
Chief of the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services

About Chicago Public Schools

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is one of the largest school districts in the United States, serving over 320,000 students in 600+ schools and employing approximately 40,000 people, most of them teachers. CPS has set ambitious goals to ensure that every student, in every school and every neighborhood, has access to a world-class learning experience that prepares each for success in college, career, and civic life. In order to fulfill this mission, we make three commitments to our students, their families, and all Chicagoans: academic progress, financial stability, and integrity. Six core values are embedded within these commitments – student-centered, whole child, equity, academic excellence, community partnership, and continuous learning.

The mission of the Office of Diverse Learning Supports & Services (ODLSS) is to support activities designed to accurately identify students with disabilities, and provide them with the specialized instruction and services they need to meet their individual educational needs.

The Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) is responsible for providing critical, equitable and transformative support to students with diverse learning needs across the city. ODLSS is responsible for student evaluations, creating and monitoring Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and working with schools, staff, and families to fulfill these plans towards greater student development and achievement. ODLSS uses a data-driven approach to best support the needs of each individual student, and does so in compliance with federal and state regulations regarding special education, including the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

About The Role

Under the direction of the Chief Education Officer (CEdO), the Chief of the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services provides critical leadership for the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) and directly oversees a team of approximately 100 people and nearly 2000 citywide clinician. The Chief of ODLSS has direct ownership of all activities targeted at improving instructional practice, and ultimately driving outstanding academic outcomes for all CPS students. This role provides strategic direction to both central office and school-based leaders and staff to ensure that all students receive high-quality, grade-level instruction in their least restrictive environment. As a critical member of the senior leadership team, this role will lay out a clear vision and plan for curriculum and instruction, staff development and accountability, and operational excellence of the department, designed to ensure equitable support and services for diverse learners.

Your Responsibilities

The Chief of the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services will be held accountable for the following responsibilities:

- Collaborate with other CPS offices to ensure that students with diverse learning needs receive high quality grade level instruction in the least restrictive environment.
- Establish, communicate and build commitment to a shared vision for serving diverse learners in a manner that drives high expectations and outstanding academic outcomes while eradicating inequities between peers;
- Improve the quality of the continuum of services for diverse learners to ensure instruction and services are highly effective, inclusive, culturally relevant and centered around the needs of students;

- Leverage research, best practices and deep personal expertise around special education to design and articulate clear theories of pedagogy, develop intervention programs, implement curriculum and assess efficacy to improve the delivery of special education and related services;
- Lead the design of a comprehensive assessment and progress monitoring system to both outline the annual cadence of diverse learner assessments, including appropriate modifications and accommodations, as well as to evaluate the equitable distribution of diverse learner supports and services to ensure that they are equitably allocated to meet the needs of all CPS students, families and schools;
- Create a culture of continuous improvement by proactively establishing systems to gather feedback from schools and families intended to influence both policies and practices at the district level that support the education of diverse learners;
- Increase accountability by developing, in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education special monitor, strategies and procedures to ensure that CPS meets all state and federally-mandated regulations and requirements for diverse learner programs;
- Manage the quality assurance process of instructional and intervention materials for diverse learners, including those in bilingual programs to inform and ensure alignment with the district's framework;
- Assess, develop and implement an appropriate organizational structure for the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services that aligns to the department's strategic plan and maximizes the strengths of each team member;
- Build effective, productive working relationships with internal departments throughout CPS to champion diverse learner education, ensure that all instructional materials are universally designed for all students and that all strategies for improving diverse learner outcomes are implemented successfully and with fidelity;
- Manage a high-functioning team of administrative employees, citywide teachers and clinicians to deliver best-in-class services to diverse learners, families, and communities in CPS, Charter, Contract, Private and Residential Schools;
- Partner with the Budget Office to develop and maintain the annual department budget that advances educational outcomes for diverse learner students, including forecasting, budget-building and monitoring;
- Build the capacity of school leaders to champion and implement fair and consistent academic practices for diverse learners by establishing robust learning opportunities and clear protocols;
- Develop and oversee the delivery of training essential to support all educators to be fully equipped and committed to providing diverse learner instruction that results in the achievement of student performance goals;
- Support central and school-based staff and the community to make decisions based on research and best practices in special education, psychology, social work, health, counseling, student support team, and related services;
- Other duties as assigned.

Skills Needed for Success

Strategic Planning, Organization and Effective Execution

- Strategic and critical thinker with a proven ability to lead thoughtful, transformative action within complex organizations.
- In-depth knowledge and experience in leading data-driven practices including distilling analysis into insights and translating insights into systemic action.
- Offer innovative solutions to seemingly intractable problems and adapt strategy to changing conditions.
- Exhibit a strong focus on goals and results. Set clear metrics for success.
- Prioritize and plan activities, monitor progress continually and demonstrate persistence to overcome obstacles to achieve goals.

- Ability to effectively achieve multiple goals and manage multiple priorities and projects simultaneously.

Special Education Knowledge and Expertise

- Expert understanding of special education law, including legal mandates and regulations governing the provision of special education and related services.
- Demonstrate ability to develop and deliver special education programming that improves academic performance.
- Understand and implement promising, innovative and effective instructional practices and models.

Influence and Leadership

- Create clear compelling vision; proven ability to build consensus among diverse stakeholders to lead and drive change, including influencing and motivating others toward a common goal.
- Communicate effectively, tailoring messages for the audience, context, and mode of communication.
- Listen actively to others and effectively interpret motivations/perceptions. Seek and integrate feedback from others to achieve better results.
- Build positive relationships and coalitions. Maintain visibility and work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders at all levels (i.e. district staff, students, families, communities, advocacy groups, etc.).
- Collaborate with public agencies, multiple departments, schools, or organizations to achieve convergence in strategy and practice.
- Navigate political structures, relationships, and dynamics to improve results and amplify access for all students.

Team Leadership and Management

- Lead a creative, innovative, and high-functioning team; delegate and leverage the team effectively to drive for impactful results and achieve ambitious goals.
- Assess team and individual skills and identify development needs; provide feedback and support to improve practice, build capacity, and maximize talent.
- Promote professional learning and utilize effective adult learning techniques.
- Lead teams to collaborate with other departments, teams, and stakeholders.

Racial Equity Lens

- Deep knowledge of research, principles, and practices around diversity, inclusion, and racial equity.
- Ability to meaningfully engage a wide variety of diverse stakeholders in challenging dialogue and critical self-reflection around racial identity, implicit bias, systemic racism, and structural inequities.
- Passion and urgency for addressing racial inequities and improving the lives of students and families in Chicago.

In order to be successful and achieve the above responsibilities, the Chief of the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services will possess the following qualifications:

Education Required:

- Master's degree in special education, educational administration, or a related field from an accredited college or university; Doctorate preferred
- Illinois State Board of Education Licensure with Director of Special Education endorsement required

Experience and Number of Years:

- Minimum of seven (7) years of leadership experience in special education leading teams is required

- Minimum of five (5) years implementing district-wide strategies related to teaching and learning for diverse learners in a large urban school district is preferred
- Previous experience building and leading high-performing teams to achieve ambitious goals with strong outcomes;
- Proven record of building and leading large-scale complex programs, projects and change management initiatives; and
- Experience with multi-year strategic planning and budgeting preferred.
- Bilingualism preferred.

Conditions of Employment

As a condition of employment with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), employees are required to:

- **Establish/Maintain Chicago Residency** - Employees are required to live within the geographic boundaries of the City of Chicago within six months of their CPS hire date and maintain residency throughout their employment with the district. The Chicago residency requirement does not apply to temporary/part-time positions, however, all CPS employees must be residents of Illinois.
- **Be Fully Vaccinated Against COVID-19** - Unless approved for a medical or religious exemption, all employees are required to be up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations, including boosters, and to submit proof of vaccination to the district within 30 days of hire. “Up-to-date” on vaccination is defined as being at least two weeks past all primary vaccine doses and any applicable boosters.

Salary & Benefits

The salary range for this integral leadership position is \$180,000 to \$200,000 and commensurate with prior experience. In addition, a comprehensive benefits package will be included in the ultimate offer. We look forward to discussing details with you as the interview process progresses.

How to Apply

Alma Advisory Group is honored to support Chicago Public Schools on this search. Interested candidates may apply online at: <https://apply.workable.com/almaadvisorygroup/j/923D25C1CF/>