Job Description, Director of Research and Strategy

Position Objective: The Director of Research and Strategy is a key position on the Imaginarium’s leadership team. This position maximizes the positive impact that innovation can have on student learning and equity in Denver Public Schools (DPS) and beyond. The Director pursues this objective by:

1. Implementing a research agenda and systems to study innovative learning in meaningful ways;
2. Sharing findings in the form powerful stories and actionable knowledge;
3. Transferring knowledge into concrete strategies that affect improvement in Denver Public Schools.

The Director leads the vision and mission of the Imaginarium by actively challenging the status quo, supporting meaningful shifts in learning and teaching, and cultivating conditions to sustain innovation over time with the long term goal of redefining the purpose of education and the role of public education systems.

About the Imaginarium
The Imaginarium is Denver Public Schools’ innovation lab. We envision public education that is radically reinvented by the communities it serves, is equitable in all its practices, and empowers every learner in the path of their choosing. Our mission is to stimulate and support innovation across Denver to transform learning and education systems.

We advance our vision and mission through five strategic priorities. Create the conditions for innovation to thrive. Build a movement for innovation across Denver. Engage and empower students in innovations that impact them. Empower students, DPS staff, parents and community partners to design and/or redesign innovative schools, products, and services that close opportunity and achievement gaps and prepare every student for success in life. Develop and leverage knowledge to fuel innovation across the system.

We are a team committed to human centered design, research, youth and community engagement, and educational equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Position Overview: Roles and Responsibilities

Strategic and Tactical Planning: Work with the Executive Director and Director of Client Supports to develop and implement long-term and annual plans to achieve the Imaginarium vision and mission. Specifically,

- **Research agenda**: Lead the identification of long term and annual research priorities and strategies that align the Imaginarium’s program and investment areas with district priorities (Denver 2020 goals).
- **Continuous improvement**: Lead the design, development, and implementation of systems for continuous improvement at multiple levels (client, project, program, process) to support iterative and long-term improvements.
- **Imaginarium way:** Work with the Director of Client Supports to align client support strategies (practice) and knowledge strategies (research and impact) to ensure the Imaginarium has a balanced, holistic, and consistent approach to supporting field-driven innovation.
- **Client portfolio:** Work with Imaginarium ED and Director of Client Supports to manage client admissions and retention policies to ensure that the Imaginarium supports high-potential innovations.
- **Finances and investment:** Work with Imaginarium ED and Director of Client Supports to develop annual budget for the Imaginarium, including investments in client innovations. Lead strategy for financial investment in research, knowledge management, open innovation, and other strategic projects.
- **Human capital development:** Work with Imaginarium ED and Director of Client Supports to develop human capital strategies, including team development and training; performance management; collaboration and teaming; and human resource allocation.

**Partner and Stakeholder Engagement:** Work with the Executive Director and Director of Client Supports to develop a long term and annual plan for engaging stakeholders at multiple levels, to ensure the Imaginarium achieves its goals, secures external investment, and is known nationally as an innovation leader.
- **Senior leader learning systems:** Engage Senior Leaders and Department Heads in DPS so that innovation knowledge proactively and strategically informs district processes, initiatives, and priorities.
- **Funder cultivation and management:** Cultivate new funder relationships and manage current funder relationships.
- **University engagement:** Engage university partners to recruit graduate students to assist research projects, leverage academic resources and systems, and secure funding opportunities.
- **Partner organization engagement:** Engage educational organizations doing complementary innovation work to support shared learning, identify collaboration opportunities, and ensure that the Imaginarium is known as an innovation leader nationally.
- **Innovation Advisory Council:** Manage the Innovation Advisory Council to inform Imaginarium long term strategy and success, and to gain access to funding opportunities.

**Business Development:** Work with the Executive Director and Director of Client Support to continually scan the district, local, and national environments to identify new innovation opportunities that support Denver 2020 goals and hold potential for radically reinventing education.
- **Open Innovation Program:** Manage the Open Innovation Program to source, select, support, and scale innovative programs and services driven by teachers, leaders, students, families, and the broader Denver community. Manage Imaginarium Design Challenges and all client support systems to ensure the launch and scale of successful products and services.
- **District innovation partnerships:** With Senior Leaders and Department Heads, identify opportunities to leverage the Imaginarium’s innovation strategies and methods to support DPS priorities and initiatives. Manage these partnerships to ensure success.
- **Strategic projects:** Scan the Denver and national landscapes to identify new opportunities to innovate, prioritizing innovations that hold opportunities for radical reinvention. Manage these partnerships (directly or indirectly) to ensure success.
Research, Impact and Continuous Improvement: Design, implement, and continuously improve an approach to measurement and learning in an innovation context, leveraging design-based and action research, human centered design, and improvement science. Current priority areas include personalized learning outcomes, innovation outcomes, learner agency, and conditions for innovation success. Priority student outcomes include academic outcomes, social emotional outcomes, and 21st century skills.

- **Innovation research:** Set the vision and priorities for research in an innovation context. Manage the design, development, and implementation of all research activities, including: outcomes model development, measure development, instrument development, field collection, data analysis, and reporting.
- **Client and program impact evaluation:** Set the vision and priorities for impact evaluation in an innovation context. Manage the design, development, and implementation of all impact evaluation activities, including: goal setting, measure design and development, progress monitoring, short cycle and long term impact evaluation, and impact reporting.

Knowledge Management and Sharing: Design, implement, and continuously improve the human, technological, and process systems necessary to capture, translate, codify, share, and use innovation knowledge. Ensure that there are strategies in place to proactively and strategically engage critical stakeholders as active audiences for innovation knowledge, in order to shift practices, inform district decision making, and inform the field.

- **Research and resources:** Manage the production of multimedia case studies, research reports and briefs, practice banks (video, artifact, and tool), and design playbooks.
- **Knowledge systems:** Manage the platforms that support research practice, knowledge sharing, and team collaboration. Specifically, develop and manage the systems map that includes: database and data storage; document management and cataloguing; web-based hub for sharing research and resources; internal team portal for client relationship management; and platform for virtual and hybrid communities of practice.
- **Internal knowledge sharing:** Manage the design and implementation of opportunities for Imaginarium team members to engage with data and knowledge. Specifically, manage platforms and processes for team to reflect on and use continuous improvement data.
- **Client knowledge sharing:** Manage the design and implementation of platforms and learning opportunities that allow our clients share and leverage knowledge from the field.
- **Stakeholder knowledge sharing:** Manage the design and implementation of platforms and learning opportunities that help members of the education field (community members, education organizations, funders, academics) access, translate, and apply innovation knowledge.

Team Development: Create strong teaming, cultivate culture, and manage workflows to execute on outcomes. Ensure the right people are in the right roles, are supported, and are inspired on a daily basis.

- **Team management:** Directly manage a five-person team to meet shared outcomes. Supports team members so that they have role clarity, can access resources needed to do their jobs, are inspired, creatively and intellectually engaged, and have opportunities to learn and grow.
• **Consultant and contractor management:** Manages contractors and consultants to execute on critical projects, ensuring that they are strategically deployed to maximize Imaginarium talent.

**Qualifications**
- Ten or more years of experience in education
- Masters or PhD in Education

**Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes**

**Knowledge/Skills**
- **Strategic and tactical planning:** can develop compelling vision; build logic models including outcomes, strategic priorities, activities, and resources; map internal and external influences; develop tactical plans; match and delegate talent; and engage stakeholders.
- **Applied research:** understands design-based, action-based, and other forms of applied research; is willing and able to innovate in the area of research methodology, in order to discover new ways of capturing innovation impact.
- **Human centered design:** can apply human centered design to a variety of processes; can integrate human centered design into other processes, including research, project management, strategic planning, and team management.
- **Strategic school design:** understands and can support school design with a focus on personalized and competency-based learning.
- **District policy and context:** understands and can navigate bureaucracy; knows how to align Imaginarium resources and processes with district priorities and strategies.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** can engage with a wide variety of stakeholders to build shared vision, ownership, and collective action.
- **People management:** knows how to recognize and leverage strengths, delegate, support growth, and ensure that people feel inspired, focused, and creatively engaged in their work.
- **Workflow and project management:** can manage highly complex and interdependent work streams (with and beyond the Imaginarium) to ensure timely, excellent execution.
- **Cultural proficiency:** has the skills and knowledge to model cultural proficiency in all relationships, projects, and processes.
- **Communication:** models excellence in visionary, values based, and culturally proficient communication across multiple media.

**Attributes**
- **Visionary:** sets, communicates, holds, and shares vision for all aspects of work; links vision to values that inspire and unite.
- **Collaborative:** can facilitate strong teams and participatory processes; knows how to hold and leverage creative frictions for more innovative outcomes.
- **Creative:** seeks novel approaches and challenges the status quo.
● Focused: can identify and maintain priorities amidst ambiguity or confusion; makes decisions effectively and efficiently.
● Relentless: is not deterred by challenges and apparent barriers; sees a way forward when others do not.
● Equity-focused: is passionate about educational equity, and proactively weaves equity across all aspects of work.
● Relational: prioritizes and cultivates authentic relationships with diverse partners and stakeholders; communicates proactively and effectively.

Interested candidates should send a resume and cover letter to Katherine_Casey@dpsk12.org and Peter_Piccolo@dpsk12.org.