

Mindset Scholars Network: Director of Strategic Outreach & Partnerships

Position Summary

Reporting to the Mindset Scholars Network's Executive Director, the Director of Strategic Outreach & Partnerships will play a pivotal role in our team's collective efforts to advance scientific understanding of students' mindsets and motivation at a time when practitioners and policymakers are eager to integrate lessons from this research into systemic efforts to enhance learning and educational equity in K-12 and postsecondary education.

We are seeking a person who loves engaging practice, policy, and funder audiences about social science research; translating academic research for non-technical audiences; and creating innovative experiences, resources, and partnerships that will help these audiences learn about the research and consider how it can be applied in their work to better serve students and educators. This role will actively engage MSN's key external stakeholders, with a focus on "grass tops" groups (e.g., educational intermediary organizations, thought leaders, funders, policymakers, system-level leaders, product developers), as well as early adopters among K-16 practitioners who are interested in mindset science. At its core, this role will create influential experiences, resources, and coalitions in the education sector in order to extend the impact of mindset science.

This is a new role in our organization created in response to a growing portfolio of strategic outreach work in the education sector, and the candidate who is hired to fill the role will work with the Executive Director to shape this role over time.

As a team, we seek a colleague who:

- Is committed to work that benefits students and educators and advances educational equity;
- Is excited to learn about mindset science to advance our team's collective vision and impact;
- Is passionate about continuously improving their own work and that of our team;
- Is energized by the prospect of being an integral part of a small, remotely staffed and highly collaborative team; and,
- Can simultaneously think about the 'big picture' and execute on day-to-day management and planning skills.

About the Mindset Scholars Network (MSN)

Motivation is a key factor in learning. Human beings are born to be learners and doers, and psychological research explains how meeting people's basic needs to feel competent and connected to others can sustain their natural desire to learn and improve academic mastery. When students want to

do a task, believe they can do the task, and feel part of a collective endeavor, they are more likely to choose challenging tasks, persist in the face of difficulty, learn more deeply, and achieve at higher levels.

Myriad factors shape students' motivation to learn. But one key source of motivation is the beliefs that students come to hold about themselves, their relationship to others, and the work they're asked to do in school. These beliefs are shaped by students' observations of the world around them; they are reasonable inferences that reflect students' reality and the messages sent by schools and society. These beliefs (or 'mindsets') are the lenses through which students make meaning of, or construe their experiences in school. These interpretations, in turn, shape their responses.

The [Mindset Scholars Network's](#) mission is to advance scientific understanding of mindsets and motivation to improve student outcomes and expand educational opportunity. We invest in original interdisciplinary research, build capacity for high quality mindset scholarship, and disseminate the latest scientific knowledge to the education sector. We serve as an authoritative resource for reliable, research-based information about learning mindsets, including: Belonging, Growth Mindset, and Purpose & Relevance. MSN works directly with preeminent social scientists to advance this mission. Together, these researchers' diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives help us understand how students' perceptions of themselves and their experiences are shaped by their identities and contexts, and how those perceptions matter for their academic motivation, behaviors, and outcomes.

Responsibilities and Tasks

Strategy: *Develop vision, strategy, and language for how the MSN will build awareness and use of mindset science in the education sector*

- Stay current on developments in relevant academic research and K-16 practice and policy trends
- Identify problems of practice in education that could benefit from the perspectives offered by mindset science
- Design a portfolio of outreach activities and partnerships that will position the MSN to achieve its impact goals
- Surface strategic opportunities and influential organizations and networks with whom to introduce practically-relevant insights and innovations from mindset science
- Conduct and/or oversee projects (e.g., landscape scans, interviews, focus groups) that help MSN and its allies in the mindset ecosystem (e.g., funders, organizations engaged in mindset-related R&D) understand target audiences' awareness and use of insights from mindset science
- Work with the Executive Director and external consultants to develop effective messaging of mindset science for public, practice, and policy audiences

Education: *Design and execute creative learning experiences that help K-16 education stakeholders learn about and apply insights from mindset science in ways that benefit students and educators*

- Design, plan, and execute events (e.g., day-long briefings for dozens of education funders; multi-day design workshops that bring together researchers and leaders of educational organizations; virtual events like conference calls and webinars) that build the awareness and capacity of grass tops groups to integrate insights and innovations from mindset science into their efforts to improve the quality and equity of education received by students; manage staff, organizational processes, and consultants in planning these events
- Create and deliver presentations that translate mindset science for grass tops audiences in the education sector
- Consult with education leaders and policymakers on mindset science and potential applications in their work; convey practice-relevant research questions back to the scientific community
- Provide feedback to others translating aspects of mindset science for education audiences
- Represent the MSN and the latest insights and applications of mindset science at education sector events

Resources: *Develop and broker access to tools and resources that help MSN's target audiences learn about and apply mindset science effectively*

- Identify needs for new tools and resources on mindset science for the K-16 education sector
- Design and create tools and resources for grass tops educational organizations seeking to learn about and apply insights from mindset science (e.g., primers on mindset science for a target audience); seek input from MSN staff and scholars as well as potential users to ensure these tools are both accessible and reflect accurate scientific understanding
- Build familiarity with other organizations developing resources, platforms, and programs relevant to mindset science; educate MSN target audiences about this landscape

Coalition-building: *Cultivate relationships, champions, and strategic partnerships that expand the MSN's ability to educate and influence the education sector*

- Build relationships with individuals and organizations in the education sector that could provide opportunities for future MSN strategic outreach activities
- Cultivate a coalition of influential organizations and individual champions for MSN's work and applying mindset science in K-16 education practice and policy
- Initiate and manage strategic partnerships related to outreach with other organizations in the mindset field and broader education sector

Management: *Scope and manage the workflows of staff and consultants; plan and invest in the professional development of staff*

- Manage staff working on MSN strategic outreach activities (MSN's Program & Policy Associate)
- Work with staff to develop professional growth plans and provide learning opportunities
- Scope and manage contracted consultants working on MSN strategic outreach activities

Other duties: *Perform other duties as assigned, including contributing to team meetings and retreats, and supporting the Executive Director on an as needed basis with grant writing and reporting*

Education, Experience, Knowledge, Skills and Ability

- Graduate degree or equivalent (e.g., Bachelor's degree with at least five to seven years of experience) in the social sciences, education, or public policy
- At least five years' experience working in the education sector, including experience building relationships with researchers and senior leaders in practice, policy, and foundations
- Experience developing, executing, and overseeing a strategic vision and advancing strategic partnerships across organizations
- Experience synthesizing complex ideas from education research and translating that research for practice and policy audiences
- Experience designing and facilitating effective adult learning experiences, including creating resources and in-person events that build awareness, buy-in, and capacity
- Exceptional communication skills, including written, verbal, and graphical; ability to design products that convey ideas clearly and persuasively
- Experience spearheading projects with multiple contributors (including across organizations) and work streams from conception to completion on time and within budget
- Experience managing and creating capacity-building opportunities for junior colleagues
- Proficient in Microsoft Office applications, especially Word, PowerPoint, and Excel; comfort using Google Docs; experience using collaborative project management tools
- Ability to work in a small, highly motivated and fast-moving remote office / telecommuting environment with frequent change and innovation
- Ability to creatively solve problems to ensure deliverables are met and pitch in when necessary at all task levels
- Time management skills to handle the competing priorities of several projects and ongoing organizational responsibilities
- Culturally open-minded, flexible, open to suggestions and opinions, eager to learn and grow, direct but polite, and organized in all aspects of work (including communication)

- Ability to collaborate productively and harmoniously in a team, while also being able to self-manage completion of work tasks independently with minimal oversight and exercise good judgment and sound decision-making

Valued and Non-Essential Education, Experience, Knowledge, Skills and Ability

- Experience working remotely

How to Apply

We welcome and encourage people from underrepresented backgrounds who can bring unique perspectives to the table to apply. We are looking for people committed to cultivating an inclusive work environment that prioritizes continuous professional ‘stretching’ and growth, and helping each other make a positive contribution to the world. No location preference; people in all United States locations are encouraged to apply. This position will require domestic travel to five to seven in-person meetings per year as well as attendance at education sector convenings and conferences, and is considered exempt for overtime purposes.

If you would like to apply for this position, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/MSN-DSOP>; a 1-page resume and 1-page cover letter summarizing your interest, qualifications, and experience will be required. Submissions will not be accepted via email.

Hiring Statement

The Mindset Scholars Network is a project of the New Venture Fund, a 501(c)(3) public charity that incubates new and innovative public-interest projects and grant-making programs. The New Venture Fund is committed to attracting, developing and retaining exceptional people, and to creating a work environment that is dynamic, rewarding and enables each of us to realize our potential. The New Venture Fund's work environment is safe and open to all employees and partners, respecting the full spectrum of race, color, religious creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, political affiliation, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, and all other classifications protected by law in the locality and/or state in which you are working.