



Director of Professional Development

*Virginia Association of Independent Schools
Richmond, Virginia*

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The Opportunity

Southern Teachers is assisting the Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS) in its search for a Director of Professional Development. Established in 1973, VAIS supports independent education in Virginia by offering services in accreditation, professional development, and advocacy. Its member schools vary widely in size and in focus, including single-gender and co-ed, boarding and day, religiously-affiliated and military schools, as well as schools that serve students with learning differences or that focus on specific educational philosophies. The next Director of Professional Development will create and oversee dynamic programming to support this diverse range of independent schools.

The Virginia Association of Independent Schools is the leader in advancing and advocating for independent school education in Virginia.

The Director of Professional Development will be responsible for the design of professional development programming for independent schools. With the aid of planning committees, he or she will oversee the design, coordination, marketing, implementation, and evaluation of these programs.

VAIS offers dynamic professional development year-round, including virtual programming for most employees of independent schools. This includes support for school administrators, business officers, nurses and counselors, residential life staff, and faculty, as well as trustees. The Association's accreditation process requires that schools maintain functioning professional development programs as a means of ensuring the sustainable well-being of the school. In all its programming, VAIS is guided by its core values: independence, excellence, and community.

VAIS is a non-profit, voluntary membership association of 95 accredited and candidate schools employing over 8,000 faculty, staff, and administrators and educating nearly 30,000 students.

To Apply

Please complete the online [Application](#) to become a **Southern Teachers Candidate** and submit a cover letter explaining your interest in and qualifications for this position.



Performance Objectives

VAIS member schools value the professional development, networking opportunities, and advocacy that it provides. A recent survey of Heads of School in the association highlighted three areas that inform its professional development offerings.

Bolster Connectivity

One of VAIS' greatest strengths is the sense of community it helps to foster among its diverse membership. During the pandemic, schools and the people in them have felt a strain on connectivity. VAIS would like its programming to be a catalyst to rebuild that connectivity, leveraging both the virtual tools schools have used over the past year and, as safety allows, in-person events. While faculty are primarily served through an annual conference, growing support of and connectivity between teachers is an area of desired growth for the Association.

Ensure Relevance

In a crowded professional development marketplace, the Director of Professional Development will be tasked with ensuring that VAIS programming is timely, relevant, and practical. He or she will look for ways to make virtual programming interactive and to deploy new technologies effectively. The Director will research and secure outstanding speakers and presenters and give them the guidance they need to meet the various needs of the membership, and will give special attention to programming that furthers the association's commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice. With a focus on quality over quantity, professional development offered by VAIS will connect members, open perspectives, and improve practice.

Broaden Corporate Support

The success of VAIS is dependent not only on a robust and engaged membership but also symbiotic partnerships with its corporate sponsors. The Director of Professional Development will work with the Executive Director to garner corporate support that will make professional development affordable to member schools.

Qualities and Traits

- B.A. or B.S. degree required. Advanced degree preferred.
- Experience in independent schools required; knowledge of all divisions (early childhood, lower, middle, and upper) preferred.
- Knowledge of independent school operations and governance; administrative experience preferred.
- Understanding of the needs of the adult learner.
- Excellent technology skills, including Google Suite applications and video conferencing.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Experience in creative and graphic design.
- Detail-oriented precision, effective time management, and organizational skills.
- Experience in formulating and managing budgets.
- Flexibility to travel as required for programs and networking with member schools.
- Demonstrated commitment to high professional and ethical standards.
- Personable, responsive, and service-oriented.
- A creative, flexible, and consummate problem solver and team player.



The Position

VAIS seeks a Director of Professional Development who will be the thought leader in developing programs that will be of greatest interest to our member schools.

It will be critical for this person to understand the diversity of VAIS member schools through direct connection and the lens of accreditation reviews. Planning committees assist the Director in identifying program content, but ultimately it is the Director who is responsible for overseeing the development, coordination, marketing, implementation, and evaluation of programs. The Director's primary duties include:

Key Areas of Responsibility

- Identifying the needs of independent school professionals through participation in affinity group gatherings, review of accreditation reports, travel to individual schools, and current national and international trends in education.
- Determining where VAIS might best serve its schools in a crowded professional development marketplace.
- Establishing and overseeing program budgets and helping to secure corporate support to make programs affordable.
- Identifying and engaging volunteer members of professional development planning committees.
- Designing programming and securing speakers.
- Working closely with the Director of Program Logistics and Data Management to coordinate programs, initiate contracts for program locations, and ensure accurate databases for marketing.
- Developing marketing materials to attract maximum attendance at programs using print, email, website, social media, and direct marketing strategies.
- Attending and monitoring all VAIS programs and working to ensure a successful learning and networking experience for attendees.
- Measuring effectiveness of programs through evaluation surveys and identifying strategies for improvement.
- Providing regular progress reports and implementing strategies to reach all member schools.
- Networking with professional development staff from other associations and participating in training to stay current on professional development design, delivery, and marketing.
- Performing related tasks as assigned.



The Association

The Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS), a non-profit, voluntary membership association of 95 accredited and candidate schools, is the leader in advancing and advocating for independent education in Virginia. Guided by core values of independence, excellence, and community, VAIS offers services in accreditation, professional development, and advocacy. The Association seeks to stimulate continued improvement in its member schools while promoting public regard for independent schools.



Established in 1973, VAIS is an affiliate of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and a member of the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE) and the International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation (ICAISA). With its office in Richmond, Virginia, VAIS serves a diverse membership of schools across the Commonwealth.

VAIS offers a full menu of professional development programs throughout the year. VAIS recognizes that great schools depend on great teachers. It strives to lead the way toward successful pedagogical innovation, while also staying faithful to practices that are tried and true. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, programming has been virtual for the 2020-2021 academic year. While certain elements of online offerings will be sustained, a return to in-person gatherings is expected to build community and collaboration amongst member schools.

Professional development is offered for most employees of independent schools, including heads, business officers, nurses and counselors, admissions and marketing directors, residential life staff, business officers, and division directors. Programming is also available for trustees, both on-site at individual schools and through virtual and in-person gatherings.

While the Director of Professional Development will have sole responsibility for his or her area, he or she will benefit from working with a close-knit team of supportive, engaged, and talented colleagues.



The Community

Richmond, the capital of Virginia, is a cultural and historical hub on the east coast, just 100 miles south of Washington, DC, and 100 miles west of Virginia Beach. The Richmond Metropolitan Area is home to approximately 1.2 million people, making it the state's third most populous area (behind Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads). In 2016, Travel + Leisure named Richmond the #3 best place in the world to visit, citing its architecture, burgeoning art and food scene, and bicycle friendliness. Residents enjoy the city's charms along with easy access to Atlantic beaches and the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The James River, Richmond's most significant natural landmark, flows through the heart of the city. The James River Park System covers over 550 acres of shorelines and islands and hosts over a million visitors each year. Activities in the park include running and walking trails, fishing, canoeing and kayaking, swimming, and rock climbing.

History abounds in Richmond. The city was the third capital of the Virginia colony after Jamestown and Williamsburg, and it has played a role in many of the most significant American events, from the American Revolution, to the Civil War, to the Civil Rights Movement. Patrick Henry made his famous "Give me liberty or give me death" speech at St. John's Church, where it is now reenacted for visitors. The Edgar Allan Poe Museum honors one of Richmond's most famous former residents. The Richmond Slave Trail is a

self-guided walking trail that details the journey of Africans brought to Virginia.

This is a wonderful time to move to Richmond. Cost of living in Richmond is below the national average, yet Forbes recently rated Richmond among the top ten hottest housing markets in the country. An investment in the community now will pay great dividends in the future.



Application Process & Timeline

For most thorough consideration, candidates for the Director of Professional Development position should submit applications to Southern Teachers (available at SouthernTeachers.com) along with a current resume and a cover letter explaining their interest in and qualifications for this leadership position.

Questions may be directed to Mr. Jamie Estes at Estes@SouthernTeachers.com or 434-295-122.
Please do not contact VAIS directly.

Initial interviews with the consultant at Southern Teachers will be ongoing.

The new Director of Professional Development will begin work no later than July 2021.

