

The Opportunity

SparkNC seeks a dynamic, growth-oriented leader with a passion for education transformation to serve as the organization's President. As the President, you will guide our team, in collaboration with innovative educators, dedicated industry partners, and forward-thinking policymakers, to realize our ambitious vision and ignite North Carolina students' futures in tech!

About SparkNC

SparkNC is a proof of concept for a new way to do school – one that is learner-centered, industry-relevant, and competency-based. In its first year of implementation (2023-24), SparkNC is partnering with 17 North Carolina school districts. Looking ahead, SparkNC plans to eventually expand to work with public schools across North Carolina and to extend our approach to other fields.

SparkNC opens doors for learners to discover, experience, and navigate their own pathways toward high-tech careers. We help learners expand skill sets, build networks, gain confidence, and chart personalized pathways toward these careers.

SparkNC is a North Carolina nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, launched with the generous support of the North Carolina General Assembly and in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. SparkNC began as an initiative within The Innovation Project, a separate nonprofit, before transitioning to its own organization during the 2023-24 academic year.

Our Approach is Guided by Five Design Principles:

1. Learner Agency. Learning will experience a choice of pathways and maintain a strong voice in program design.
2. Equity. All learners will have access to pathways, particularly those historically underrepresented in technology.
3. Relevance. Learners will grapple with complex, industry-relevant, real-world challenges through problem-based learning.
4. Connection. Learners will receive guidance and support from knowledgeable, caring adults, and comprehensive, up-to-date tools to navigate pathways.
5. Transformation. Learners will inform state and system leaders on how to redesign current practices and create policies that respond to industry needs, support system collaboration, and enable competency-based learning.

We are passionate about transforming learning, particularly for those who have been disengaged or left behind by traditional systems. We are deliberative and strategic, but also impatient and driven to action. We believe strongly in public education and the power of innovative educators to build impactful, personalized learning experiences for all kinds of learners.

To learn more about SparkNC, visit our website at <https://www.sparknc.org>.

The President's Role

The successful candidate will be capable of leading a promising new nonprofit organization at a time of expected growth and strategic development. Above all, SparkNC's President must be deeply driven by two ambitions: (1) a desire to expand pathways into high-tech fields for all kinds of learners, particularly those from groups that have historically been underrepresented in tech; and (2) a deep and abiding commitment to transforming learning experiences, policies, and systems to make public schools more effective, equitable, and learner centered.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

The President will oversee the day-to-day business and affairs of SparkNC and carry out the strategic priorities and policies of the board. The President will be responsible for the selection, development, and retention of the core team and partners. The President will be responsible for delegating assignments and building leadership capacity of team members to accomplish the following:

- Set the future vision for SparkNC in collaboration with the organization's board, staff, SparkLab Leaders, and partners.
- Develop strategic plans and goals with staff members and monitor their performance for success.
- Generate consistently high-quality work, to (1) create and deliver engaging learning experiences for students and (2) to serve as a lodestar for broader system change.
- Empower staff to develop effective program implementation, including the design and delivery of learning experiences and support for innovative system, school, and classroom leaders.
- Facilitate the development of resources to support program delivery, including playbooks, toolkits, roadmaps, policy memos, FAQs, and case studies.
- Develop, enhance, and maintain SparkNC's collaborative partnerships with members of the NC General Assembly; leaders at DPI, the State Board of Education, and the Governor's Office; funders; and leaders of state and national organizations focused on education transformation.
- Manage all fundraising and development activity, including writing or directly supervising the drafting of funding proposals.
- Work with outside evaluator(s) to assess the efficacy, impact, and resource requirements of SparkNC's work, and use findings to adjust programming and partnerships as needed.
- Provide leadership for the execution of SparkNC's communications plan, social media engagement, and storytelling about the student and educator experience.
- Coordinate SparkNC operations, finances, strategy development, and personnel and partner management.
- Expand SparkNC's influence and impact in NC and nationally.
- Lead an iterative design process to continually assess and act upon strengths and opportunities for organizational improvement.
- Coordinate and collaborate with the Board of Directors.

The President position is a full-time position. The President will be expected to reside in North Carolina and should expect to travel up to 25% of the time for in-state travel and occasional national conferences and events.

Our Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will be a proven visionary leader and innovative thinker. The ideal candidate will understand school system operations and leadership but will also be able and willing to rethink, reimagine, and redesign systems to better serve students, particularly those who have traditionally been marginalized or underserved within existing systems. The ideal candidate will be comfortable pushing school systems, school, and classroom leaders to think differently and engage in collaborative and iterative design.

The ideal candidate will have a collaborative leadership style with minimal micromanagement. The ideal candidate will delegate tasks effectively to team members, while trusting staff to execute their work autonomously. The ideal candidate will create a culture of open communication, while looking for ways to grow and build leadership capacity in team members. The ideal candidate will model the behavior expected of others by allowing team members to assume responsibility for assigned projects and tasks.

The ideal candidate may have experience with the high-tech industry, but in any case, will understand the dramatic growth of the industry and how it is impacting the employment landscape that our learners are preparing to enter.

The ideal candidate will bring:

- A desire to rethink foundational assumptions that have shaped existing systems, programs, and practices in K-12 education.
- An ability to inspire others and lead through influence.
- Excellent interpersonal, relationship-building, and communication skills and the ability to work with many different stakeholders.
- Appreciation for complexity and tolerance for ambiguity.
- An entrepreneurial drive to learn, build, and lead.
- Eagerness to embrace and live SparkNC's design principles.
- An ability to regard our work with seriousness and urgency while maintaining positivity, having fun, and supporting the SparkNC team.

Benefits

The SparkNC provides full-time employees with a competitive benefits package and professional development opportunities.

Apply

SparkNC is an Equal Opportunity employer. Personnel are chosen based on ability without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, marital status or sexual orientation, in accordance with federal and state law.

Please submit a resume and cover letter to bridges280z@gmail.com and include "President Application" in the subject line. To guarantee full consideration, please submit materials by the end of the day on March 1, 2024. The successful candidate will be expected to start no later than July 1, 2024.