

POSITION PROFILE

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

AIM HIGH

San Francisco, California



ABOUT AIM HIGH

Aim High was founded on the conviction that every young person, regardless of life circumstance, has the right to a quality education that opens doors to the larger world. Launched in 1986 with fifty pioneering San Francisco students, Aim High has since expanded to eighteen sites serving over 2,300 deserving middle schoolers throughout the Bay Area, Napa and Tahoe-Truckee.

Along the way, this award-winning summer enrichment program has engaged and empowered over fifteen thousand low-income middle schoolers to *aim high for high school*, *aim high for college* and *aim high for life*. One notable testimonial to Aim High's success is that, since 2009 when we started tracking the alumni/ae data, over 98% of its alumni/ae have graduated from high school and gone on to college. Another is that, today, over a third of Aim High teachers are Aim High graduates!

Mission and Vision

Aim High creates life-changing opportunities during the summer and beyond. Our community:

- Nurtures the promise and potential of middle school students from low-income neighborhoods
- Prepares students for high school, setting them on the path to college and future success
- Recruits, engages and inspires the next generation of teachers and educational leaders

Aim High is committed to closing the opportunity and achievement gaps in Northern California through its transformative summer learning program. We envision every middle school student having access to joyful summer learning, inspired and innovative teachers and the support they need to propel them to success and fulfillment in school and life.



ABOUT AIM HIGH

Core Values

Aim High's CORE values reflect a distinctive philosophy of education that is embraced and advanced by its teachers, students, parents, and community. Grounded in the belief that learning should be affirming, joyful, engaging, and challenging, these CORE values animate Aim High's recipe for creating bright futures:

- **Community:** As an organization, and in every aspect of our program, we celebrate diversity, teamwork, and successes large and small that are anchored in a palpable sense of belonging. Above all, we believe in making Aim High a place where all of our community members feel safe, respected, appreciated and empowered.
- **Opportunity:** Break perceived barriers by "owning" and taking the initiative. Become a proactive learner committed to contributing to and being a leader in the larger community. This begins by marshalling the courage to explore the world outside your walls and imagining/developing yourself as an effective societal influencer. Aim High's role as a fresh "window on the world," an incubator and springboard toward personal belief, strength and agency results from one's multi-year immersion in the Aim High Magic. The fact is that Aim High's lasting impact does not rely on magic. Instead, it springs from its belief in young people's determination and capacity to do their part to heal the world and to make it better. Their durable and enduring mantra is to "say yes" to being impassioned agents of change.
- **Respect:** "Put-ups," not put-downs, are an integral part of Aim High's culture of positive reinforcement. We value our differences, and we support each other through acts of kindness and encouragement. We deeply honor and respect individual differences, culture, community as well as the sanctity of the environment and the natural world.
- **High Expectations:** The Aim High experience enables all community members, students and professional staff alike, to make life-shaping commitments to personal and professional growth, as they set aspirational (even audacious) goals for the future. Aim High's rigorous expectations for growth -- personal, academic and "allocentric" (other centered) -- are the touchstone of the Aim High experience



ABOUT AIM HIGH

Making An Outsized Impact (the “mouse that roared”)

More than 15,000 middle-schoolers have graduated from Aim High since 1986. In recent years:

98% of Aim High alumni/ae have graduated from high school on time vs. **76%** of low-income students nationally

98% of Aim High alumni/ae have enrolled in college vs. **52%** of low-income students nationally

Among Stanford University’s Gardner Center’s 2019 findings were that Aim High participation reduced chronic absenteeism and suspension rates and improved English language arts performance. Researchers extrapolated that if all low-income middle school students in California had had access to Aim High, 12,000 fewer students would have been chronically absent each year. It was because of such impressive outcomes that Aim High was twice (2008 and 2018) recognized by the National Summer Learning Association with the *Excellence in Summer Learning Award* (the only organization to be so honored twice), and when Alec Lee was recognized by the Obama White House as a *Champion of Change*, Aim High was acknowledged as one of the top ten summer programs in the country.

For a more comprehensive understanding of Aim High, please visit www.aimhigh.org and review their most recent **Annual Report**.

LEARN MORE:

aimhigh.org
Annual Report



THE OPPORTUNITY

Aim High, a nationally recognized, award winning organization at the forefront of the summer learning movement, is seeking a dynamic and inspiring leader to be its CEO. This is a unique opportunity to lead an organization dedicated to nurturing the power and potential of every student while eradicating gaps in achievement and opportunity in low-income and marginalized communities.

After 35 years of service and commitment to unlocking the potential of low-income middle school students in the Bay Area and beyond, Aim High's beloved Co-Founder and Executive Director, Alec Lee, is retiring. Under his leadership, Aim High has grown from one summer campus with 50 students to over 2,300 students at 18 sites across Northern California. Over 15,000 students have graduated from Aim High's engaging, personalized and supportive summer school program to date — with 98% graduating from high school and going on to college.

Aim High is now at an enviable inflection point as it considers how best to extend its reach in terms of

number of students served and expanding its imprint in the larger world of education — all while continuously improving its programs. This “moment” in Aim High's evolution offers the opportunity for a transformative leader to crystallize Aim High's vision, strategic directions and organizational structures toward these ends. As the ultimate “keeper” of Aim High's mission, the CEO will be expected to ensure program quality and to oversee the professional administration of all operational aspects of the organization. The CEO will inspire, mentor and manage a staff of 24 at its headquarters in San Francisco and will oversee an annual budget of \$7 million. They will also serve as Aim High's key spokesperson and relationship builder with school partners, teachers, funders, nonprofit leaders, board members, students and parents.



THE OPPORTUNITY

In short, Aim High requires its CEO to provide the vision, passion, focus and expertise to further develop Aim High’s “gold standard” model, to expand the organization’s reach and to share what we know and what we do with other educators and community leaders. The work of Aim High’s CEO, staff and board must always be anchored in Aim High’s founding conviction, that every young person, regardless of life circumstance, has the right to a quality education.

It is hard to imagine a more compelling leadership opportunity for a visionary, seasoned leader who is committed to making the world a fairer, more equitable and uplifting place.



CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate will have the following professional competencies and personal qualities:

Passion for the Mission

The CEO will have a passion for the mission of Aim High and the organization’s history, model, and potential for future impact. An innovative thinker, the CEO will passionately, boldly and strategically identify opportunities for expansion, always with the “Aim High magic”* at its core.

Conversant and comfortable with change, this leader will be creative and agile in seizing opportunities to increase the reach of Aim High’s programming to unlock the limitless potential of even more students and to propel them forward. The CEO needs to be a kind and empathic leader, treating others with understanding and respect. Informed by their own lived experience, they will be a fervent advocate in realm of DEI and will relish the opportunity to advance Aim’s High’s determination to be a fully anti-racist organization. Ideally, the CEO will bring a solid understanding of the educational, and life challenges that students from low-income communities face. They will also appreciate and promote the ways in which student-centered, project-based and culturally-relevant curricula can provide the springboard these children need to clear the hurdles that society has set before them.

*More a matter of the heart than of the head, the *Aim High Magic* is primarily a function of personal and relational ingredients within a learning community that is warm, welcoming, respectful, affirming, challenging, fun, engaging, experiential and mind- as well as world-expanding. At its core, the *Aim High Magic* is a palpable expression of understanding, of caring and of love.



CANDIDATE PROFILE

Strategic and Visionary Leader

The CEO will be a visionary and strategic leader with experience developing strategic direction, including expanding organizational reach and impact. In collaboration with the Board and staff, the CEO will build on Aim High's past successes and lead the conceptualization and articulation of a clear roadmap for the achievement of superior program quality, targeted and responsible growth, measurable results, and innovation in the field of summer learning.

The CEO will be proficient in executing strategy, providing focus, and building the commitment and capacity of others to achieve Aim High's vision. An prodigious and innovative thinker, the CEO will proactively identify opportunities for growth -- always staying true to, what makes Aim High unique. With a track record of sound financial management, the CEO will understand the prerequisites that determine organization success -- i.e. appreciating that budgetary decisions are, first and foremost, values decisions.

Accomplished in Advancement and Fundraising

The CEO will exhibit a notable track record of success in institutional advancement and fundraising. This leader will have the expertise and mindset to build on Aim High's development operations locally, regionally, and nationally and will develop and/or sustain lasting relationships with current and potential donors. The CEO will be "a natural" in embracing and thriving in the external aspects of the role, providing high-touch and authentic engagement with Aim High's donors and supporters. Lastly, the CEO will find ways to inspire both internal and external constituents towards a culture of philanthropy -- engendering a culture and level of commitment that will diversify and increase the funding pipeline for Aim High.



CANDIDATE PROFILE

Expertise in Organizational and Change Management

The CEO will have a nuanced understanding of nonprofit management practices and will be especially adept at leading an organization through leadership transition and other kinds of substantive -- both macro and micro -- change. In response to our nation's racial reckoning, Aim High has committed to being an anti-racist organization and is further sharpening its DEI lens. The CEO will be our leading change agent in this and in many other regards.

On a more granular level, the CEO must excel at developing and optimizing Aim High's infrastructure, operational systems and policies required to dependably translate theory into reality -- with quality performance being the guiding star and innovation being the engine of thrust on that trajectory. Further, the CEO will demonstrate the ability to attract, mentor, retain and empower an exceptional professional team with diverse backgrounds, doing so through clear, transparent communication, delegation and growth-oriented accountability processes. The CEO will be an active listener and natural collaborator and will have experience walking the invisible line between leading and being led by a Board of Trustees. The CEO must also be an exemplar and facilitator of a culture of continuous organizational learning and growth.



An Ambassador and Relationship Builder

As the "face" of Aim High and a poised, passionate spokesperson, the CEO will have the ability to inspire, recruit and mobilize a diverse community of stakeholders composed of students, parents, teachers, funders, nonprofit leaders, Board members, and school partners.

The CEO will do so, in part, by speaking knowledgeably about Aim High's vision and mission as well as its history, impacts, growth strategies, and future directions. This will enable the CEO to carry on the work of building, nourishing and strengthening a community united by shared values, mutual respect and appreciation. Further, the CEO will be effective in developing a staff culture that is grounded in mutual support and a commitment to continuous professional and personal growth. Finally, as an engaging and convincing storyteller, the CEO will employ their voice to elevate Aim High's "place" across the broader educational landscape, particularly in the summer learning arena.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The annual base salary for this role will be based on a range, with the low end of the range being in the low \$200,000s and the high end being open and commensurate with the successful candidate's skills and experience. The compensation also includes a competitive benefits package.

CONTACT

Koya Partners, the executive search firm that specializes in mission-driven search, has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Michelle Bonoan and Medelene Beasley are leading this search. To make recommendations or to express your interest in this role please visit this [here](#) or email mbeasley@koyapartners.com. All nominations, inquiries, and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

Aim High is an equal opportunity employer. Aim High seeks diversity in its community and affords equal employment and advancement opportunities to all qualified individuals without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, citizenship status, medical condition, or any other legally protected status.

About Koya Partners

Koya Partners, a member of the Diversified Search Group, is a leading executive search and strategic advising firm dedicated to connecting exceptionally talented people with mission-driven clients. Our founding philosophy—The Right Person in the Right Place Can Change the World—guides our work as we partner with nonprofits & NGOs, institutions of higher education, responsible businesses, and social enterprises in local communities and around the world.

Koya is an equal opportunity employer fully committed to creating an environment and team that represents a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, styles, and experiences. We encourage all to apply because we believe a diversity of voices leads to better discussions, decisions, and outcomes for everyone.

For more information about Koya Partners, visit www.koyapartners.com.