
**Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Chief Academic Officer**

The Opportunity

Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) is seeking a Chief Academic Officer (CAO) to champion the district's instructional vision, and enable academic excellence for every scholar, in every school. The CAO will join CEO Warren Morgan's cabinet after several years of pivotal work to build a centralized academic strategy anchored in high-quality core curricula, and a unified assessment system. The next CAO will bring coherence to the work that matters most in classrooms and deliver on the [Board Goals](#): increasing proficiency in reading, math and college readiness.

CMSD is Ohio's third-largest district, serving more than 34,000 students, and offering families a wide range of school choices, including STEM, the arts, single-gender education, International Baccalaureate, Montessori, and early college. With [Building Brighter Futures](#), adopted by the Board in December 2025 and now in its first year of implementation for the 2026-27 school year, CMSD has made tough but necessary choices, in partnership with the community, to close a \$150 million shortfall, consolidate schools, and move students into newer buildings with richer opportunities. Today, every CMSD high school offers college and career pathways, and every elementary school offers enrichment courses.

The next CAO will build on that progress, accelerating proficiency, graduation, and college and career readiness while expanding access to advanced coursework so that where a student attends school no longer determines how far they can go.

About the Chief Academic Officer

The Chief Academic Officer is a key leader on the CEO's cabinet spearheading the district's efforts to support, empower, and create exceptional schools through sound leadership and instructional practices. This leader provides leadership across the Office of Teaching & Learning, the Office of Student Services, and the Office of Schools. The role aligns these functions to support high-quality instruction and effective school operations across the district. This Division is committed to being student-focused, in order to provide intellectually rich experiences for children that ensure they graduate prepared for college, career, and life.

This role requires strong instructional and operational leadership, sound judgment, and the ability to manage complex systems in a large, unionized public sector environment. It also requires a working knowledge of Cleveland: its schools, people, relationships, and community and labor dynamics.

This leader ensures that the Academics Division remains grounded in the district's [Core Values](#): Equity & Inclusion, Student & Community Focused, Growth & Learning, Care & Well-Being, Excellence & Achievement.

What You'll Do (Key Responsibilities)

Instructional Stewardship

- Lead the academic aspects of Building Brighter Futures implementation, including ensuring more students are enrolled and scheduled in advanced coursework in all schools so that students and families experience continuity of high-quality instruction and support.
- Ensure coherence across all academic programming, including curriculum and instruction, career and college success, early childhood, and fine arts.

- Enable the district to demonstrate growth in academic proficiency in alignment with our District's Goals and Guardrails by strengthening the district's existing academic structures and driving continuous improvement.
- Increase student enrollment and participation in the college and career pathways and programs offered in the district.
- Ensure that the core curriculum instruction addresses the needs of diverse learners and is supplemented by enrichment and interventions as needed.
- Serve as the primary academic advisor to the CEO and Cabinet and drive alignment between academics and school systems and organizational priorities.
- Ensure all program areas are in compliance with governing federal, state, and local regulations.

Instructional Program Design and Effectiveness

- Build on the academic systems, program design, and organizational structure to achieve the district's student achievement priorities.
- Leverage established data-driven structures to develop and refine proven strategies that will further advance student achievement and districtwide improvement.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of academic processes and regularly track progress toward ambitious team goals that support student learning.
- Ensure high-quality professional development opportunities are offered to schools, principals, and other staff and aligned to the district's priorities and academic vision.
- Ensure the effective oversight of schools through the Area Superintendent who manage, coach, and mentor school leaders in ways that drive continuous student achievement gains.

Academics Team Leadership

- Lead, manage, and develop a large team of more than 80 professionals, including four (4) high-performing direct reports, across the three departments - Teaching & Learning, Student Services, Schools, and an Academic Strategist to the CAO - to ensure coherent service delivery model for schools.
- Partner with the Office of Schools to be present and visible in schools regularly, both observing and evaluating the alignment of instruction, school climate, student behavior, and school leadership.
- Foster a culture of high expectations with shared strategic goals around measurable outcomes and continuous improvement.
- Oversee and coordinate the development of budgets related to the Academics Division, including staffing needs, instructional materials and resources, and provision for the activities of the district.
- Encourage and promote collaboration across all functional areas, including both internal and external partners.
- Represent the CEO, as needed, with respect to academic and instructional matters related to the district.

Stakeholder Partnerships and Engagement

- Ensure systems and processes exist to allow for high-quality family and community engagement across the district.
- Present information clearly and effectively through oral briefings and written reports to the Board of Education, the Mayor, the Chief of Education for the City of Cleveland, legislators, city, state, and federal officials, philanthropic partners, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Oversee the preparation of all updates surrounding the Board's goals and guardrails presentations and related data reporting, and support the CEO on major decisions.
- Manage key partnerships and community relationships with savvy and care, anticipating reactions to difficult, high-visibility decisions such as school consolidation.

The Skills You'll Need to Be Successful (Key Competencies and Skills)

Student-Centered Teaching and Learning Expertise

- Demonstrates deep knowledge of evidence-based instructional practices, culturally responsive pedagogy, and interventions, including demonstrated impact on student achievement and growth.
- Believes that each scholar can achieve at the highest levels and promotes high expectations for the academic achievement of CMSD scholars.
- Creates conditions for every student to access necessary support and to thrive emotionally, socially, and academically in a consistently inclusive environment.
- Understands the impact of trauma and behavioral health on student learning outcomes.
- Ability to plan and administer academic and instructional programming involving coordination across schools and departments.

Extraordinary Communication and Influence

- Connects purposefully and intentionally with others and expresses ideas with clarity, respect, and awareness.
- Demonstrates transparency and authenticity in written and oral communication with stakeholders at every level.
- Invites, includes, and engages others in the spirit of equity, empowerment, and collaboration.
- Challenges assumptions and influences others to approach all work through the lens of equity, even in high pressure situations.
- Brings composure, credibility, and a collaborative presence at the executive level.
- Understands the political, community, and operational dynamics that shape leadership decisions and accounts for them proactively.

Strategic Leadership and Execution

- Exhibits outstanding critical thinking skills, including the ability to navigate ambiguity, identify trends, pinpoint problems and root causes, ask probing questions, and develop innovative solutions.
- Possesses a deep understanding of systems-level operations, management, and organizational design in order to deliver desired outcomes.
- Demonstrates a strong focus on planning, project management, accountability, and results; sets clear metrics for success.
- Analyzes data strategically and makes decisions that prioritize the needs of students above the comfort of adults and is driven by a desire to produce quantifiable student achievement gains.
- Leads from the perspective of a service provider, advisor, thought partner, and capacity-builder for school leaders.
- Engages in transparent decision-making and shares with staff and stakeholders how their input informs district decisions.

Team Management and Leadership

- Effectively balances school-based decision-making and school leaders' autonomy with the need for coherence and equity across all schools.
- Builds, inspires, manages, and coaches an effective senior team to achieve ambitious goals aligned with the BBF plan.
- Holds self and others accountable for high standards of performance, communication, collaboration, and transparency toward the achievement of key goals and priorities.

- Commits to building and developing a team that reflects the scholars and families of CMSD.

Minimum Requirements

- Demonstrated track record of improving student outcomes through data-driven decision making, ideally in an urban, unionized, K-12 public school district setting.
- At least ten (10) years of senior leadership experience with progressively increasing levels of responsibility in K-12 education in a public school district with similar demographics as CMSD.
- Master's degree in education or a related field from an accredited college or university required. Doctoral degree preferred.
- Experience managing large teams and holding leaders accountable for results.
- Demonstrated commitment to the importance of public education and advocacy for all scholars, especially scholars of color living in highly impacted environments.
- Preference is to hold or be eligible for [Administrator License](#) in the State of Ohio.

Salary and Benefits

The salary range for this critical leadership position is \$175,000–\$210,000, commensurate with experience. The role also includes a comprehensive benefits package. We look forward to sharing additional details as candidates progress through the interview process.

The District's Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment, and Sexual Harassment and the District's Title IX grievance procedures, including information on how to report or file a complaint of discrimination, how to report or file a formal complaint of sexual harassment, and how the District will respond, may be accessed on the District's Civil Rights Notices webpage, available at . The District's Title IX Coordinator/Director of Equal Employment Opportunity may be reached at:

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How to Apply

Alma Advisory Group is honored to support Cleveland Metropolitan School District in this search. Interested candidates may apply online at: <https://apply.workable.com/almaadvisorygroup/j/E71D4DAA0F>