



**An Invitation to Apply for the Position of  
Vice President of Research  
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)  
Chicago, Illinois  
May 2017**

### **Organizational Summary**

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a nonprofit organization based in Chicago, is dedicated to advancing the science and practice of social and emotional learning (SEL). CASEL's mission is to help make evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) an integral part of preschool through high school education across the country. We believe that systemic educational efforts that promote students' social and emotional competence are a key ingredient that will enable all young people in our diverse society to lead healthier, happier, more productive, and fulfilling lives.

With committed and growing philanthropic funding and a cohesive strategic plan, CASEL is endeavoring to:

- Support the implementation and document the impact of systemic SEL in large school districts and socio-demographically diverse school districts across this nation.
- Capture, refine, and test the learnings to advance the research base for the process of implementing systemic SEL and share that knowledge broadly.
- Identify and evaluate interventions and assessment tools to accelerate high-quality implementation of SEL nationwide.
- Partner with SEL program providers, colleges of education, professional organizations, school districts, and researchers to support scaling of SEL.
- Promote federal and state policies that encourage academic, social, and emotional learning.
- Strategically communicate to foster widespread demand for SEL as an essential part of students' education at the classroom, school, district, state, and national level.

CASEL is overseen by a distinguished 11-member Board of Directors. They include Timothy P. Shriver (Chair), Ann S. Nerad ( Vice Chair), Larry Aber, Stephen D. Arnold, Catherine Bradshaw, Linda Darling-Hammond, Deborah Delisle, Paul Goren, Kim Schonert-Reichl, Andrea Wishom, and Roger P. Weissberg (Vice Chair). This search will fill one of the most pivotal top-level positions: the Vice President (VP) of Research. The VP of Research will ensure CASEL operates with the appropriate and efficient infrastructure, policies, and practices that will be important to fulfilling CASEL's goal of making evidence-based SEL an integral part of children's educational experience.

## THE POSITION

The VP of Research is a senior position and will serve as a member of CASEL's Executive Team. The VP of Research reports to CASEL's President and CEO (Karen Niemi) and works closely with CASEL's Chief Knowledge Officer (Roger Weissberg). Part of CASEL's expansion involves establishing a strong research unit in Chicago where research staff members collaborate effectively with practice, development, communications, and operations staff on CASEL's efforts to establish preschool to high school SEL in schools across the United States. The VP of Research will oversee all research, evaluation, translational science, and continuous improvement activities aimed at enhancing and expanding the evidence base for SEL.

The ideal candidate for the VP of Research position will have extensive experience conducting qualitative and quantitative action research and evaluation in the PreK-12 education or youth development sectors. S/he will be broadly knowledgeable about SEL and/or related forms of developmentally appropriate educational practice. S/he will be a gifted leader, collaborator, communicator, and writer—one who thinks strategically, inspires others to their best efforts, and has a successful track record for securing grant funding. This is a rare opportunity for an entrepreneurial and collaborative individual to help CASEL realize its goal of promoting systemic SEL implementation in school districts across the country.

The VP of Research will help CASEL to: (1) analyze and promote high-quality research on the practice and effects of SEL; (2) serve as a leading source for information on SEL science, practice, and policy; (3) establish demonstrations of systemic, high-quality SEL in school districts across the nation; and (4) establish the cross-field and cross-discipline collaborations necessary to strengthen and grow the field of SEL.

### **Opportunities and Expectations for the Vice President of Research**

The VP of Research will collaborate closely with the Executive Team and research staff, and have primary responsibility to lead efforts across the following areas:

#### ***Research Agenda for National Implementation of SEL in School Districts Across the U.S.***

The VP of Research, in close collaboration with CASEL's VP of Programs and Practice, will develop and advance the research agenda for implementing systemic SEL and develop innovative resources to accelerate high-quality implementation nationwide. S/he will collaborate on, support, and supervise all evaluation and continuous improvement activities within CASEL's Collaborating District Initiative, and help to make the learnings accessible and usable by others. S/he will design and lead initiatives designed to bolster and promote quality in the field.

The VP of Research will oversee the conduct of a variety of research syntheses and original research areas. Illustrative projects include: (1) evaluation of the impact and process of SEL implementation in the Collaborating Districts Initiative; (2) an ongoing Program Review of nationally available SEL programs; (3) curating and analysis of research and implementation science; and (4) participation in CASEL's assessment initiatives.

### ***Dissemination of Research Findings***

The VP of Research will ensure that high-quality and innovative SEL research is disseminated internally and externally to key constituents. S/he will deepen the body of evidence that links SEL to student, school, and district-level outcomes in ways that will be compelling to district-level decision-makers and policymakers. The VP of Research will also disseminate insights from research to inform effective implementation of SEL and to fill gaps in the field's understanding of effective SEL practice. S/he will collaborate with CASEL's communications team to make research findings usable for multiple target audiences in research, practice, and policy communities.

### ***Build Research Capacity through Grant Writing***

The VP of Research will help build CASEL's research capacity through grant writing and fundraising. S/he will identify specific priorities and potential sources of related funding to support research, evaluation, and assessment work. The VP of Research will directly support the writing of federal, state, and foundation grants to build CASEL's research capacity to: promote and evaluate systemic SEL; improve the quality of evidence-based SEL programs; identify and develop assessment tools and continuous improvement systems that are scientifically sound, feasible to use, and actionable; and other projects to advance CASEL's mission. The VP of Research will also participate in fundraising-related calls, meetings, and events as needed and appropriate.

### ***Collaborate with External Partners to Ensure Alignment & Build Capacity in the Field of SEL***

The VP of Research will collaborate with external partners to ensure that resources and priorities are aligned with the CASEL research agenda. S/he will maintain CASEL's Research Advisory Group, seeking their guidance on how to advance CASEL's research priorities. S/he will manage relationships with University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) researchers and other research contractors and partners to carry out our research agenda. S/he will also build capacity in the research community to study SEL by collaborating with the Chief Knowledge Officer to oversee the Joseph Zins Action Research Awards for junior and senior scholars.

### ***Talent Management***

The VP of Research will hire, develop, motivate, and lead a high-performing team of CASEL research staff to accomplish the goals, objectives, and priorities of the research department. S/he will establish the goals, objectives, and priorities for the research, evaluation, and assessment activities. S/he will engage in effective talent management processes for research staff, including selection and on-boarding processes for talent acquisition, expectations setting, and performance management. S/he will promote and enhance CASEL's collaborative learning culture. S/he will effectively manage consultants and subcontractors to achieve research goals as appropriate. S/he will work the Executive Team to foster CASEL's internal capacity and positive culture.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Although no one candidate will embody all of the desired qualities, the successful candidate will bring many of the following qualifications and personal attributes:

### Qualifications

The background and educational experience required for this position are:

- Doctorate in a relevant field (education, public policy, psychology, human development, prevention science, sociology), preferably with a focus on PreK-12 education or youth development.
- Ten or more years of experience conducting quantitative and qualitative research studies and evaluation, with a focus on PreK-12 education or youth development.
- Experience collaborating with senior leaders of large school districts and working with educators to develop and implement evaluation and tracking systems/
- Experience working to translate research findings into easy to understand, usable tools and materials for practice and nonprofessional audiences (e.g., developing consumers' guides, content for high-quality videos, online professional development courses, webinars, papers, etc.).
- Demonstrated track record of securing federal and foundation grants, publishing academic articles, and developing products for wider distribution.
- Experience leading a high-functioning team of staff members, including successfully building, managing, and developing staff.
- Excellent interpersonal, communications and writing skills, including the ability to connect in culturally competent ways with local stakeholders from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- Passion for social and emotional learning and for CASEL's mission.

### Personal Characteristics

- Intellectual curiosity and a commitment to continuously improving evidence-based educational strategies.
- A talent for recruiting, developing, and inspiring staff and a commitment to the professional growth of staff.
- Strongly collaborative, someone who enjoys being a part of a collaborative team.
- Cultural competence and enjoyment working with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Commitment to improving public education and providing low-income students from diverse backgrounds with excellent educational opportunities.
- Excellent strategic thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as advanced skills in managing and executing multiple projects according to organizational priorities.
- Integrity, resilience, and stamina; grace in dealing with a broad spectrum of personalities; good humor in leading the day-to-day work of the organization.

**TO APPLY**

Please email a **thoughtful cover letter and resume** outlining how your skills and experience meet the qualifications of the position and stating how you heard about this opportunity to [careers@casel.org](mailto:careers@casel.org). Please include the position title in the subject line of your email message. We regret that we will not be able to respond to phone inquiries about this position.

*The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning is an equal opportunity employer. CASEL evaluates applicants for employment on the basis of qualifications, merit, and work-related criteria without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, mental or physical disabilities, pregnancy, medical condition, marital status or any other characteristic protected by law. CASEL employs diverse staff and values a diverse work environment.*