

**POSITION OVERVIEW**

**Position:** Chief of Staff, Director of Operations and Strategy

**Organization:** Mindset Scholars Network (MSN)

**Reports to:** Executive Director

**Works Closely with:** Leadership Team

**Location:** Fully Remote

**POSITION SUMMARY**

This Director level, full-time position is newly created and will report directly to the Executive Director (ED). The Chief of Staff, Director of Operations and Strategy (COS), will serve as a trusted partner, operator, implementer, and integrator to advance work across the organization and support key cross-functional activities. The ideal candidate will bring strategic leadership with the ability to implement systems, execute objectives, and promote efficiency. They will work with the ED and leadership team on strategic initiatives, institutional planning, program development, operational efficiency, and problem resolution. As the ED's "right-hand" person, this role requires a highly resourceful, emotionally intelligent, detail oriented, and self-motivated individual with a combination of focus and flexibility, as well as a willingness to play an active, behind-the-scenes role. This Chief of Staff role is for someone passionate about operations, strategy, and team culture with an ability to bring ideas to fruition based on MSN's mission and vision.

This is a new role in the organization and is created following the development of a new adaptive strategy that catalyzes greater collaboration and integration across research, practice, and policy. The hired candidate will work with the Executive Director to shape this role over time.

As a team, we seek a colleague who:

- Is committed to work that benefits students and advances educational equity;
- Is excited to learn about insights from research to advance our team's collective vision and impact;
- Is passionate about continuously improving their own work and that of our team;
- Is energized by the prospect of being an integral part of a small, remotely staffed and highly collaborative and productive team; and,
- Can simultaneously think about the 'big picture' and execute on day-to-day management and planning skills.

**ABOUT MINDSET SCHOLARS NETWORK (MSN)**

[MSN](#) is grounded in an interdisciplinary understanding that, in order to learn and thrive, students need to experience respect as valued people and thinkers—and that the practices, policies, and norms in education and society have inequitably shaped this experience of school depending on who students are and the opportunities they are afforded.

Our work is to connect people and ideas across research, practice, and policy to advance relevant scientific knowledge and improve decision-making by education system and institution leaders so that every student’s experience of school sets them up to learn and thrive.

Decades of academic scholarship has shown that the United States K-16 education system is comprised of practices, policies, and norms that advantage some students and disadvantage others, along the lines of race, ethnicity, indigeneity, class, gender, sexuality, language, ability, and immigration status. Institutional segregation and resource inequities are upheld by legislation, judicial decisions, and individual choices. Curricula and instruction have traditionally privileged certain knowledge and cultural legacies and excluded others. Institutional policies and national trends have produced an instructional workforce that does not reflect the diversity of the student body. Policies around tracking, assessment, special education, and discipline are exclusionary and punitive and disproportionately deployed.

These long-standing structures affect students’ opportunities to learn and thrive directly, by affording or constraining access to instructional resources, and indirectly, by sending repeated messages to students that they are—or are not—respected as valued people and thinkers.

Research that draws on rigorous methods and theories from across the social sciences is essential to understanding the complex ways these structures systematically and differentially shape students’ experience of school—and how these structures can be changed. But this knowledge-building is too often siloed within individual academic disciplines and methods and disconnected from the needs and perspectives of education stakeholders. To this end, MSN connects people and ideas across research, practice, and policy to promote research that is responsive and interdisciplinary, and to enable its timely application to decision-making in education. We engage with academic researchers, intermediary organizations, funders, and other practice and policy influencers in education to advance this work.

## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

### ***Create Strong Operations within the Executive Director’s Office and Across the Organization***

- Maintain, monitor, and improve core internal team structures and processes to increase effectiveness, including team meeting structures and practices; project management; decision-making; annual planning; and staffing
- Serve as the “air-traffic controller” for the rhythm of the ED’s Office to support a well-functioning operation that serves the ED and the leadership team
- Manage all-staff and director team meetings to build team culture and advance the organization’s work: partner with staff and the ED to identify topics and design agendas; create a consistent and effective cadence for meetings; serve as facilitator; and ensure that meeting objectives are realistic, leadership is well-prepared, major take-aways are captured, appropriate follow-up ensues, and progress is captured
- Manage professional learning infrastructure: lead staff continuous improvement and annual review processes, develop processes to ensure team members can access more formal professional development supports
- Support hiring and onboarding processes: coordinate with fiscal sponsor’s HR office on all hires; help craft job descriptions and interview processes and protocols; manage offer process in conjunction with fiscal sponsor; and help design and execute onboarding
- Manage contracts, subgrants, MOUs, and reimbursement processes and liaise with fiscal sponsor on these processes

- Review monthly financial reports provided by fiscal sponsor, work with ED in producing annual budget, monitor revenue and expenditures against budget

***Ensure Cohesion and Alignment of the Leadership Team to Strategic and Development Goals***

- Partner with directors to serve as a force multiplier when needed for timely completion of initiatives
- Maintain visibility across the organization to foster alignment towards goals and maintain broad situational awareness of developments across the organization
- Demonstrate solid understanding of MSN’s core strategic priorities; connect the dots, advance operating frameworks, and share the vision
- Serve as an implementer by completing tasks and projects on behalf of the ED, including initiatives that do not fall “cleanly” to another leadership member
- Design internal strategy reviews among directors’ team, monitor progress against the strategy
- Quarterly meetings with MSN funders and advisory board: identify topics, prepare pre-read and presentation materials
- Periodic engagement with brain trust of external MSN advisors: work with other directors to identify topics, design engagement, prepare meetings
- Partner closely with the ED and leadership team to ensure that priorities are resourced, effective operating mechanisms track progress and measure growth, remove barriers, resolve potential areas of misalignment, and meet goals

***Serves as a Strategic Thought Partner, Sounding Board, and Confidante to the ED***

- Identify and analyze problems; weigh relevance and accuracy of information; generate and evaluate solutions; frame ideas to resolve problems and mitigate risks; and make recommendations, often without prompting from the ED or others, on issues and opportunities
- Inform ED’s decision-making by ensuring data and information is prepared in consistent and easy-to-understand formats; act as sounding board to offer perspective and guidance
- Succinctly update the ED on related industry and field issues, supported with facts and recommendations, facilitating effective decision-making, with vetted narrative and briefings

***Provide Strategic Prioritization of the ED’s Time to Ensure Executive Effectiveness***

- Remain committed to effective use of the ED’s time by establishing procedures, protocols, and practices that delegate or deescalate non-priority items and promote strategic thinking time
- Proactively lead special projects, transformation efforts, and initiatives to keep the ED’s time and energy focused on her core priorities
- Identify additional resources to ensure the team is adaptive to its continued growth

***Support ED with External Engagement***

- Help ED prepare for external engagement (meetings, presentations) as needed
- Draft and send key external communications as needed
- Facilitate follow-up for external meetings
- Assist with funder engagement, grant-writing, managing deliverables, and producing reports

**QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS**

- At least 10 years of progressive cross-functional experience, as a Chief of Staff or similar capacity
- Experience in the education sector strongly preferred
- Experience working closely with executives confidently and collaboratively; C-suite experience such as presenting to EDs and boards of directors a plus

- Experience developing, executing, and overseeing a strategic vision
- Experience working cross-functionally in areas including research, development, client engagement, or other fields
- Experience spearheading and managing projects with multiple contributors and work streams from conception to completion on time and within budget
- Experience managing and creating capacity-building opportunities for junior colleagues
- Strong knowledge of operational systems, structures, and ways of working both with a collective team and an Executive Office
- Exceptional communication skills, including written, verbal, and graphical; ability to design written products that convey ideas clearly and persuasively
- Ability to work in a small, highly motivated, and fast-moving remote office / telecommuting environment with frequent change and innovation
- Ability to creatively solve problems to ensure deliverables are met and pitch in when necessary at all task levels
- Time management skills to handle the competing priorities of several projects and ongoing organizational responsibilities
- Strong people management and culture-enhancing skills
- Culturally open-minded, flexible, open to suggestions and opinions, eager to learn and grow, direct but polite, and organized in all aspects of work
- Ability to collaborate productively and harmoniously in a team, while also being able to self-manage completion of work tasks independently with minimal oversight and exercise good judgment and sound decision-making
- Strong self-efficacy and emotional intelligence to cultivate team-wide respect and trust
- Passion, energy, and appreciation for motivating and inspiring teams; ability to build relationships at all levels of an organizations

## **TO APPLY**

We welcome and encourage people from underrepresented backgrounds who can bring unique perspectives to the table to apply. We are looking for people committed to cultivating an inclusive work environment that prioritizes continuous professional ‘stretching’ and growth and to helping each other make a positive contribution to the world. No location preference; people in all United States locations are encouraged to apply. This position may require domestic travel to two to three meetings per year, and is considered exempt for overtime purposes.

Please click [here](#) to apply via Prime’s website. You will be required to submit a resume and two written responses through the application process. Email any questions to [info@primechiefstaff.com](mailto:info@primechiefstaff.com).

## **Hiring Statement**

*The Mindset Scholars Network is a project of the New Venture Fund, a 501(c)(3) public charity that incubates new and innovative public-interest projects and grant-making programs. The New Venture Fund is committed to attracting, developing and retaining exceptional people, and to creating a work environment that is dynamic, rewarding and enables each of us to realize our potential. The New Venture Fund's work environment is safe and open to all employees and partners, respecting the full spectrum of race, color, religious creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, political affiliation, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, and all other classifications protected by law in the locality and/or state in which you are working.*