



Executive Director, Breakthrough Denver

ORGANIZATION:	Breakthrough Denver, a program of Kent Denver School
LOCATION:	Englewood, Colorado
REPORTS TO:	Head of School or designee
ADVISORY PARTNER:	Breakthrough Denver Advisory Board
JOB CATEGORY:	Full-Time, Year-Round (Exempt)
PROGRAM REACH:	More than 450 students in grades 7 through 12, as well as post-secondary

OVERVIEW:

The Breakthrough Denver Executive Director is an accomplished, mission-driven leader who guides a high-impact, year-round program serving more than 450 motivated, historically underrepresented students in grades 7 through 12 who are pursuing post-secondary opportunities, as well as preparing talented college students for careers in education. The Executive Director will build on a strong program model and a long-standing partnership with Kent Denver School to ensure excellent student outcomes, a healthy and inclusive organizational culture, durable community relationships, and sustainable philanthropic support.

The Executive Director is accountable for Breakthrough Denver's overall leadership, quality, and sustainability. The Director sets direction; translates strategy into measurable annual priorities; develops and supports the staff; safeguards the student and Teaching Fellow experience; leads fundraising and external relations; and stewards the program's financial and operational resources. Success requires equal strength in educational leadership, organizational management, relationship building, strategic philanthropy, fundraising and execution.

This is a distinctive leadership role. Breakthrough Denver is not a separate nonprofit corporation; it is a program hosted by Kent Denver School and an affiliate of Breakthrough Collaborative. The Executive Director, therefore, leads Breakthrough Denver with substantial programmatic and external responsibilities while working within Kent Denver's legal, financial, human resources, safety, and risk management framework. The Executive Director also partners closely with the Breakthrough Denver Advisory Board, whose role is to support and sustain the program through fundraising, advocacy, relationships, and program support.



JOB DESCRIPTION:

Strategic and Organizational Leadership

- Develop and execute a clear, multi-year strategy aligned with Breakthrough Denver's mission, Kent Denver School's institutional priorities, and Breakthrough Collaborative's affiliate expectations.
- Translate strategy into annual goals, work plans, budgets, performance measures, and clear accountability across the team.
- Use student, program, financial, and stakeholder data to assess results, identify risks and opportunities, and improve the program continuously.
- Serve as the senior advocate for Breakthrough Denver within Kent Denver and as the program's principal representative in the broader community.

Program Quality and Student Success

- Ensure coherent, high-quality summer and school-year programming from entry after sixth grade through high school graduation and college matriculation.
- Establish ambitious, developmentally appropriate outcomes for academic growth, high school success, college readiness, student belonging, and persistence; monitor progress and respond to findings.
- Center the experiences and aspirations of students and families in program design, evaluation, communication, and decision making.
- Oversee the recruitment, selection, training, coaching, and performance of Teaching Fellows and seasonal instructional staff in collaboration with program leaders.
- Maintain strong systems for student safety, supervision, attendance, behavior support, transportation, communication, and emergency response in accordance with Kent Denver policies.

Team Leadership and Culture

- Recruit, retain, supervise, coach, and evaluate a talented year-round and seasonal team, with clear roles, goals, feedback, and opportunities for professional growth.
- Foster a culture of trust, high expectations, collaboration, belonging, learning, and shared responsibility for results.
- Plan staffing and organizational capacity to meet year-round and summer program needs, in accordance with Kent Denver's employment and human resources practices.



Fundraising and External Relations

- Serve as the program's lead fundraiser and, with staff, Kent Denver partners, and the Advisory Board, build and execute an annual and multi-year development strategy as well as annual fundraising events.
- Cultivate, solicit, and steward individuals, foundations, corporations, and other partners; develop compelling proposals, reports, site visits, events, and donor communications.
- Build a diverse and sustainable funding base sufficient to support current operations, appropriate reserves, and thoughtfully planned growth.
- Communicate Breakthrough Denver's mission, outcomes, and needs with clarity and integrity, honoring the dignity and agency of students and families.
- Develop productive partnerships with public schools, community organizations, colleges and universities, education leaders, and other stakeholders

Financial and Operational Stewardship

- Develop and manage the annual program budget, monitor revenue and expenses, forecast needs, and provide timely, accurate reporting to Kent Denver leadership and the Advisory Board.
- Work closely with Kent Denver's finance, advancement, human resources, facilities, technology, communications, and risk management teams; follow applicable school policies and approval processes.
- Maintain effective systems, records, controls, contracts, data practices, and vendor relationships that support efficient operations and protect students, families, employees, volunteers, and the institution.
- Fulfill Breakthrough Collaborative affiliate obligations and draw strategically on the national network's training, tools, learning community, and standards, including local grant management compliance in collaboration with Breakthrough Collaborative's National grant Directors.

Advisory Board Partnership

- Partner with Advisory Board leadership to engage members in fundraising, advocacy, community relationships, and program support.
- Provide the Advisory Board with timely information about goals, results, finances, opportunities, and risks, while maintaining a clear distinction between its advisory role and Kent Denver's fiduciary and employment authority.
- Support thoughtful recruitment, orientation, committee work, meeting preparation, and meaningful member engagement.



QUALIFICATIONS

Strong candidates will demonstrate many of the following qualifications. We encourage candidates to apply even if they do not meet every listed criterion.

Education & Experience

- At least eight years of progressively responsible professional experience, including significant leadership of people, programs, budgets, and organizational strategy; relevant experience in education, youth development, college access, teacher preparation, or a related nonprofit setting is strongly preferred.
- A record of building, coaching, and retaining inclusive, high-performing teams and leading through complex, fast-paced, and seasonal cycles of work.
- Demonstrated success in fundraising or partnership development, including cultivating and stewarding donors, securing gifts or grants, and engaging volunteer leaders.
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent combination of education and relevant experience; an advanced degree is welcomed but not required.

Knowledge & Skills

- Deep commitment to Breakthrough Denver's dual mission, educational opportunity, and the success of students from financially under-resourced communities.
- Strong financial and operational judgment, including budget development, forecasting, internal controls, compliance, and risk management.
- Ability to move fluently between long-range strategy and hands-on execution, manage competing priorities, and make sound decisions with incomplete information.
- Exceptional written, verbal, and interpersonal communication skills; credibility with students, families, educators, donors, civic leaders, and institutional colleagues.
- Cultural humility, sound judgment, discretion, resilience, and a collaborative leadership style.
- Knowledge of the Denver-area education and philanthropic landscape, or the ability to build that knowledge and network quickly.

Physical Requirements & Working Conditions

- This is a full-time, year-round, on-site leadership position based at Kent Denver School, with regular travel throughout the Denver metropolitan area.
- The role requires periodic evening and weekend work and an intensive on-site presence during summer programming and selected Saturday School sessions.
- Employment is with Kent Denver School and is subject to the school's employment policies, required background checks, and student-safety requirements.



Start Date: Immediate

Salary & Benefits:

\$97,000 - \$127,000

This is a full-time, year-round, exempt, benefited position.

To Apply:

Candidates should submit a resume and a thoughtful letter describing their interest in Breakthrough Denver's mission and how their experience prepares them for this role. Please submit your application to the Senior Director of Human Resources, Shannon Rybacki, at srybacki@kentdenver.org.

About Breakthrough Denver

Breakthrough Denver advances a dual mission: to expand educational and social opportunities for motivated, financially under-resourced middle and high school students through a free, rigorous, year-round program, and to motivate and train talented college students for careers in education. Students enter after sixth grade and remain engaged through high school graduation and beyond. Programming includes an intensive summer program, Saturday School, high school transition and success support, college counseling, and a nine-week Teaching Fellow experience supported by professional educators.

Kent Denver School Employment Policy:

Kent Denver School is committed to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all employees and qualified applicants without regard to race, creed, color, religion, transgender status (including gender identity or gender expression), sex (including pregnancy), gender, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, marital status, marriage to a coworker, sexual orientation, status with regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, veteran status (including Vietnam era veteran status), genetic information, military service, application for military service or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

Our school makes reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities, in accordance with applicable law. An applicant who does not meet the minimum qualifications of the position(s) for which the applicant applies will not be considered for employment.



Kent Denver School is a college-preparatory day school with 750+ students in grades 6-12, located on 220 acres in suburban Denver. Kent Denver has been recognized for our leadership in diversity, equity and inclusion. We are committed to fostering a culturally diverse faculty and student body and are eager to consider applications from candidates who recognize the critical importance of diversity in the life of a school. We offer a competitive salary and a complete benefits package for Full-Time Faculty members.