



Suzuki Association of the Americas, Inc.

Executive Director Position Description

Approved: August 2021

Position Overview

The Suzuki Association of the Americas, Inc. (“SAA”) is a membership organization serving a region that includes North, South, and Central America and is affiliated with similar regional organizations in Europe, Asia, and the Pan-Pacific as part of the broader International Suzuki Association.

In partnership with the Board of Directors (“Board”), active standing and project committees, and the staff, the Executive Director ensures that SAA is successful in achieving its mission and other strategic objectives, the core of which are to:

- Promote music education beginning from birth
- Educate teachers, parents, and families using the Suzuki philosophy
- Set guidelines and criteria for Suzuki-based pedagogical instruction
- Support a diverse community of teachers committed to lifelong learning

These goals are primarily achieved through ongoing teacher development programs, regular publications, summer institutes, and conferences.

The SAA follows the Policy Governance model of nonprofit operations. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors provides leadership to SAA on behalf of the Association’s more than 7,000 members.

In the process of pursuing and achieving SAA’s mission, vision, and strategies, the Executive Director also manages the day-to-day activities of the organization, including oversight of staff, programs, and publications. The Executive Director leads the preparation and monitoring of annual budgets, and participates actively with the Board in proactive financial decision-making to support effective achievement of SAA’s mission.

The Executive Director is a key spokesperson for SAA, representing its interests in a wide variety of forums and with many constituents regionally, nationally, and internationally. The Executive Director operates with integrity and employs a leadership and communication style that is inclusive, encourages participation, elevates trust, and builds quality relationships while moving SAA’s strategic priorities forward.

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Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The Executive Director's primary responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

Strategic and Operational Leadership

- With the Board of Directors, key committees, and staff, support and creatively strengthen SAA's ability to achieve its mission.
- Lead and manage activities to implement annual goals and operating priorities; review and report goal achievement; evaluate results and revise strategies to meet those goals as necessary.
- Lead efforts to develop and implement strategic changes when authorized by the Board.
- Ensure that SAA's operations are consistent with its governing documents, conducted in an ethical manner, and true to its mission.
- Ensure that resources are well managed to effectively support current operations and strategic plans.
- Ensure that the SAA is a welcoming, inclusive organization in its policies, processes, and service to members.
- Creatively identify appropriate organization or policy changes and manage change processes effectively.

Program and Publications Development and Delivery

- Provide educational opportunities to teachers and parents using the Suzuki philosophy.
- Ensure ongoing excellence in development and delivery of educational programs.
- Stay abreast of recent developments and trends in both Suzuki and music instruction.
- Create and work with individual committees and SAA staff to assist in and oversee the development of educational programs, principally teacher training events, the biennial conference, and leadership retreat to ensure they meet their objectives and provide consistent and significant value to attendees and SAA's broader constituency.
- Monitor regular evaluation of programs and oversee changes as needed.
- Oversee scholarship programs, and grant making activities, ensuring effective compliance with program goals and vision.
- Work with committees and SAA staff to ensure and maintain the high quality of SAA's published works and papers, oversee development of new publications, and ensure that publications continue to provide relevant and timely content in matters of Suzuki methods and music instruction.
- Ensure that the means of delivery of programming and publications remains up to date and appealing to all SAA's constituents.

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Membership and Volunteer Support and Development

- Understand the varying needs of members and ensure that members are provided outstanding service on a consistent basis.
- Actively support building the membership base as well as building the value members find in belonging to SAA.
- Foster camaraderie and a sense of shared mission among SAA members, volunteers, and non-member participants.
- Ensure that SAA remains relevant to successive generations of practitioners and members.
- Identify, energize, and engage talented and committed volunteers in the development of SAA programs and publications.
- Ensure that the volunteer experience provides value to the individual volunteer and that he/she remains engaged in SAA's work.

Community Outreach and Strategic Alliances

- Represent SAA in local, regional, national, and international communities.
- Identify and establish strategic alliances to increase resources and opportunities to advance SAA's strategic goals and programs.
- In conjunction with the Board, communicate the vision and strategy of the organization in a compelling manner.
- Serve as one of SAA's key spokespersons and build effective relationships with policy makers, media representatives, volunteers, members, and non-member participants.

Governance

- Support the Board in developing and implementing strategies to attract and engage strong, effective, and diverse members of the Board and its committees.
- Understand and support the role of the Board; ensure ongoing Board education to enhance the Board's ability to execute its responsibilities on behalf of SAA effectively.
- Support the Board in the effective use of Policy Governance processes and policies as a means towards the continued strength, relevance, and development of SAA.
- Provide strong staff support and regular operational and financial data to the Board.
- Use the time and talents of Board members effectively.

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Financial, Facilities, Staff and Risk Management

- Together with the Board, establish clear revenue generation strategies and annual goals. Ensure those goals are met primarily through membership dues, program fees, publication sales, and gifts.
- Maintain good knowledge of the basics of financial management and develop and manage SAA's substantial budget, particularly its expenses. Achieve budget objectives consistently.
- Establish and maintain effective internal controls to ensure accurate and timely financial reporting and monitoring.
- Provide strategic leadership for management of SAA's investment funds and for fundraising activities, as needed.
- Manage organizational risks effectively, minimizing legal and financial liabilities.
- Manage relationships and terms with vendors.
- Ensure that SAA complies with all required filings and other regulatory requirements.
- Develop and implement effective staff management policies and practices including hiring, training, managing, retaining, and terminating staff members.
- Develop and maintain an atmosphere in which high quality products and services are delivered consistently.
- Foster high levels of communication and camaraderie within SAA staff.
- Promote diversity and inclusiveness within SAA staff.
- Manage the day-to-day business operations of SAA effectively and efficiently.

Other duties as required by the Board of Directors.

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Qualifications

Commitment to Mission

- Demonstrated commitment to SAA's mission and ends statements with an understanding of SAA's educational goals and ability to ensure balanced programming with a range of perspectives presented.
- A deep interest in the Suzuki philosophy and in expanding knowledge and support for this pedagogical approach.

Strategic Leadership

- Strategic, down-to-earth leader with proven ability to translate strategies into measurable operating plans and objectives.
- Strong, effective leadership, management, and organizational skills; proven commitment to high performance, superior quality in all products, and accountability.
- Proven skills in philanthropic fundraising and ability to manage grant application processes successfully.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills.

Operations Leadership

- A preference for working in an environment that is collegial, collaborative, and focused on lifelong learning with open dialogue at all levels.
- Experience in working with or on a governing board and with other active, committed volunteers to achieve goals and deliverables. Experience with the Policy Governance model of nonprofit leadership preferred.
- Ability to work effectively with highly capable staff and enhance their personal career development.
- Overall general business experience and organization development skills.
- Strong understanding of budgets and issues that impact financial results.
- Excellent judgment, integrity, and comfort with delegating responsibilities appropriately.

Membership & Outreach

- Persuasive communication skills and excellent interpersonal and multidisciplinary project skills.
- An ability to actively perceive and initiate opportunities to engage with members, program attendees, and others interested in SAA's work.

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Qualifications (continued)

Personal Qualities

- Decisiveness and a willingness to take appropriate risks.
- Good facilitation and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to identify opportunities, take initiative, and be adaptable and resilient.
- Ability to avoid partisan conflicts or stalemates.
- Proven ability to build long-term relationships with variety of constituents, stakeholders, and supporters.

Other

- Advanced ability to communicate or fluency in French, Portuguese, Spanish, or other modern language highly encouraged.
- Advanced degree or relevant industry experience strongly preferred.
- Willingness to travel regionally, nationally, and internationally regularly.

The Suzuki Association of the Americas is an equal opportunity employer.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, age, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, and pregnancy-related conditions, or any other characteristic protected by law.

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