



Executive Director

Remote (within U.S., California preferred)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SEAL (Sobrato Early Academic Language) transforms multilingual learners' educational experiences by equipping educators and systems with the knowledge, practices, and support needed to create rigorous, joyful, language-rich learning environments. Grounded in deep practitioner expertise and a strong evidence base, SEAL has trained more than 2,400 California educators and reached tens of thousands of students, while contributing insights from practice to broader research, policy, and field conversations.

SEAL is entering an important next chapter from a position of considerable strength. **With a new FY27–FY29 Strategic Plan**, strong financial footing, and a highly regarded model, the organization is poised to deepen its impact in California and expand its partnerships and influence nationally. This next phase will require SEAL to evolve its business and delivery model, strengthen and diversify earned and philanthropic revenue, and make thoughtful decisions about how and where to grow, all while preserving the depth, quality, and commitment to multilingual learners that have long distinguished its work.

SEAL is seeking nominations and applications for its next Executive Director to lead the next chapter. The organization seeks a strong enterprise leader with strategic and financial acumen, experience leading through change, and genuine credibility in education and the multilingual learner field. The next Executive Director will value and draw on the deep expertise of SEAL's team, build alignment and accountability across the organization, strengthen relationships with funders, partners, and the Board, and serve as a compelling external voice for SEAL and for the multilingual learners, educators, and communities at the heart of its mission.



SEAL ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

For nearly 20 years, **SEAL (Sobrato Early Academic Language)** has partnered with educators, schools, districts, county offices of education, families, researchers, policymakers, and other partners to advance educational opportunity and outcomes for multilingual learners. SEAL began in 2007, when Dr. Laurie Olsen and Sobrato Philanthropies designed and piloted a comprehensive approach to language-rich education in preschool and elementary classrooms. After more than a decade of implementation and evaluation, SEAL became an independent nonprofit in 2019, building on a strong foundation of practice, research, and partnership.

Today, SEAL is a highly regarded, evidence-backed leader in multilingual education. Its work is grounded in a fundamental belief that students' home languages, cultures, and lived experiences are assets, and that multilingual learners thrive when educators have the knowledge, tools, and support to create rigorous, joyful, language-rich learning environments. Through evidence-based professional learning and partnerships, SEAL helps educators strengthen instructional practice while building schools' and systems' capacity to better serve multilingual learners. Independent evaluations of SEAL's model have

demonstrated improvements in teaching practices, student engagement, and students' language development and academic achievement.

SEAL's work extends beyond individual classrooms. Drawing on deep practitioner expertise and a whole-system perspective, SEAL connects insights from practice with research, policy, and the broader education field. Its partnerships with educators, researchers, advocates, policymakers, funders, and other leaders help strengthen the systems and policies that shape opportunities for multilingual learners.

SEAL is now entering an important next chapter. Its **FY27–FY29 Strategic Plan** builds on the depth and quality of its established model while making SEAL's expertise more accessible, adaptable, and responsive to educators' and partners' needs. Over the next three years, SEAL will deepen its direct impact in California; expand its partnerships and influence nationally; strengthen its role as a trusted, practice-based voice in the field; and build the organizational and financial capacity to sustain and evolve its impact. This includes developing more modular, flexible offerings; expanding ecosystem partnerships; strengthening the connections among practice, policy, and field influence; and building a more diversified mix of earned and philanthropic revenue.

This next chapter builds from considerable strength. **SEAL has trained more than 2,400 California educators** and reached tens of thousands of students across hundreds of preschool and elementary sites. Its longstanding partnerships, evidence base, practitioner expertise, and reputation give SEAL a strong foundation from which to deepen its impact for multilingual learners in California and expand its reach and influence nationally. [Learn more about SEAL's impact.](#)

The Core Model

[SEAL's powerful approach to education](#) is rooted at the intersection of research and educational equity. Its bedrock values include a commitment to developing the intellectual and linguistic genius of young children; honoring the value and role of families' cultures and languages in students' lives; and helping teachers cultivate the skills and mindsets needed to become highly effective educators.

SEAL's high-leverage, developmentally appropriate pedagogical practices are aligned from preschool through elementary grades and address the language demands of rigorous, grade-level learning across disciplines. Together, these practices support language-rich, academically rigorous, and joyful learning environments where multilingual learners can thrive as they progress through their education journey.

Equity Commitment

Equity is a core value at SEAL, which believes that diversity fosters equity. SEAL is passionate about creating a workplace where all forms of diversity, including age, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, ethnicity, perspective, and experience, are recognized as adding real value to the organization. To carry out its mission, SEAL actively recruits a workforce that reflects the communities it serves, and, as part of this, everyone feels empowered to bring their full, authentic selves to work. SEAL's mission drives its innovation and connects staff more closely to their partners and the communities they serve.

Together, staff act fearlessly, learn from one another, improve constantly, and continue to build a culture that encourages, supports, and celebrates the diverse voices, backgrounds, and cultures of team members. These principles guide how SEAL builds its teams, cultivates leaders, and develops an

organization that embraces multiple approaches and points of view. SEAL supports an inclusive environment where team members feel empowered to share their experiences and ideas. SEAL believes that non-profit organizations can be powerful platforms for social change and that its higher purpose is to drive equity for all.

Core Values



Disrupt inequity. We commit to rewrite long-held racial, cultural and linguistic inequities in our schools. We passionately believe in the SEAL mission and work toward a future where its realization is possible.



Work with urgency and optimism. The English/dual language learners of California cannot wait. We champion the cultural and linguistic assets of all English Learners and believe in their ability to learn, thrive and lead.



Collaborate thoughtfully. The diversity of our team, our partners and those we serve is a tremendous asset, which we thoughtfully tap into to improve our work. We lead with humanity and constantly pursue equity and inclusion in our relationships.



Communicate with integrity. Every interaction is an opportunity to build the trust, empathy and shared understanding that are critical to SEAL's success. We foster a supportive environment where everyone can be honest, brave, humble and authentic.



Evolve and innovate. We remain curious and embrace challenges and failure as opportunities to grow. We are open-minded, solutions-oriented and push ourselves to explore new ideas.



Choose joy. We believe in the power of joyful learning—for children and adults. We infuse joy and bring levity to our work and culture, in order to strengthen what we do for educators and students.



THE OPPORTUNITY

Reporting to the Board of Directors through the Board Chair, the Executive Director will provide overall strategic and organizational leadership for SEAL, partnering with the Board and SEAL's senior leadership team to translate the organization's FY27–FY29 Strategic Plan into clear priorities, strong execution, and sustainable impact. The Executive Director will lead and develop a talented senior team, oversee SEAL's financial and organizational health, drive revenue strategy, and serve as a visible external leader and ambassador for the organization.

The next Executive Director will join SEAL at an important moment of opportunity and evolution. With a highly regarded model, strong financial footing, deep practitioner expertise, and a new strategic plan in place, SEAL has a strong foundation to build on. The next leader will guide the organization as it evolves its business and delivery model, strengthens and diversifies earned and philanthropic revenue, expands its partnerships and national influence, and makes disciplined choices about where and how SEAL can have the greatest impact. They will bring strategic and financial judgment to assess opportunities against SEAL's mission, capacity, and impact, while ensuring the organization has the people, systems, and cross-functional alignment needed to deliver on its ambitions.

Central to this leadership mandate is the ability to pair strong enterprise leadership with genuine credibility in education and the multilingual learner field. The next Executive Director will recognize and value SEAL's deep programmatic and practitioner expertise, while bringing the fluency and authenticity needed to engage meaningfully with that expertise and to participate credibly in complex pedagogical, policy, and political conversations. They will be a thoughtful learner and a compelling external voice for SEAL, able to understand and champion its approach and to represent the organization with educators, districts, policymakers, funders, partners, and other leaders in the field. The Executive Director will lead change with transparency, clarity, and respect for SEAL's culture and institutional knowledge, strengthening trust, accountability, and collaboration across the organization while partnering closely with the Board and the leadership team through SEAL's next chapter.

Key Responsibilities

The Executive Director will provide strategic and organizational leadership across SEAL, collaborating closely with the Board and the senior leadership team to advance the organization's mission and implement its FY27–FY29 Strategic Plan. Key responsibilities include:

Strategic & Enterprise Leadership

- Lead the implementation and ongoing refinement of SEAL's strategic direction, translating long-term goals into clear organizational priorities, decisions, and measures of success.
- Maintain accountability for SEAL's overall financial health, organizational performance, and long-term sustainability by working closely with the Head Finance & Operations Officer and the Board to align resources with strategic priorities.
- Guide the continued evolution of SEAL's business and delivery model, including the shift toward more flexible, modular offerings, while preserving the depth, quality, and impact that distinguish SEAL's work.
- Assess emerging opportunities and changes across education, policy, technology, philanthropy, and the market; make disciplined decisions on what SEAL should pursue, sequence, partner on, or decline, based on mission, impact, capacity, and financial sustainability.

Revenue & Development Leadership

- Own SEAL's overall revenue strategy and, in partnership with the Executive Leadership Team, build a durable, increasingly diversified mix of philanthropic and earned revenue.
- Personally cultivate and steward key funder and partner relationships, serving as a compelling ambassador for SEAL's mission, impact, and evolving strategy.
- Strengthen the organization's development capacity, data and information systems, and discipline, building durable fundraising knowledge, relationships, and practices across SEAL.
- Engage the Board as an active partner in fundraising, relationship-building, and ambassadorship, enabling Board members to contribute their networks and influence to SEAL's long-term sustainability.

Program, Impact & Field Leadership

- Ensure that SEAL's programs, partnerships, research and learning, and field-facing work remain aligned with its mission, evidence base, strategic priorities, and its commitment to multilingual learners.
- Lead and support SEAL's deep internal programmatic and practitioner expertise, creating conditions for strong collaboration, innovation, continuous learning, and accountability for impact.

- Serve as a visible and credible external voice for SEAL among educators, district and system leaders, policymakers, researchers, funders, and other partners, connecting insights from SEAL's practice to broader education and policy conversations.
- Guide SEAL's expanding national partnerships and influence by focusing on where its expertise can add meaningful value across diverse education and political contexts.

People, Culture & Organizational Leadership

- Lead, support, and develop SEAL's senior leadership team, fostering shared ownership, strong cross-functional collaboration, clear decision-making, and accountability for organizational priorities.
- Build trust across a largely remote organization through transparent communication, meaningful listening, clear expectations, and consistent follow-through, including closing feedback loops when staff input informs organizational decisions.
- Lead organizational change with clarity, empathy, and discipline, preserving SEAL's institutional knowledge, staff expertise, community relationships, and commitment to equity while helping the organization adapt to its next chapter.
- Ensure SEAL's organizational structure, talent, systems, and ways of working evolve to support the strategic plan and enable staff to do their best work.

Board Leadership & Governance

- Serve as the Board's primary organizational partner, ensuring trustees have the information, context, and strategic guidance needed to fulfill their governance and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Partner with the Board Chair and trustees as the Board evolves its composition, capabilities, committee infrastructure, and engagement to support SEAL's next chapter, including broader fundraising, governance, strategic, and national perspectives.
- Support the partnership between the Board and staff, ensuring clear distinctions between governance and organizational leadership while effectively drawing on Board members' expertise and relationships.
- Steward SEAL's longstanding relationship with Sobrato Philanthropies with care and strategic judgment as the nature of that partnership continues to evolve.



WHO YOU ARE

We will consider exceptional candidates who demonstrate a strong combination of the qualifications, experiences, and qualities described below. *We recognize that candidates may bring these strengths through different professional pathways and do not expect any one candidate to bring equal depth across every area.*

- **Executive and enterprise leadership:** Significant senior or executive-level leadership experience in a mission-driven organization, with accountability for organizational strategy, financial performance, people, and results. Demonstrated ability to lead across functions, translate strategy into execution, and make disciplined decisions about priorities, resources, growth, and organizational capacity.
- **Revenue and financial leadership:** Demonstrated success generating revenue and leading strategies for long-term financial sustainability, including philanthropic fundraising and/or earned-revenue models. Able to cultivate significant relationships, make a compelling case for investment, and partner effectively with staff and Board members on revenue strategy.

- **Education-sector and field fluency:** Meaningful experience in education and sufficient fluency to engage credibly in conversations about pedagogy, policy, systems, and the political contexts affecting multilingual learners. Experience, standing, or relationships in multilingual education, education policy, educator professional development, or an adjacent field are strongly preferred. Deep expertise in MLL pedagogy is welcomed but not required; the successful candidate must bring the education-sector fluency and judgment to engage meaningfully with SEAL's internal expertise.
- **Change and organizational leadership:** A track record of leading significant organizational change with clarity, adaptability, and respect for people and institutional knowledge. Able to build trust, alignment, and accountability across teams, strengthen cross-functional collaboration, and communicate transparently through ambiguity and change.
- **Connection to mission and communities:** An authentic connection to immigrant and multilingual communities through lived and/or professional experience, coupled with a demonstrated commitment to educational equity. Brings cultural fluency, humility, curiosity, and respect for the expertise and experiences of the communities SEAL serves.
- **External leadership, communication, and partnership:** A compelling communicator, storyteller, and relationship-builder who can represent SEAL credibly with educators, system leaders, policymakers, funders, researchers, advocates, and partners. Experience working effectively with nonprofit Boards or other governing bodies and engaging trustees as strategic and fundraising partners.
- **Strategic judgment & adaptability:** A big-picture thinker who can interpret shifts in education, policy, philanthropy, and the broader environment and translate them into practical implications for SEAL. Brings sound judgment on when to pursue, adapt, sequence, partner, or say no to opportunities while safeguarding the quality and integrity of SEAL's work. Multilingual capacity, meaningful familiarity with California's education and policy landscape, and experience evolving an organization's business or delivery model are strongly preferred.



LOCATION, COMPENSATION, & BENEFITS

Location: SEAL is currently a remote organization based in California. The role requires regular travel for staff and organizational gatherings, Board meetings, partner and funder engagement, conferences, and other external-facing responsibilities. California residency, or willingness to relocate, is strongly preferred.

Compensation & Benefits: The starting salary range for this position is \$300,000 to \$340,000. Our highly competitive benefits package includes:

- 100% coverage for employee medical, dental, vision, life, AD&D, long- and short-term disability benefits.
- 50% coverage for dependent(s) for medical, dental, and vision benefits.
- Up to 6% 401(k) matching.
- Medical/Dependent Care FSA.
- Self Care Program and Telecommuting Ergonomics Program.
- 20 days of PTO/year.

ADA Requirement/Working Conditions:

- Long periods of sitting and computer work.
- Position may require occasional lifting or occasional movement up to 40 pounds and writing or drawing in lateral and upright positions.



TO APPLY

SEAL is partnering with [Allison Kupfer Poteet](#) and [Alejandra Villa](#) of the national search firm [NPAG](#). Candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible, and applications will be reviewed as they are received. Candidates may submit their cover letter, outlining their interest and qualifications, along with their resume, via [NPAG's website](#).

At SEAL, we are committed to building a diverse and inclusive organization in which we give voice to, and meet the needs of, the communities, teachers, and students we serve. We believe in lifelong learning and continuous improvement, and we are ever-evolving the processes through which we select and support team members and foster a culture of universal belonging and empowerment. SEAL encourages applications from individuals of diverse backgrounds and lived experiences, especially those from immigrant and English Learner communities, people of color, and members of other historically marginalized groups. SEAL is committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment.