



Position Announcement
Thrive in 5: Boston's Promise to Its Children
Executive Director

Thrive in 5 is a ground-breaking public-private partnership to ensure universal school readiness, Boston's roadmap for preventing the academic achievement gap in our next generation of students. The new Executive Director – a strategic leader, skilled collaborator and proven resource developer – will oversee and drive the success of Thrive in 5.

Background

Launched in 2008 by Mayor Menino and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay, Thrive in 5 has seen major successes in meeting its goals and has faced a range of challenges.

Why is this citywide approach to school readiness an essential component for Boston's future? Learning begins at birth. In the first years of life, a child's brain develops faster than during any other time. A child's school and subsequent life success relies on good health, positive early childhood experiences, and strong families as the foundations for all the learning and development that follows. For this reason, throughout 2007, a cross-sector, diverse 65-person team of professionals and 35 parents met to create Thrive in 5. A total of 300 Boston leaders and residents were engaged through focus groups and community meetings, building on research and practice that identified the most effective strategies for promoting school readiness. This process resulted in a city-wide vision and 10-year plan for Boston to ensure that every child enters Kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life.

In sum:

- We know that half of the achievement gap in grade twelve can be attributed to gaps already present in first grade.
- Thrive in 5 arose from the moral, scientific and economic imperative to ensure universal school readiness, understanding that disparities go beyond individual children and families, creating racial and economic inequities in our country that impact us all.
- Given the kind of diversity here (racial, cultural and linguistic), and the levels of need, Boston offers the ideal U.S. learning lab for best practices that engage vulnerable families and communities to ensure universal school readiness.

Thrive in 5 is building a city-wide movement – bringing together young children's families, early care and education providers, health and human service providers, the corporate sector, and government – to work in new ways, across traditional sectors and systems that will more effectively and efficiently support the healthy development and school readiness of our children. Boston's School Readiness Roadmap details the goals and strategies being implemented to transform the way Boston works to support our youngest children and their families.

The following graphic illustrates Thrive in 5's equation and vision of success:



Parents will have the skills, confidence and knowledge to be leaders in their children's learning and development.

Families will continuously play a leadership role in expanding community capacity to support children's healthy development from birth.

Boston will be the city with the highest quality early education and care for all young children – infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers – and in all settings: family child care, center-based care, Head Start/Early Head Start, school-based early education, and informal (family, friend and neighbor) care.

Health care, early intervention and other systems that serve young children will succeed in early detection and effective responses to barriers to child development, especially conditions that can create "toxic stress" in children.

Every sector in Boston will continuously work together so that children's school readiness remains a permanent priority.

Where children and families go in the course of their daily lives, there will be visible signs of support for school readiness, parenting and child development.

As measured by comprehensive and holistic assessments, upon kindergarten entry all our children will be ready for school success.

Implementation Partnerships for each part of this equation, spearheaded by a lean Thrive in 5 staff team, advise and support the implementation of the strategies.

While Thrive in 5 is sponsored by Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino and United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, additional funding partners include: Barr Foundation; Boston Medical Center; the Boston Opportunity Agenda; Children's Hospital Boston; Partners HealthCare; the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; and two significant federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grants in partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission and the Mass. Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

A vibrant and high-level 26-member Leadership Council advises the work of Thrive in 5. Representing a unique cross-section of health providers, public policy leaders, business executives, early education and care experts, and parents, the Leadership Council brings together representatives from every corner of Boston who care about and are dedicated to ensuring that children enter school ready to succeed.

For more information, please visit www.thrivein5boston.org.

The Position

The Executive Director is a United Way employee, reporting to the United Way Senior VP for Community Impact, and meeting monthly with the Executive Committee of the Thrive in 5 Leadership Council.

Duties and Responsibilities

- DRIVING PROGRESS - Provide strategic leadership to the Executive Committee and Leadership Council as they guide and support Thrive in 5, as well as managing and directing the Thrive staff team.
- SECURING RESOURCES - Lead the effort to secure required resources for Boston's early childhood vision. Develop strategies, identify and secure funding opportunities, galvanize current and potential donors (public and private). Engage the Thrive in 5 leadership to develop significant and sustainable sources of both direct funding and leveraged funding opportunities.
- COMMUNICATIONS – STAKEHOLDERS - Communicate regularly with Executive Committee, full Leadership Council, current funders, and leaders of each key initiative within the Thrive in 5 umbrella.

- MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS – EXTERNAL - Ensure a broad knowledge and understanding across Boston of the importance of early childhood and the progress, accomplishments and value of Thrive in 5.
- CONTINUOUS STRATEGIC REVIEW – Organize and lead a continuous, effective consideration of Thrive in 5’s next strategic chapter, ensuring that infrastructure, strategic priorities, evaluative systems, as well as fundraising, communication, and community building support and enhance the goals outlined in the Thrive in 5 Roadmap. Advise the Executive Committee and full Leadership Council on formative and emerging lessons learned, and create conditions to deepen the partnership and maintain its healthy functioning.
- OPERATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION – Oversee the Thrive in 5 staff and collaborate with the partners engaged to achieve Thrive in 5’s annual strategies. Engage staff and partners that will best accomplish Thrive in 5’s aims and reconsider as necessary. Negotiate terms of contracts/renewals for consultants. Create work plans, facilitate information sharing and develop a core expertise and commitment to maximizing systems reform opportunities. Manage, coordinate and leverage significant in-kind human resource contributions of the partners.
- DATA AND EVALUATION – Review current systems and where necessary implement improved systems for effective collection and use of data to monitor progress across all key components of Thrive in 5, both quantitative and qualitative.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate will be a highly seasoned, hard-working and visionary professional with a proven track record in each of the 7 areas above, who is skilled at:

- Quickly establishing effective working relationships
- Working well under the pressure of deadlines and achieving consensus in complex collaborative contexts
- Receiving feedback well and working in a participative, collaborative manner
- Ideal but not required is content knowledge in one or more areas of school readiness, such as: early education, pediatric/public health strategies, and family and community engagement.

Additional experience and characteristics:

- Passion for universal school readiness
- Ability to inspire buy-in to large scale vision while ensuring the tactical execution of that vision
- Significant leadership experience developing and facilitating collaborations and partnerships at a community, municipal and/or state level
- Experience designing and managing complex projects and community change efforts that are data-driven and results-oriented
- Outstanding writing and public presentation skills and facility communicating with diverse audiences on complex issues
- High energy, drive and ethical standards
- Appreciation for diversity of race, culture, language, religion and family structure
- Bachelor’s degree required. Advanced degree in education, management, human services or related field preferred.
- Residence in or near Boston or ability to relocate. Understanding of Boston neighborhoods and families a significant plus.

To apply, send cover letter, resume and salary history to Susan Egmont at Egmont Associates, segmont@egmontassociates.com.