



AN INVITATION TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION OF  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES SCHOOLS NETWORK

ASIA SOCIETY  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

*Investigate the World. Recognize Perspectives. Communicate Ideas. Take Action.*

**THE SEARCH**

Asia Society seeks an entrepreneurial Executive Director to lead the International Studies Schools Network (ISSN). ISSN is a national network of design-driven schools with a mission of developing college-ready, globally competent high school graduates. Asia Society has led the effort to define the concept of global competence, articulating the knowledge and skills students need in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Since 2003, Asia Society has worked in partnership with public school districts and charter authorities to create the ISSN. The network currently includes 28 schools in urban and rural communities across the United States; 72% of all students are minorities and 64% are from low-income families. A major focus of ISSN has been closing the achievement gap for low-income and historically underserved secondary students while addressing the growing opportunity gap between what American schools typically teach and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for full participation in a global economy and the responsibilities of global citizenship.

The Executive Director will lead a staff that is highly-regarded, well-networked, and possess a high level of practitioner experience and global competence expertise. ISSN provides executive coaching to school level administrators, builds teacher capacity through targeted professional development and assists districts in planning whole-school development and transformation. The ISSN team has developed an understanding of international trends and practices in curriculum, instruction, assessment and school governance. The emphasis on developing students' global competence is complimented by the commitment to providing excellent and equitable educational options for children in traditionally underserved communities.

The ISSN responds to two intertwined imperatives facing American education. The first is overcoming the chronic problem of poor academic performance among low-income and minority students. The second is preparing students for work and civic roles in a globalized environment, where success increasingly requires the ability to compete, connect, and cooperate on an international scale. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and interdependent, the United States faces challenges and opportunities that are global in scope. Schools and educators are tasked with addressing the immediate issues of today, ranging from international conflict to interconnected economies, while embracing opportunities for global collaboration. These challenges run deep, calling into question how schools educate the country's children and prepare the workforce for success in the 21st century.

Asia Society has set out to prepare educators with the global content knowledge, pedagogy, and teaching skills they need to integrate global competence into the classroom to reach all learners. Effective teachers not only prepare students to address the challenges of today, but equip them to solve the problems we do not yet have the imagination to conjure.

The Executive Director position calls for an educational champion, strategic and creative leader, and a global advocate who is deeply knowledgeable of K-12 education and passionate about global education – both policy and practice. S/he must be an effective and skillful communicator and an educational partner. The successful candidate must be able to work with diverse stakeholders and have the capacity to identify, create, and nurture effective partnerships and relationships to substantially grow the ISSN in size and impact. This is an exciting opportunity for a seasoned K-12 leader to join a strong and driven organization at a critical moment in its history as the organization sets out to reimagine the depth of its mission and identify new partnerships, while strengthening its foundation of schools.

Asia Society has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential until finalists are selected, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **ASIA SOCIETY'S MISSION AND HISTORY**

Asia Society is the leading organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context. Across the overarching fields of the arts, policy, and education, the Asia Society provides insight, generates ideas, and promotes collaboration to address present challenges and create a shared future.

The organization was founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller III. Initially established to promote greater knowledge of Asia in the U.S., the Society today is a global institution – with offices throughout the U.S. and Asia – that fulfills its educational mandate through a wide range of cross-disciplinary programming. As economies and cultures become more interconnected, the Society's programs have expanded to address Asian American issues, the effects of globalization, and pressing concerns in Asia, including the status of women, environmental challenges, and rapid urbanization.

Asia Society is organized into three main areas: arts, policy, and education. The Director of the ISSN will report to the Vice President of Education, Anthony Jackson, who oversees all of the organization's educational initiatives.

## **ASIA SOCIETY: EDUCATION**

At the Asia Society, the core educational mission is to develop students' and young leaders' *global competence* as the foundation for understanding between people in the Asia Pacific region and throughout the world.

Working collaboratively with leaders in the field, Asia Society defined global competence and has strived to operationalize it in schools and educational systems for over 10 years. Students demonstrate global competence through awareness and curiosity about how the world works – informed by disciplinary and interdisciplinary insights. Specifically, globally competent students are able to: **Investigate the World, Recognize Perspectives, Communicate Ideas and Take Action.** More information on global competence can be found at [asiasociety.org/globalcompetence](http://asiasociety.org/globalcompetence).

In 2003, Asia Society received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to lead a new school design effort to bring global competence to classrooms and schools around the US. Asia Society began to partner with school districts and charter management organizations to initially develop 10 small, international-themed schools which became the International Studies Schools Network (ISSN). These schools served as replicable examples of what high-quality, global education can do for students, positioning Asia Society and its partners to inform policymakers and leaders in education and to inspire a broadening of secondary school curricula nationally. The ISSN has expanded over time to include established schools interested in transforming their core curriculum and culture to emphasize deep learning, emphasizing development of educators' expertise in project based instruction and performance based assessment learned and applied in a global context.

The ISSN is one of several high-quality educational initiatives at Asia Society, all of which work to reform the educational system to incorporate global competence toward a more engaged global future. The Executive Director of the ISSN will work in thought partnership with leaders from the fields of international best practice sharing, Chinese language, after school, and professional development to advance the mission of global competence education. More information on all of our initiatives can be found at [asiasociety.org/education](http://asiasociety.org/education).

## **ISSN STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN**

Since its creation in 2003, Asia Society has grown the network to include 28 active and 6 alumni schools. ISSN currently addresses the educational achievement and opportunity gaps by providing high-quality tools, materials, and professional development service through its **Graduation Performance System (GPS)**, the means through which global competence is operationalized in schools. Asia Society supports teachers to engage students in project-based learning and standards-based evaluation of their work via performance assessments. Through

exposure to frequent and high-quality, performance-based learning experiences, the GPS aims to provide students with increased:

- Levels of motivation and engagement in learning.
- Preparation to be successful on the types of authentic performance tasks contained in the Common Core assessments.
- Attainment of the competencies required for global competence in college and career readiness.

GPS continues to transform curriculum and instruction by integrating international content through a student-centered pedagogy.

In 2013, during a moment of reflective assessment, Asia Society undertook a strategic growth planning process to examine the applications of its mission, the Network's role in emerging educational trends, and measures of progress and impact of its programs. As expected, the assessment revealed there is an overarching demand for students in the U.S. to be both globally competent and college-ready, however U.S. schools and educators are not appropriately equipped with tools and resources to effectively prepare students for work and civic roles in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.

As the needs of schools and educators expand, the ISSN is well positioned to handle and meet those needs through a projected and natural deepening of the Network's existing work. The network's future growth will maintain a focus on strengthening its core GPS resources and coaching services, while leveraging performance assessment professional development workshops as an entry point towards working with schools on a deeper level.

Over the next five years, the ISSN aspires to grow to serve 120 schools and 60,000 students. To achieve this growth, ISSN will implement an enhanced business model, invest in product development, and validate its impact through rigorous program evaluation study. ISSN will seek philanthropic support over the next five years to invest in program development and to supplement the funding of its ongoing operations.

ISSN will continue to transition from a whole-school reform model towards a more targeted approach to curriculum, assessment, and instruction as a capacity-building service provider. Schools and districts are being encouraged to commit to a three-year service period staged in one-year customized increments. ISSN will provide service bundles consisting of four or eight coaching days, with access to an online platform during the service period (and the option to purchase continued access post-contract). Coaching services are delivered on site by highly qualified, trained, and Asia Society-certified consultants with a range of experience levels and content expertise. Customers may optionally purchase service "extras," including study tours, site visits, attendance at bi-annual Leaders Series Meetings, and attendance at the annual Summer Institute.

## **THE ROLE**

Based in New York, NY, the Executive Director is an educational champion, advocate, and key leader responsible for developing strategy and scaling, and ensuring successful operations of the International Studies Schools Network (ISSN).

At a moment of reimagining the breadth of ISSN's reach, the Executive Director will play a pivotal role within the Education Department in growing and enhancing Asia Society's signature initiative to promote the development of college-ready, globally competent graduates. The Executive Director will ensure the strategy is pursued collaboratively with schools and educators in ISSN and that the organization's data, policy, and practice are well coordinated and communicated.

## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Expand the number of schools and students served by ISSN**

The next Executive Director will expand the number of schools and students served by ISSN to a projected target of 120 total schools and approximately 60,000 students by 2019. The next Executive Director will lead the transition from a whole-school reform model towards a more targeted approach to curriculum, assessment, and instruction as a capacity-building service provider. This will require the identification and cultivation of schools that would be a good match for the ISSN. S/he will be expected to articulate clearly the core value proposition of the ISSN and also to interface effectively with a variety of external constituencies.

With a recent completion of a strategic plan, the Executive Director will join Asia Society, and specifically ISSN, at a point of anticipated growth, further contemplation, and action. The Executive Director will refine a strategy of growth and enhance the Network on a national level. Over time, ISSN will consider expanding into targeted international markets. In collaboration with the Vice President, the Executive Director will lead the research and data agenda of the ISSN. On a broad scale, s/he will support the department's research agenda for global competence.

### **Broaden ISSN's Public Profile**

The Executive Director will strengthen the ISSN brand and create a pipeline for global core curriculum, instructional, and assessment resources. As the International Studies Schools Network measures its voice on the national stage, the Executive Director is expected to cultivate new opportunities in the market to seek partnerships and business at a regional, statewide, and national level. S/he will oversee the Associate Director, School Partnerships in direct outreach to selected school districts, stated education agencies, and charter authorities to initiate agreements between the Society and such entities responsible for implementing school-based reforms. The Executive Director will actively seek venues to speak and represent Asia Society with educators and policy leaders, state leaders, and philanthropists. Internally, s/he will support the work of others in identifying philanthropic sources of funding and conceptualize and develop proposals.

In an effort to ensure a strong online presence for ISSN, the Executive Director will provide communication oversight and ideas in collaboration with the Assistant Director of Content and Strategy. S/he will write blog posts and participate in social media as a method of advancing the mission and ISSN's reach of influence.

### **Manage the Operational Metrics of Implementation, Materials Development and Support**

Using the example of building blocks, ISSN's internal team works in collaboration with one another, building upon the foundation of the network's documented success. The Executive Director will be responsible for a five-person team and ten senior consultants.

S/he will oversee and support the Director of the ISSN, who leads the overall operations of the ISSN implementation, including recruitment, training, and evaluation of consultants; the implementation of the ISSN services; and professional development initiatives for ISSN school leaders. Furthermore, the Executive Director will support the Director and the coaching teams as they implement ISSN service in schools and ensure the services continue to support schools in meeting federal and state requirements.

S/he will also oversee and support the Director, Global Learning Programs, and team in the creation of professional development and curriculum to support GPS implementation and ISSN scale (freemium versions of materials, online materials, workshops, etc.).

### **Explore ISSN's Future Opportunities for Philanthropic Support**

ISSN was initially underwritten by significant investment by foundation support subsidizing the cost of the program and incentivizing schools participation. As ISSN has proven its value, it has moved to a mixed funding model which is predominately fee-for-service with limited philanthropic support. The next ED will explore what opportunities might exist to court additional philanthropic support for additional programmatic enhancements and research.

### **QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCES**

- Passion for educational mission of the Asia Society and the work of the ISSN: [www.asiasociety.org/issn](http://www.asiasociety.org/issn);
- Business Acumen: The ability to identify and develop strategic partnerships that lead to increased business, improved awareness of global competence, and increased adoption of our work; proven track record working with programs of national/international significance;
- Excellent entrepreneurial and strategic management skills with experience managing an initiative through growth;
- Highly knowledgeable of international content, pedagogy, and performance-based instruction and assessment, including the use of portfolios;

- Professional maturity with a high level of intellectual curiosity and the ability to handle a dynamic agenda, adapting to a changing landscape, where appropriate, and operating effectively amid ambiguity;
- A team player with a can-do attitude who seeks to work with others collaboratively toward a common purpose;
- Strong management, supervisory, and team-building skills as well as experience managing budgets;
- Results-oriented with the ability to translate ideas into action;
- Masters degree and at least 10 years experience in a senior position in a field related to education and child development;
- At least 7 years of practical leadership experience in education reform/school change, school/district strategic planning, or site-based professional learning;
- Experience working with urban and diverse school district(s);
- Diverse international work, travel, or other intercultural experiences;
- Technological acumen: proficient with Microsoft Office Suite; solid knowledge and comfort with 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom technologies.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS AND PROCEDURES**

Asia Society has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm. Review of candidates will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Nominations, inquiries, and applications, including a letter of interest describing the individual's qualifications for the position and curriculum vitae, should be sent in confidence to:

Sean Farrell, Principal, and Talia Greenwald, Associate  
Isaacson, Miller, 1300 19th Street, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036

To apply: [www.imsearch.com/5265](http://www.imsearch.com/5265)

**Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.**

*The Asia Society is an equal-opportunity employer.*