

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH

## FOLK ARTS-CULTURAL TREASURES CHARTER SCHOOL

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

[factschool.org](http://factschool.org)

Start Date: July 2025



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

[CARNEYSANDOE.COM](http://CARNEYSANDOE.COM)

# Mission Statement

Giving meaning to the lives of our children in the present while preparing them to become active citizens in a democratic society, the Folk Arts – Cultural Treasures Charter School will provide children with an exemplary education that utilizes traditional arts and cultures found within their own and neighboring communities as the catalyst for critical inquiry and community engagement.

The Folk Arts – Cultural Treasures Charter School will provide children with an education which has high academic standards, is truly community based, incorporates and respects the lives of students and their families, engages students in understanding their own cultures and communities, and engages students in understanding their role as active participants in working for a just society. The Folk Arts – Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS) is a kindergarten through eighth grade elementary school serving students of diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds from the City of Philadelphia.

## At a Glance



Established  
**2005**



Enrollment  
**500**



Total faculty  
**50**



Student-teacher ratio  
**10:1**



Students of color  
**91%**



Faculty of color  
**44%**



Faculty with advanced degrees  
**54%**



Annual operating budget  
**\$9.6M**



## Overview

The Folk Arts – Cultural Treasurers Charter School (FACTS) is an inspiring place. It was founded in 2005 by members of the organization [Asian Americans United](#) (AAU). AAU was founded in 1985 to ensure equity and justice for Asian-American, refugee and immigrant students in the city of Philadelphia. FACTS now serves a diverse community of students providing an exemplary education that utilizes traditional arts and cultures found within their own and neighboring communities as the catalyst for critical inquiry and community engagement. It continues to strive for more public investment and public space in the under-served Chinatown community and public schooling that engages children as active participants in working for a just society.

The end of the 2024-25 academic year will mark FACTS' 20th Anniversary. It will also mark the end of Ellen Somekawa's remarkable tenure as the school's Executive Director. One of FACTS' founders, Ellen has been integral to keeping FACTS' growth over the years "mission true," so the school has spent a good deal of time thinking through the impact her departure will have as well as the opportunities this may present the school for future growth.

This is a school that lives and breathes "purpose," and we believe a mission-aligned educator and leader can help advance its goals effectively.





## Opportunities and Challenges

As Ellen Somekawa prepares to retire, the school is busy with various initiatives, none more important than the work related to the school's building and strategic decision to either stay in the building or to move to another school location. Given the school's close connection to the Chinatown community, which imparts so much to the school's identity and mission, it seems unlikely that any move would take the school far, but school leadership is keenly aware of decisions schools must make to survive and thrive. The school is in better shape in its 20th year than it ever has been, in terms of resources, staffing, momentum, etc., so they are considering the future from a position of relative strength, but they are also aware that the school has only been around for 20 years, and needs to be bold to take the right steps to live out its mission to the best of its abilities.

Making the right hire for the Executive Director role is crucial to its success. With a great deal of stability otherwise on the leadership team, the school feels confident it can help support the new Executive Director to do their best work, and they are excited to find a leader who has many/most of the following qualities and personal attributes.



## Qualifications and Personal Attributes

### Community

- A leader with over five years of experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- A community builder who enjoys being an active and visible presence in the life of the school and community.
- Deep experience with DEIB and Anti-Racist work.

### Fundraising

- Fundraising experience, with a preference for prior work in capital campaigns.
- Demonstrated experience in financial management/budgeting and building construction projects.

### Leadership

- An inclusive leadership approach guided by humility, open-mindedness, and transparency.
- A willingness to motivate, support, and work with faculty and staff towards achieving the school's objectives.
- A leader who is skilled at working collaboratively and able to make difficult decisions when needed for the functioning and sustainability of the organization.

### Staff Coaching/Management

- Experience in recruiting, onboarding, retaining, managing, and supporting faculty and staff.
- Organized, able to delegate, supportive, and collaborative.

### Administrative Skills

- Excellent organizational and management skills with demonstrated experience in developing systems and structures across divisions.
- Proficiency in relevant educational technology and administrative tools.
- Experience in both governance (boards) and education (has experience in a school environment, with faculty unions, etc.)



# Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School.

[School Website](#)

[About Philadelphia, Pennsylvania](#)

[English Language Development](#)



# To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- Selected candidates may be asked to submit responses to writing prompts and a list of professional references to:

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