



Seeks Executive Director

About the Worcester Education Collaborative

Worcester Education Collaborative (WEC) is an independent organization working to ensure that all students in the Worcester Public Schools (WPS) are given the opportunity to succeed at the highest possible level and to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to master the challenges of the 21st century. Its mission is to advance excellence and equity in education for all WPS students. WPS is an urban district in a gateway city, serving a diverse population of 25,000 students across 45 schools. The district is heavily reliant on state funding and faces significant challenges related to poverty, multilingual learners, and other socioeconomic barriers.

WEC approaches its work through collective action, building an educational ecosystem that interacts and collaborates to provide high quality, equitable learning opportunities and resources. Partners include nonprofits, businesses, parents, and school personnel. WEC is the only organization of its kind in the city and its independent voice speaks for the children and the community to create a system of effective schools where every child is prepared for success in college, career, and life.

WEC opened its doors in 2010 and has an impressive history of pioneering education improvement and inspiring innovation. It contributes in three broad areas:

Inspiring Action

- An Equity-based Vision for Worcester Students. In 2017 and again in 2023, WEC facilitated the community work necessary to develop the WPS strategic plan. The plan is a roadmap for the district's visionary superintendent, Rachel Monárrez, the Worcester School Committee, and the work of educators and others involved in education.
- Education Ecosystem for Collective Impact. Recognizing the value of increasing collaboration among community stakeholders and the school district, WEC established and now convenes the *Worcester Education Equity Roundtable*, a dynamic coalition of more than 55 institutional partners and individuals committed to equity for historically marginalized people in Worcester's public education system.
- School-Community Connections. Now in its 12th year, WEC's flagship *Principal for a Day* program strengthens school-community partnerships by providing a unique opportunity for local civic leaders to learn about the challenges and triumphs of school leadership firsthand, empowering them to advocate for positive changes in the schools. Additionally, WEC facilitates the education module of the Leadership Worcester program.

Implementing for Impact

- Enhancing Literacy. *Reading Together* operates in nine elementary schools with historically low reading achievement, bringing retired educators to classrooms three times a year for an engaging read-aloud followed by a classroom activity. Parents and caregivers are invited to join

these special events, and students take home reading and project materials. To date, WEC has worked with 1,900 students and has distributed 5,400 books to children.

- 21st Century Skills Development through Project-Based Learning. Led by WEC, *Woo-Labs* is a network of community-based partners working to increase their capacity to provide high-quality, culturally responsive, project-based learning in out-of-school time for K-6 grade students. *Woo-Labs* has reached over 4,000 students and has provided over 200 hours of training for fellows and partner organizations.
- Family and Community Engagement. WEC's Family and Community Engagement Specialists (*FACES*) work to involve parents of WPS students and community members in the advocacy efforts and events of the *Worcester Education Equity Roundtable*, as well as provide leadership development opportunities through its Powerful Parents workshop series and other topical training events.

Informing the Community

- Hub for Resources and Connection. Each year WEC provides community briefings on topics of importance related to education in Worcester. The virtual forums attracted over 1,000 registrants in FY24 and are generating productive dialogue in our city and across the state about student equity and educational excellence.
- Trauma-Informed Care Training. WEC created an innovative, multi-media training series, *Understanding Trauma-Sensitive Practices*, for practitioners in the youth development, education, and juvenile justice sectors. Over 700 practitioners have been trained.

WEC is governed by a highly committed and connected Board of Directors that actively supports the staff and mission. United Way of Central MA serves as WEC's fiscal sponsor, oversees its human resources and finances, and hosts the office location. WEC is a small but highly impactful organization, currently employing three talented, hardworking, full-time staff and approximately 20 part-time staff and contractors. WEC has an operating budget of \$1 million; approximately 70% of funding comes from foundation, state government, and corporate grants and the remainder from contributions, contracts, and program fees.

The Opportunity

The Executive Director will lead a highly respected and financially stable organization with significant influence in the education field locally and across the Commonwealth. These are unprecedented times for the fragile state of funding and support for education nationally so the next leader will have a tremendous opportunity to play a central role in protecting education's best practices and to fight courageously for policies and initiatives that expand possibilities for students and improve outcomes for WPS.

Reporting directly to the WEC Board of Directors, the Executive Director will hold overall responsibility for the organization's strategic direction, community relations, fiscal health, and operational management of staff, policy advocacy and programs, and impact. Key priorities for the next Executive Director include:

- **Strategic, Opportunistic Growth:** In partnership with staff and the Board, assess the relevance and impact of its policy agenda and program portfolio and facilitate big-picture solutions to education issues facing young people and their families in WPS. Guide the organization in strategic planning and priority setting for supporting local and state-level issues.

- **Educational Policy Advocacy:** Be vigilant in addressing the ever-changing educational issues and state and federal funding restrictions through a variety of local and state-level means.
- **Relationship and Partnership Building:** Safeguard existing strong relationships with education stakeholders - nonprofit collaborators, government officials, funders, and businesses - and grow new, relevant ones.
- **Community Engagement:** Engage and hear from families of WPS students and educational advocates and find new and effective ways to reach all communities.
- **Funding:** Actively work to diversify and expand WEC funding sources in the context of a competitive funding environment, to ensure long-term financial sustainability, donor loyalty, and community good-will.

Profile of the Ideal Candidate

The ideal leader of WEC must be an enterprising, relationship-driven, strategic, and adaptable nonprofit executive who understands education policy and advocacy, and excels in community engagement, partnership building, fundraising, and public representation. We seek an organizational leader who will demonstrate many of the following attributes, skills, and experiences:

- **Strategic Thinker:** Proven experience with planning, priority setting, and the use of data for informed decision-making and delivering measurable impact and results.
- **Courageous, Articulate Advocate:**
 - Willing to take bold action, engage in conflict and foster productive dialogue, and have proven experience navigating complex educational and policy landscapes.
 - A genuine, diplomatic advocate with a strong compassion for students and families.
 - Well-spoken and capable of engaging both the media and the public.
 - Comfortable addressing diverse audiences, from corporate CEOs to parents and students.
- **Understanding of Education Systems:**
 - Knowledge of federal, state, and local education policy, advocacy, and best practices.
 - Recognizes the intersections between schools, community development, and social services.
- **Relational & Collaborative Leadership:**
 - Values reciprocity, with proven experience building and maintaining authentic partnerships and sustained relationships.
 - Able to work across differences with empathy, adaptability, and respect. Has experience bridging diverse perspectives, integrating different perspectives, and forging collaborative solutions in complex and sometimes polarized environments.
 - Able to lead and inspire a staff team by creating a collaborative, engaging, and inclusive environment. Proven skill in supporting and empowering staff to advance the impact and reputation of mission-based work.
 - Deep understanding of the roles DEI practices plays within an organization's culture and behaviors.
- **Nonprofit Acumen:**
 - Strong track record in raising funds, building funding relationships, and storytelling for impact.
 - High-level understanding of nonprofit finance and operations, and experience with effectively leveraging the talents of a board of directors.

- **Local and Community Perspective:**

- Experience collaborating with public school systems, such as WPS, and local education stakeholders.
- Familiarity with the Worcester area is a plus or demonstrated strength in building and sustaining community relationships.
- Commitment to fostering diversity and representing the perspectives of a diverse community like Worcester's is highly valued.

Compensation and Benefits

This is a full-time, salaried, exempt position with a starting salary range of \$120,000 - \$135,000 along with a strong benefits package that includes health Insurance (75% of the premium), dental insurance (50% of premium), long-term disability, life insurance, MA Paid Family Medical Leave contribution, a 401K plan, free parking, and four weeks accrued vacation annually. All WEC employees are employed under the United Way of Central MA umbrella.

Application Process and Additional Information

This position is place-based; the office is in the newly renovated nonprofit center at 18 Chestnut Street in Worcester with free parking.

WEC is an equal opportunity employer, committed to inclusion and diversity. We ensure equal opportunity for all applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, Veteran status or other legally protected characteristics.

Candidates must include a resume and a cover letter, both in PDF format, which describe how qualifications and experience match the needs and mission of WEC. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Upload required documents to: <https://eostransitions.applicantpool.com/jobs/>.

This executive search is being conducted by Eos Transition Partners consultant, Nancy Jackson. All submissions will be acknowledged and are confidential, and any questions can be submitted to Nancy at: njackson@eostransitions.com.