



# The Eliot School of Fine Arts & Applied Arts Executive Director

## Organization

The Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts (Eliot School) is located in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts. Through its mission of **inspiring lifelong learning in crafts and creativity for all**, and a commitment in all programming to racial equity, Eliot School cultivates a welcoming environment where people convene across a continuum of age, economic means, and backgrounds to build skills, craftsmanship, and community. Eliot School began in 1676 with the donation of corn and land to support a school in Jamaica Plain. In the late 1800's the school left the public school system to offer manual training for schoolteachers, instruction for adults, and classes for children both after and during school time. Eliot School maintains an active relationship with Boston Public Schools. Workshops and classes are offered in woodworking, upholstery & furniture restoration, sewing & fashion, fiber arts, book & paper arts, printmaking, photography, drawing & painting, mixed media, tinkering & inventing, and other crafts.

Reflecting its core values, Eliot School's programs and classes seek to satisfy the human desires to create, engage in self-expression, and learn by doing. School and Community Partnerships send artists and artisans to teach woodworking and visual arts in schools and community centers throughout Boston, reaching more than 1,000 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The Teen Bridge program serves a dedicated group of teens outside of school time in a year-round, multi-year program combining art education and experience, life skills, mentorship, job training, and employment. The school's Arts Teachers Alliance offers professional development to all art teachers, both public and independent, to improve skills, share resources, and build collegiality among peers. In addition, Eliot School offers multi-session, community classes in a variety of media including upholstery, photography, fiber arts, and printmaking. In the summer, the school also hosts Schoolyard Concerts, open to all. Community partnerships have included Boston Public Libraries, Boston Centers for Youth & Families, Higher Ground Boston, Fuller Craft Museum, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, and the Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

The school is located in an affluent historic district of a multiracial, mixed-class neighborhood with significant immigrant constituencies. Eliot School is aware of its cultural/historic position and has been committed to increasingly developing programming that is accessible to young people and adults across Boston's geographic, racial and class spectrum—at the Eliot Street site, in Boston Public Schools, and through its partnerships. Prior to the pandemic, the school annually served 4,000 students of all ages, from preschool-age to seniors. Classes are held at its main Schoolhouse at 24 Eliot Street and the Annex at 253 Amory Street, where the administrative offices are housed. With important and long-standing relationships with the City of Boston's largest arts funders, Eliot School remains a strong legacy institution. In Spring 2023, the organization completed an 18-month strategic planning process to establish short-term strategic priorities. The incoming Executive Director will guide the process for long-term strategic planning.

The Eliot School is steered by the Executive Director and governed by a 10-member board of trustees led by Chair Melony Swasey. There are 14 full- and 2 part-time employees, as well as over 80 instructors. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, the organization reported total revenue of \$1,491,097, with \$961,860 from contributions and grants and \$151,221 from program services. Total expenses were \$1,500,422.

## Community

As New England's largest city, Boston has long been the region's economic and cultural hub, with an expansive variety of educational, performing, and visual arts organizations. With an estimated population of 667,000, Boston is one of the 25 largest cities in the country. Greater Boston is home to nearly 4.6 million residents. With strong professional sectors in education, technology, and healthcare, Greater Boston is youthful, culturally diverse, and socially active. More than 20 million visitors travel to Boston each year for national events such as the Boston Marathon, First Night/First Day, and/or Head of the Charles Regatta. Known for its historical roots and the American Revolution, Boston is a city that honors history. The region is recognized for the strength and international reach of its education, health, and technology sectors. Boston College, Boston University, Emerson College, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and Northeastern University are some of the renowned schools located in this region. Quality of life is anchored by a vibrant arts and cultural sector with world-renowned

museums, orchestras, historic sites, regional cultural centers, emerging and experimental performing and visual arts entities, and multi-disciplinary cultural heritage organizations.

The Eliot School is located in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood, nicknamed “JP” by locals. Jamaica Plain is a distinctive, artistic, and creative community. Home to a diverse group, ranging from young families and professionals to artists and activists. With its eclectic collection of funky shops and restaurants showcasing a variety of cultures, Centre Street is the neighborhood’s main thoroughfare and hub of activity, surrounded by greenery such as the Emerald Necklace, Arnold Arboretum, Franklin Park, and Jamaica Pond. It is one of the city’s largest neighborhoods and stretches over 4.4 miles. Eliot School is on the traditional lands of the Wôpanâak, the Pawtucket, the Ponkapoag, and the people known today as the Massachusett.

Sources: boston.gov; bostonusa.com; censusreporter.org; newengland.com; eliotsschool.org; compass.com/neighborhoodguides

## Position Summary

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director (ED) will be a collaborative, visionary, and strategic leader responsible for all aspects of the Eliot School’s programs and operations. They will serve as a key spokesperson and relationship builder, maintaining and fostering partnerships in the Greater Boston area and beyond in support of the school’s mission and strategic goals. In conjunction with the board, they will develop and implement a strategic plan and set the direction for the future of the school. An experienced leader, they will bring strong business acumen and the skills needed to rebuild and reconfigure the organization post-COVID. Honoring Eliot School’s commitment to racial equity, artistic excellence, and financial sustainability, the ED will be a human-centered leader able to guide and mentor a senior leadership team including the Associate Director, Director of Development and Communications, Director of Adult Programs & Engagement, Director of Youth Engagement, Business Manager, and Facilities Manager to support these strategic imperatives.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Strategy Leadership and Organizational Revitalization

- Guide and implement an organizational short- and long-range strategy that ensures the school achieves its mission and makes consistent and timely progress toward its strategic goals.
- Champion the Eliot School’s current racial equity commitments, both internally and externally, while assessing the organization and prioritizing future initiatives.
- Manage the senior leadership team, ensuring their effectiveness while planning with appropriate provisions for succession.
- Encourage staff and education-assisting program volunteers to discover how their specialized work relates to the organization’s overall program and mission.
- Maintain a culture and organizational climate that attracts, motivates, and retains a diverse team of top-quality staff and instructors.
- Support the board and its committees to ensure their success as decision-makers and ambassadors.
- Embrace other Strategic Leadership and Organizational Revitalization responsibilities, as needed.

### Fundraising and External Relations

- Serve as a primary spokesperson and advocate for the school, raising its profile and developing positive relationships that support both earned and contributed revenue goals.
- Along with the Director of Development/development staff, create and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy to support organizational sustainability and growth.
- Actively participate in local, regional, and national conferences, meetings, and convenings to develop relationships and strategies that support the school’s revenue and strategic priorities.
- Develop and maintain partnerships with local, city, and stand partners, as well as external partners.
- Embrace other Fundraising and External Relations responsibilities, as needed.

### Administration and Financial Oversight

- Manage the recruitment, employment, and release of personnel, both paid staff and volunteers.
- Ensures that job descriptions are kept up to date, that regular performance evaluations are held, and that sound human resource practices are in place.

- Develop and implement a formal system of feedback and evaluation to support both individual growth and achievement of strategic and programmatic goals and outcomes.
- Prepare annual budgets working with the staff, finance committee, and board to develop revenue goals and expense guidelines.
- Oversee ongoing financial operations and reporting, ensuring that the organization operates within budget and cash management guidelines and cash management policies.
- Provide leadership in developing programmatic, organizational, and financial plans with the Board of Trustees and staff and carry out plans and policies authorized by the board.
- Execute legal documents and conduct official correspondence of the organization with designated officers, jointly with the Co-Chairs and Secretary of the Board of Trustees.
- Embrace other Administration and Fiscal Oversight responsibilities, as needed.

## Traits and Characteristics

The Executive Director will be a strategic, visionary thinker who values building partnerships and relationships to support mutual goals. They will value interacting with people and will thrive in a collaborative working environment while also being able to set clear directions. A resourceful leader, they will be intentional in seeking practical results that maximize the return on the school's fiscal and human resources. This individual will be versatile and able to anticipate and solve problems and deliver results. The ED will be resilient and people-oriented, committed to racial equity and inclusion, and able to embrace the perspectives and experiences of others, both inside the organization and in the external community. The ideal ED will be an entrepreneur able to meet the challenges of organizational rebuilding, working with the board and staff to develop a long-term vision with achievable goals and a strategy that embraces a range of partners and community collaborations.

Other key competencies include:

- **Leadership and Personal Accountability** – The ability to organize and influence people towards a common goal, while being answerable to personal actions.
- **Time, Priority Management, Planning and Organizing** – The capacity to establish courses of action, while prioritizing tasks to deliver targeted outcomes.
- **Resiliency and Self-Starting** – The dexterity to be adaptable to changes in the industry and environment, while recovering from the pandemic/adversity.
- **Decision Making and Diplomacy** – The acuity to analyze all aspects of the current organizational structure and processes, while making decisions involving all stakeholders.

## Qualifications

At least five years of demonstrated experience in executive or nonprofit leadership, especially in community-facing arts and/or leading racial equity transformation in an organizational setting. Strong business skills, demonstrable accomplishments in fundraising, and knowledge and respect for the craft field are required. Demonstrated senior leadership experience that includes developing new revenue sources, building and strengthening strategic partnerships, and demonstrating fiscal accountability are essential. Exceptional writing abilities and verbal presentation skills are expected. Candidates must bring a demonstrated commitment to DEI and human centered leadership.

## Compensation and Benefits

The Eliot School offers a competitive salary range of \$115,000 to \$135,000. Comprehensive benefits include health care, paid vacation, sick leave, personal days, and holidays; long-term disability, and life insurance; and a voluntary 403(b) retirement plan.

## Applications and Inquiries

To submit a cover letter and resume with a summary of demonstrable accomplishments (electronic submissions preferred), please click [here](#) or visit [artsconsulting.com/opensearches](https://artsconsulting.com/opensearches). For questions or general inquiries about this job opportunity, please contact:

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***"The Eliot School seeks to contribute to a more just and equal world. As we design our programs and spaces to pursue equity, we are currently asking ourselves: How do all parts of our school enact our mission to inspire lifelong learning in craft and creativity for all? This position works with organizational leadership to develop and implement long-term vision and present-day program implementation based on a commitment to racial equity."***