Job Posting

Position Title:

Chief Operating Officer

Reports To:

Deputy Commissioner, Operations

Location:

Tennessee Department of Education
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243

Position Description:

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) serves as a leader over three divisions—Finance, Information Technology, and District Operations— and reports to the Deputy Commissioner to ensure operational supports are delivered consistently, at high quality, and with focus on accuracy, timeliness, and completeness. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) also ensures that all Finance, Information Technology, and District Operations operations align robustly to the department's strategic plan and both internal and external stakeholders are supported in their partnerships and implementations. This individual must be solutions-oriented, collaborative, strategic, and organized.

The Office of the Chief Operating Officer include the divisions of Finance, Information Technology, and District Operations. While maintaining an unwaivering commitment to what is best for students, the Chief Operating Officer manages day-to-day operations and strategic initiatives across these divisions, establishing and maintaining coherence and collaboration, and ensuring divisional supports meet stakeholder needs, meet performance benchmarks, and align to strategic outcomes. This work requires the navigation and management of state government contexts—both within the Tennessee Department of Education and to other aligned state agencies, governmental bodies and entities, and local education agencies—and programmatic goals of the department to continuously improve service delivery while following and bolstering internal controls. The role requires dynamic leadership responsive to day-to-day issues while also continuing to build office culture and alignment to the strategic vision to meet long-term goals to advance educational outcomes for students in Tennessee.

Stakeholders:

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The position will work closely with the Deputy Commissioner, Operations and the assistant commissioners of Finance, Information Technology, and District Operations to deliver supports to the following key stakeholder groups among others:

- Commissioner
- Department Cabinet: Includes all chiefs across the department
- Department Executive Leadership Team: Includes all assistant commissioners
- Office of the Governor
- General Assembly
- Local Education Agency (LEAs) Leadership
- External Organization: Includes partners, vendors, philanthropies/foundations, etc.

Key Position Initiatives:

- *Fiscal Strategy and Management:* The Chief Operating Officer, in collaboration with the Chief Financial Officer, will develop and manage strategic budgeting and fiscal management and will:
    - Ensure strong state fiscal stewardship of funds by developing and managing organizational budgets;
    - Refine programmatic approaches to budget management through agency-wide training and culture-building on the use of budget dashboards to ensure appropriate spenddown against budgets;
    - Lead collaboration with divisions across the agency—including closely with the Performance Management Division—to ensure alignment between budgets and project and process plans;
    - Analyze grants management to ensure streamlined strategies are leveraged across the agency and out to districts to maximize flexibilities and alignment to strategic initiatives;
    - Manage the codification and continuous improvement of project and process plans to advance the organization's strategic vision;
    - Provide high-quality supports to local education agencies; and
    - Develop strategies for the reallocation of unspent funds throughout the fiscal year based on return on investment measures in collaboration with the Performance Management Division.

- *Information Technology Strategy and Management:* The Chief Operating Officer, in collaboration with the Chief Information Officer, will develop and manage strategic technology initiatives including, but not limited to:
    - Strategic development—including managing interagency collaboration and coherence—and rollout of a rigorous online tool to support teachers, parents, and other stakeholders;

- o Update and provide strategic vision for a renewed education information and data platform, including technological capability and managing data privacy policy;
- o Provide strategic support and vision around technological capacity, training, and development needed for the organization to meet its strategic goals as it transitions to a largely work-from-home organization;
- o Manage the codification and continuous improvement of project and process plans to advance the organization's strategic vision; and
- o Analyze information technology supports to districts to ensure alignment to overall strategic plan, adapting to new district needs based on context, and leveraging federal funds to meet district needs.

- *District Operations Strategy and Management:* The Chief Operating Officer, in collaboration with the Assistant Commissioner, District Operations, will develop and manage strategic initiatives related to supporting districts including, but not limited to:
  - o Ensuring high-quality, consistent services are provided to districts and are aligned to federal funding requirements;
  - o Collaborating with other state agencies across the state of Tennessee to ensure the quality development and implementation of integrated projects;
  - o Providing strategic support and vision around school safety, nutrition, transporation, and coordinated school health;
  - o Manage the codification and continuous improvement of project and process plans to advance the organization's strategic vision; and
  - o Continuously analyze and improve supports to districts aligned to the strategic plan and ensure strong communication and partnership between the state department and local education agencies.

- *External Stakeholder Management:* The Chief Operating Officer, in collaboration with the Deputy Commissioner, Operations, will partner with the Office of the Governor, the Tennessee State Legislature, other state agencies, philanthropic partners, and local education agencies to:
  - o Co-develop and manage cross-cutting projects between multiple state agencies;
  - o Provide the Office of the Governor and the Tennessee State Legislature answers to requests, policy and legislative proposal analyses, and other services as requested; and
  - o Identify and leverage philanthropic opportunities to further the goals of the strategic plan.

- *Internal Management*: The Chief Operating Officer will serve on the Cabinet and play a key role in ensuring the department's operations continue to work as efficiently as possible in the service of programmatic goals. This will include leadership over high-profile initiatives or issues as they

arise, the development of unique project plans aligned to strategic plans, and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to problem solve in a variety of contexts.

Specific Position Responsibilities:

- Serve as a member of Cabinet, setting and owning organization visioning, strategy, and outcomes
- Make critical decisions—in consultation with the Deputy Commissioner, Operations, the Commissioner, and Cabinet—to advance educational outcomes for students in Tennessee
- Build office culture—both virtually and in-person—to innovate and develop collaborative solutions to critical problems
- Manage the codification and continuous improvement of project and process plans to advance the organization's strategic vision
- Continuously analyze and improve supports to districts aligned to the strategic plan and ensure strong communication and partnership between the state department and local education agencies
- Manage three divisions—Finance, Information Technology, and District Operations—using performance management structures to meet organizational strategic performance and long-term outcomes and goals
- Lead and manage the fiscal health of the agency, including with robust measures of return on investments aligned to performance management structures
- Lead and manage the development of information technology systems and supports, both at the state and local levels, designed to efficiently meet requirements and robustly serve students' academic needs
- Support district operations essential for child wellbeing, including guidance, technical assistance, grants management, federal and state compliance, and partner/vendor management in the areas of nutrition, safety, transportation, and physical health
- Provide key updates to Deputy Commissioner and Cabinet to ensure cross-divisional alignment within the department and to ensure agency leadership is well-informed at all times
- Liaise with other state agencies to ensure opportunities for collaboration are surfaced and leveraged to improve services to Tennessee studentsDevelop and manage strategic budgets aligned to strategic programmatic projects in collaboration with the Deputy Commissioner, Operations and Chief Financial Officer
- Perform other duties as assigned to address agency needs

Qualifications:
- 10+ Years of Operations and/or Strategic Management

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- High level of personal responsibility, optimism, and judgment
- Commitment to excellence and problem-solving
- Ability to prioritize critical tasks
- Ability to collaborate effectively with others
- Dedication to cultivating workplace culture
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Graduate degree in relevant field preferred
- Experience in education preferred

Salary and Benefits:

Salary is competitive and commensurate with qualifications. In addition, a comprehensive benefits package is included.

Pursuant to the State of TN's policy of non-discrimination, the Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or military services in its policies, or in the admission of, access to, treatment, or employment in its programs, services, or activities.

Application Process:

Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter, and references to James M. Paul at james.paul@tn.gov. Applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.