



The PEP Program

Providing Educational Possibilities



Executive Director Search

Summit, New Jersey

Position starts January 1, 2024

(or a date determined after discussion with the successful candidate)



EDUCATORS COLLABORATIVE
EXPERTS IN SEARCH, TRANSITION & STRATEGY



Mission Statement

The PEP Program increases opportunities for a select group of motivated Summit Public School students with demonstrated financial need. We provide comprehensive academic, social, and emotional support, ensuring that participants accomplish a post-secondary education and become productive adults.

About the Program

In the early 1990's, a private family foundation in Summit, New Jersey, conceived of and created the PEP Program to provide educational opportunities in a nurturing environment for Summit students with demonstrated financial need. Today, the PEP Program is a college-access program that offers academic support, social-emotional learning activities, and college support to select motivated students from Summit Public Schools beginning in grade 7. The program includes subject-based tutoring, study skills and test preparation, character development and cultural enrichment, along with on-going post-graduate support and career readiness. The PEP Program also looks to instill a sense of civic responsibility by requiring students to complete annual community service hours.

Over two decades of work in Summit, PEP's focus has evolved and grown, and the program has experienced increased success in achieving its goals. Students qualify for PEP by demonstrating financial need and strong potential to achieve with academic, emotional, and financial support.

Students apply for the PEP Program in 6th grade and eight students are chosen to begin the program in the summer before their 7th grade year in school. Approximately 40% of those who apply for the program are granted admission. During the summer, students attend classes that are intended to provide a preview of what they will encounter in school the following year. Students who will begin 7th, 8th, and 9th grade in the fall attend classes four days a week for the summer session. Rising 10th and 11th graders

PEP Student Profile

- 93% of our students identify as persons of color
- 70% qualify for free-or-reduced lunch
- 100% graduate from Summit High School and 97% enroll in college
- 79% will be the first in their families to graduate college

Core Values

- We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to fulfill his or her potential.
- We believe that no child should be denied educational opportunity because of financial resources.
- We believe that children can develop character through high expectations, role models and service to the community.
- We believe that every child deserves a positive, nurturing and structured support system.
- We believe that with support, children can and should set high goals and strive for excellence in their personal and academic lives.





Facts at a Glance

- A ten-year program, for grades 7 - 12, plus support through college
- 80 students in the program; 50 students in grades 7-12; 30 students in college
- 8 students admitted to the program each year, beginning in 7th grade
- Comprehensive college access and college support program, with tutoring, enrichment, college readiness and social and emotional support both after school, during summer enrichment, and through college
- Four full-time staff including the Executive Director, two Directors, and one Program Coordinator, supported by part-time resources: a Behavioral Coordinator, 12 tutors, Academic Coaches, and volunteers
- A 501(c)(3) private operating foundation, funded by the PEP Foundation
- \$900,000 annual budget: \$750,000 operating budget plus \$150,000 college scholarships

attend summer sessions to develop their skills in English and Math while rising seniors have several summer sessions to work on their college essays and the common application. During the school year, students in students in grades 7, 8, and 9 come to the PEP House, after school, for tutoring and support with executive functioning and self-advocacy skills. Students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade receive similar support two evenings a week while also receiving extensive guidance in the college application process.

In addition, all students are required to complete community service projects with pre-approved organizations in Summit. Middle school students undertake at least 20 hours a year of service; high school students complete at least 30 hours per year. In addition to individual service work, PEP students complete group service projects in Summit, as a reflection of the program's emphasis on giving back to their community.

PEP students in good standing who attend colleges and universities after graduating from high school are eligible to receive up to \$8,000 per year in financial assistance over 5 years from the program towards their college education. This financial support is intended to address the gap between grants, financial aid, and scholarships the students receive and the overall cost of a college education; it thereby reduces the amount of loans incurred by students and families and makes it more affordable for students to attend college. PEP contributed more than \$150,000 in financial assistance in the most recent academic year.

PEP provides ongoing support for students while they are in college: a PEP College Coach connects with students once a week during their freshman year to provide them with guidance on navigating the environment. This support is intended to help students not only to attend college, but to thrive and graduate.





Impact Metrics Since 2012

- 77% of students completed a post-secondary program (college and career) within six years
- Of those students who obtained a bachelor's degree, 89% completed the degree in four years
- 85% cumulative college retention rate

The PEP House

The PEP Program is located in a house in central Summit that was acquired by PEP in 2000. The well-maintained facility feels comfortable and students consider it their home away from home. In addition to offices for the program's staff, the PEP House includes classroom and study rooms on four floors. The house is conveniently located near public transportation and includes ample parking for the program's staff and visitors.

Governance

The fourteen-member Board of Trustees consists of individuals from the Summit area who are dedicated to the mission and values of the program. The program's founders are sponsor trustees of the Board. The current Board President is chairing the six-person Search Committee. Committees of the Board include Executive, Finance, Nominating, Post-Secondary, Recruitment and Retention, Impact, Jobs/ Internships, Technology, and Marketing, and Facilities. The Board meets monthly, 11 times a year, with committee meetings occurring monthly throughout the year.



"My experience in PEP has been nothing short of extraordinary. It has not only been immensely helpful and exciting, but it has been truly transformative."

- a 2023 PEP Program graduate





"PEP has benefited me in many ways, but the most important way is that PEP has helped me to become a stronger individual."

- a PEP Program graduate



Finance

The program's current operating budget is approximately \$750,000, with no debt. The program is financed by the PEP Foundation, which is supported by the founders, who have funded the program since its inception over 20 years ago. The primary expenses of the organization are staff salaries and benefits and program-related expenses. College financial assistance varies each year, depending on the number of PEP students who are currently attending colleges and universities. PEP assists students to find and apply for outside scholarships and internships. Students are required to complete FAFSA annually and apply for at least five community scholarships. PEP financial assistance is awarded after all other sources of financial aid have been explored and exhausted.

Leadership Opportunity

The PEP Program Board of Trustees has launched the search to identify a successor to the current Executive Director, who is relocating in September 2023 after twelve highly successful years leading the program. Current trustee Martha Sayre is serving as Interim Executive Director until a permanent successor is hired; she is eager to support new leadership and help the new executive director understand the program's mission, culture, and history. It should be noted that this position is a full-time, full-year onsite position at the PEP House, with up to two evenings per week during the academic year. Some presence at program events (e.g., college campus tours, community events, etc.) will be required.





Nat Conard and George Sanderson of Educators Collaborative, LLC are assisting the Board in this search. Based on numerous meetings and a visit designed to learn about the program and interview its key stakeholders, Nat and George offer the descriptors below that represent community-wide sentiments about the PEP Program's strengths, the challenges and opportunities lying ahead, and the skills and attributes desired in the next Executive Director.

Strengths of the Program

- A proven track record over two decades of fulfilling its mission to support academically motivated students with demonstrated financial need.
- A stable management and governance team that is unified in its commitment to the mission and values of the organization.
- Long-standing financial support from a committed donor.
- A program that continues to evolve and achieve success in achieving its goals, especially in terms of enrolling graduates in college and supporting students' post-high school academic and professional objectives.
- Academic tutors and student support professionals who are experienced, dedicated, skilled, and extremely well-regarded. During our visit, tutors remarked to us how much they enjoyed being with the PEP Program, working with "students who truly want to be here," in the words of one tutor.
- A deep sense of connection with, and love for, the program by employees, families, and students. Students are proud to be part of the PEP Program and thankful for the impact it has made in their lives. Families support the mission of the program and are grateful for the role it has played in their children's development.
 - *In the words of one parent, "I am overjoyed to share my appreciation for this exceptional program that has tremendously contributed to the emotional and academic growth of my daughter."
 - *In the words of a student, "PEP's guidance has taught me the value of embracing new perspectives and being open to fresh ideas. In turn, this fundamental lesson empowered me to continuously seek knowledge and inquire about the world around me."
- A surplus of qualified applicants each year.
- An increasingly successful college access program that has resulted in recent graduates enrolling at Washington University in St. Louis, Boston University, Rochester Institute of Technology, Hampton University, Seton Hall University, and all the major public colleges and universities in New Jersey.
- An impressive dedication to community service and strong partnerships with Summit area nonprofit organizations.
- Its small size, which allows for everyone to be known and for personalized instruction to be a hallmark of the PEP Program.
- An optimistic culture that looks to the future with energy and enthusiasm.

Challenges and Opportunities

- The growing number of PEP graduates attending colleges and universities is both a strength and a challenge for the program as it has increased the overall cost of administering the PEP Program.
- As the number of PEP students in college has increased, the organization's focus has evolved to provide support for first-generation college students so that they complete college successfully. The nature and depth of this support will continue to require refinement.
- As more PEP graduates attend colleges and universities, the support that PEP provides such students will no doubt evolve and potentially require more time and resources.
- To help meet the increased costs associated with college financial support, PEP is endeavoring to raise money for scholarships from the Summit community, including from current and past Board members, individual community members and from corporate sponsors. This initiative began in recent years and achieved modest success, raising approximately \$25,000 annually. The Board hopes to increase such fundraising to as much as \$250,000 annually over the next five years.
- Raising the profile of PEP in the greater Summit community will help the organization continue to attract strong applicants, raise money from outside sources, and develop connections that will lead to professional opportunities for graduates.
- The next Executive Director will need to be mindful about balancing their time between managing the internal requirements of the organization and attending to its external needs in the community.
- Mirroring trends in the overall population, the mental health needs of PEP students have increased. PEP has addressed this by adding a part-time social worker to the staff whose title is "behavior coordinator." The ongoing social and emotional needs of students will require close monitoring.
- The PEP Program has limited connections with other college access programs and there is an opportunity to build relationships with similar organizations in New Jersey and New York to share leading practices and enhance educational outcomes.
- The current PEP Staff have prepared "impact reports" to measure the results of the program on PEP students. The incoming Executive Director will have the opportunity to continue to refine these reports and utilize them to make data-driven decisions.
- Communicating with families of PEP students who speak Spanish at home can be challenging, given that only one member of the current PEP staff speaks Spanish.

Desired skills and attributes

The PEP Program's next Executive Director should:

- Possess strong interpersonal and management skills, exhibiting:
 1. Mature judgment and sound management skills
 2. Ability to work collaboratively and effectively with the Board to advance the Program mission and the Board agenda
 3. Exceptionally strong organizational, administrative, writing, communication, and analytical skills
 4. A working knowledge of fundamental financial and accounting policies, with practical experience in budgeting and expense control practices
 5. Experience in developing creative programs and curricula.



"I have been given the chance to follow my dreams and become successful in life. The educational trips expanded my knowledge to the point where I am ahead of most kids in my classes."

– a PEP Program student



- Be a dynamic leader who can:
 1. Foster teamwork and work effectively with others to set goals, resolve problems and make decisions that enhance organizational effectiveness.
 2. Assess situations to identify causes, gather and process relevant information, generate ideas and make recommendations for a solution.
 3. Be a visible and charismatic leader who makes themselves accessible to others and comes excited to engage fully in the PEP and Summit community.
 4. Communicate transparently, positively and clearly and be able to delegate appropriately in order to keep an eye on the big picture needs of the organization. The ability to communicate with families in Spanish is a plus.
 5. Provide clear expectations and hold others accountable to those expectations through respectful interaction and direction.
 6. Be an active listener who seeks opinions with an open mind before (when appropriate) making important decisions.
 7. Demonstrate a willingness to be flexible, versatile and tolerant in a changing work environment with needs that often arise without prior notice.
- Behave ethically – understand ethical behavior and ensure that their own behavior and the behavior of others is consistent with these standards.
- Have an entrepreneurial view to the future, thinking about how access organizations of the future need to operate. Be willing and able to preserve the good of the past while moving the organization forward with a clear vision developed in collaboration with the Board.
- Demonstrate proven fundraising capability or have a plan for how they will engage enthusiastically in development work in the Summit community.
- Be knowledgeable about current pedagogies and methodologies on leading practices for improving first-generation college outcomes. Experience in the classroom is a plus.
- Reflect a strong commitment to and, ideally, possess experience working with a college access organization.
- Demonstrate cultural competence and the ability to manage related conversations comfortably and confidently with all members of the community.





To Apply

The deadline for applications is November 1, 2023.

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials in a Single Merged Document, in the order listed:

- EC Candidate Summary Sheet (Contact Nat Conard and/or George Sanderson for this document)
- Letter of Interest, addressed to the PEP Program Search Committee
- Current résumé
- Statement of Educational Leadership philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information (including phone numbers and email addresses)
- Disclosure Form (Contact Nat Conard and/or George Sanderson for this document)

Please Address Inquiries to:

Nat Conard, Partner, Educators Collaborative, LLC
nconard@educatorscollaborative.com

and/or

George Sanderson, Partner, Educators Collaborative, LLC
gsanderson@educatorscollaborative.com

Position starts January 1, 2024 or a date determined after discussion with the successful candidate.

The PEP Program is committed to equal employment opportunity.



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