work in labs, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, theaters, newsrooms, political offices, law firms, and any number of corners of the working world. Students can also choose to participate in one of Commonwealth's international exchange trips to complete their Project Week. Alternately, students can also stay at Commonwealth, working with their teachers on a variety of projects pertaining to life drawing, computer programming, creative writing, and theater.

Students with a passionate interest in a particular subject have the opportunity to apply for a year of independent study under the guidance of a faculty mentor. Applications to the [Capstone Program](#) are due in spring of junior year; accepted applicants will begin research and correspond with mentors during the summer and into senior year.

LOCATION AND LOCAL CULTURE

Charles Merrill chose to locate the Commonwealth School in Boston's vibrant Back Bay community. He purchased two adjoining brownstones on the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Dartmouth Street, which had previously housed the Katherine Gibbs School. In 2015, the school began an \$8 million renovation affecting every area of the school.

The city of Boston is home to diverse neighborhoods, national and regional landmarks and monuments, world-famous academic institutions and institutes, national and international corporations, competitive national sports teams, and regional theaters and music halls. The school is easily accessible by public transportation.

THE ROLE OF DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is a full-time opportunity that may include classroom teaching depending on background and interest.

Working collaboratively with Commonwealth faculty and staff leadership, the Director of DEI will develop and implement a DEI strategic plan aligned with the school's mission and [long-range plan](#); promote and cultivate a welcoming community culture for all students; improve effectiveness and success in recruiting and retaining diverse faculty and staff; advise on and support development of classroom and curriculum methods and environments that are inclusive; plan, develop, and market DEI-focused events and professional development for faculty, staff, students, and families; promote and support the work of the Admission and Advancement teams to engage prospective and current families and Commonwealth alumni; play an active role with [Dive In](#) and the program's Director; represent the school at local, regional, and national diversity events; and, pursue professional opportunities, attending conferences and meetings to remain current with DEI issues that may affect the school.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will benefit from ongoing commitment and foundational work on DEI in 2020-21. InCommon, a small committee of trustees and members of the faculty, came together in June 2020 in response to concerns expressed by current and past community members. They are leading the way forward for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at Commonwealth, inviting students, alumni, and other members of the community to share their voices.

The Equity and Anti-Racism Task Force (EAR), made up of almost twenty faculty and staff, conducted an internal audit of all aspects of school life (both academic and administrative) in the summer and fall of 2020. The thorough and thoughtful reflections of the EAR subcommittees have been shared with the full faculty and staff to broaden the conversation about DEI. From those findings the faculty and administration will determine short-term goals for 2020-21 and, in conjunction with InCommon, frame issues and formulate long term goals and recommendations for the new Director of DEI and the [incoming Head of School](#) to advance DEI and to identify longer-term goals.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Important qualities for the Director of DEI include: a cooperative leadership style; the desire to work in community with faculty and staff colleagues and students; strong and responsive listening and communication skills; a growth mindset coupled with optimism and a strategic focus; and a commitment to building a school culture rooted in curiosity, creativity, responsible leadership, and excellence.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred)
- Substantial training or experience in counseling and supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds in privileged educational settings
- Demonstrated leadership experience in working within schools to encourage discussion about culture and values and to support growth
- Demonstrated ability to develop sensitive working relationships with students, faculty, staff, and parents
- Experience articulating a strategic vision and bringing it to life
- Experience collaborating with multiple teams and managing several time-sensitive projects simultaneously
- Experience teaching in a classroom preferred
- Commitment to the Commonwealth School mission and core values

For consideration, please send all nominations or cover letter and résumé to:



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Commonwealth School is committed to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all employees and qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, veteran status, military service, application for military service, or any other status protected by applicable law. Commonwealth will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities, in accordance with applicable law.