

Position Title: Head of School

Location: Collins Lake Outdoor School, Cleveland, New Mexico

Start Date: Fall of 2025 for planning year. Fall of 2026 start of school

Overview: The Head of School will lead the launch and early operations of a new charter school located on a beautiful ranch near Mora, New Mexico. This innovative K-4 school will offer an immersive, nature-based education model with a focus on outdoor learning, environmental stewardship, and hands-on, experiential education. The Head of School will play a crucial role in the initial planning and preparation for the school's opening in Fall 2026 and will be responsible for guiding the vision and culture of the school, building relationships with the community, and ensuring all operational aspects are ready for a successful launch.

Key Responsibilities:

1. Leadership & Vision:

- Develop and articulate the educational philosophy, mission, and vision of the school, ensuring alignment with outdoor education principles.
- Serve as the primary spokesperson and advocate for the school within the Mora community, including with parents, prospective students, local government, and education networks.
- Lead and inspire staff, students, and the broader community to create a nurturing and inclusive school environment that promotes environmental literacy and respect for nature.

2. Strategic Planning & Development:

- Collaborate with the Board of Directors, founding team, and external stakeholders to plan the operational and educational framework for the school.
- Oversee the design and implementation of curricula that integrate outdoor and experiential learning, with an emphasis on sustainability, community engagement, and personal growth.
- Assist in the development of school policies, procedures, and the school calendar, considering local regulations, charter requirements, and best practices in outdoor education.

3. Staff Development & Hiring:

- Lead recruitment efforts to hire a passionate, skilled, and diverse team of teachers and staff who share the vision of a nature-based education.

- Provide professional development and training to staff in forest school pedagogy, outdoor education, and child-centered learning practices.
 - Foster a collaborative, reflective, and supportive work environment.
- 4. Operations & Logistics:**
- Manage day-to-day operations of the school, ensuring everything is in place for a successful launch in Fall 2026.
 - Oversee facility management, ensuring the ranch is equipped for safe, outdoor learning, safety protocols, and emergency procedures.
 - Work with administrative staff to set up enrollment systems, budgeting, fundraising, and communication systems to ensure a smooth operational flow.
- 5. Community Building & Outreach:**
- Build relationships with local community leaders, families, and organizations to foster a sense of community and support.
 - Develop and implement outreach strategies to attract prospective families and students, including hosting informational events and tours of the site.
 - Engage with local environmental organizations, educators, and businesses to build partnerships that enhance the school's offerings and community involvement.
- 6. Fundraising & Budgeting:**
- Assist in developing a budget for the school, managing resources efficiently, and ensuring sustainability.
 - Lead efforts to secure funding through grants, fundraising events, and donor engagement to support the school's mission and growth.
 - Ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements, including reporting for charter school accountability.
- 7. Student & Parent Engagement:**
- Establish strong communication with parents, providing regular updates and opportunities for input.
 - Promote a culture of transparency and collaboration with families, ensuring they feel involved in their children's learning and development.
 - Ensure the emotional and academic well-being of students, fostering a safe, inclusive environment where every child thrives.
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Qualifications:

- A deep passion for nature-based education, sustainability, and outdoor learning.
- Previous experience in a leadership role within an educational setting, preferably in a charter, independent, or alternative school.

- Strong understanding of project-based learning experiential education, and child development.
 - Strong background in special education and serving students with a variety of social, emotional needs.
 - Excellent communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to build positive relationships with a diverse community.
 - Experience with strategic planning, curriculum development, and team management.
 - Knowledge of New Mexico education laws, charter school regulations, and public school governance.
 - Ability to lead through vision, creativity, and problem-solving in a new school environment.
 - A commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of the school's work.
 - Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree in education or related field preferred.
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Preferred Skills:

- Experience in rural or community-based education settings.
 - Ability to work independently and collaboratively in a small, dynamic, and start-up environment.
 - Familiarity with environmental education programs and outdoor adventure education.
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Compensation:

- Competitive salary commensurate with experience.
 - Benefits package, including health insurance and paid time off.
 - Professional development opportunities in outdoor and nature-based education.
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Application Process: Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and three professional references to Steve Smaby, Board Chair, at CollinsLakeRanch@gmail.com or to CLOS, PO Box 472, Cleveland, NM 87715. Please include a statement about why you are interested in leading a outdoor-based charter

school and how your background aligns with the school's mission. You may also contact us by phone at 575-387-5089 or 281-630-0827.