



Senior Director, Advocacy and Policy

Austin, TX

Educate Texas (EdTX), an initiative of Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT), is a catalyst for large-scale statewide educational systems change. EdTX partners with public and private entities to achieve the goal of strengthening the public and higher education system in Texas so that every student is prepared for educational and workforce success by earning a college degree, certificate, or technical credential.

Educate Texas currently describes itself with these words:

Vision

Strengthen the public and higher education system so that every Texas student is prepared for educational and workforce success.

Mission

Increase postsecondary readiness, access and success for all students by building partnerships, leading innovation, and scaling practices and policies.

Values

Collaboration, both internally and with our partners, amplifies our ability to effect change. Measurable **impact**, on behalf of all students in the educational system, is our goal. **Integrity** and a commitment to being open, honest, and accountable to all underpins our work/voice. **Learning** through study, knowledge sharing, and experiences drives our work.

(These core statements will continue in meaning, but an expanded and strengthened version will be part of the new strategic plan to be announced in December 2020.)

Launched in 2003, EdTX is headquartered at CFT's offices in Dallas, with satellite offices in Austin and the Rio Grande Valley.

EdTX's experienced Austin-based advocacy and policy team works to drive conversations and effect change in various college readiness and higher education success policy areas. EdTX is now a sought-after resource to provide advice and counsel to key executive and legislative leadership offices; the state agencies overseeing public education, higher

education and workforce development; and the state's foremost education advocates. With its earned credibility with policymakers, business leaders and philanthropic partners, Educate Texas has influenced policies affecting college and career readiness, effective teaching and higher education.

The team also helps Educate Texas serve as the convener of statewide groups that bring together diverse stakeholders to advance and advocate policy. The Texas Student Success Council, the Teaching and Learning Council, and Philanthropy Advocates are strong examples of EdTX's ability to build awareness and dialogue about the strengths and challenges for its impact areas, and its partnerships help K-12 and higher education leaders and stakeholders to identify best practices in policy and programs, and impact legislative, state agency and local efforts.

The challenge: this newly-created Senior Director position is an integral part of EdTX's planned growth. Since its founding EdTX's advocacy and policy efforts have been led by the Executive Director, John Fitzpatrick, in more recent years in partnership with the Austin-based team. With the significant growth built into its new 2025 strategic plan, Educate Texas is ready to recruit a seasoned leader to design and manage its overall advocacy and policy strategy for both K-12 and higher education. The Senior Director will work closely with the ED during the upcoming 2021 session, and lay the groundwork for the organization's future strategy, as well as the bridge to a cooperative hand-off of the ED's relationships.

For more background information see:

<https://www.edtx.org>

<https://www.cftexas.org>

Position summary

The Senior Director is responsible for managing the overall development and delivery of EdTX's state advocacy and policy agenda for K-12 and higher education. The Senior Director will serve as the lead relationship manager with members of the Texas Legislature and with the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker's offices, as well as serving as a liaison with the three education agencies (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas Education Agency, and Texas Workforce Commission) and with other existing and potential partners.

Relationships

The Senior Director will report to the Executive Director, John Fitzpatrick.

The advocacy and policy team currently has four members (plus an intern); the new Senior Director will have the opportunity to define and recruit at least two new team members during this fiscal year.

The Senior Director will maintain a working liaison and communications with EdTX program leaders, the Educate Texas Committee, and with CFT executives as appropriate.

Externally, the Senior Director is responsible for EdTX relations with the Legislature and state leadership, and for building relationships with the education agencies and with a broad spectrum of existing and potential partners on EdTX K-12 and higher education interests.

The Senior Director will serve as a member of the Educate Texas Operating Committee, a senior leadership committee.

Position priorities (to be addressed during the first six months)

- Represent EdTX during the 2021 legislative session, working with the Executive Director and the policy team.
- Build on this experience to start designing the strategy and process for advocacy and policy initiatives in the future.
- Evaluate the team's resources and staffing needs, and make appropriate adjustments.

Primary responsibilities

- Lead the team to develop and advocate state policy solutions to improve student achievement and postsecondary readiness; ensure a cohesive, collaborative, and impactful policy framework and message to advance EdTX policy objectives at the state level.
- Work with EdTX leadership and the policy team to develop long-term strategy for advocacy and policy; develop new initiatives to help fulfill the goals of its 2025 strategic plan.
- Manage relationships, in partnership with the policy team, with legislators and leadership (Governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker) and their staffs; maintain strong working relationships with the K-12 and higher education policy legislative leaders on current or proposed policy initiatives.
- Build relationships with education advocacy and policy leaders outside of the Legislature, including the education agencies and the leaders, government relations professionals, and lobbyists for school districts, higher education institutions, and associations; identify opportunities for partnership and collaboration.
- Manage existing relationships with philanthropic partners and funder collaboratives supporting the EdTX portfolio.
- Identify new potential philanthropic partners for EdTX advocacy and policy initiatives; work closely with other externally-facing colleagues in communications, development, and other areas to cultivate these opportunities.

- Manage the budget, staffing, and other organizational aspects of the policy team in accordance with EdTX and CFT protocols.
- Manage, recruit, train, and retain excellent team members who are committed to helping EdTX fulfill its mission.

Ideal experience

- Educational background: bachelor's degree required, and post-graduate studies and/or degree strongly preferred.
- Work experience: at least 10-15 years' significant experience in the advocacy and policy field, preferably in Texas, with demonstrated strategy development and supervisory experience. Knowledge of education policy is highly desirable, and substantial direct experience with the Legislature is required.
- Outstanding communications skills (oral, written, and presentation) are essential.
- Experience with the interests of diverse individuals and communities and knowledge of the educational and economic challenges they may face is a strong plus.

Ideal personal profile

- An experienced advocate who is a team builder with the ability to serve as a unifying force on a cohesive and collaborative vision.
- A creative thinker and seasoned presenter who can position policy discussions at both strategic and tactical levels.
- A respected thought leader who can gather, analyze, distill, and communicate complex policy information within EdTX and to its partners, legislators, and other policymakers.
- An individual committed to excellence and to the mission who can represent Educate Texas and the Communities Foundation of Texas effectively to the Texas legislature, other policymakers, partners, and the public.

For more information contact:

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