The Position

The Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women, a unique public charter school committed to providing the city of Baltimore with the next generation of exceptional, diverse female leaders, seeks a Chief Executive Officer to begin in summer 2018. Through a rigorous and supportive program of academics, arts, athletics, and social-emotional learning, the school seeks to instill BLSYW P.R.I.D.E. — professionalism, respect, integrity, diligence, and enthusiasm — and prepare girls to thrive as learners and leaders in school and beyond. To guide this work, the school will appoint an experienced and passionate professional to lead the school into its second decade, working closely with internal and external stakeholders to guarantee the continued growth and wellbeing of the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women and its community.

School History

The Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women was founded in 2008 by Brenda Brown Rever, a prominent Baltimore women’s advocate who identified a need for a school focused on the success of girls and young women who can become the next leaders of the City. Working closely with district leadership, Brown established the first all-girls middle and high school in Baltimore, which opened its doors to a founding class of 120 sixth grade students in the fall of 2009.

After the school’s first year, BLSYW moved to its new location in the former YWCA at the corner of Franklin Street and Park Avenue, growing each year to welcome a new class. The school’s first graduation, which took place on June 3rd, 2016, was the subject of a cover story by The Baltimore Sun newspaper.

The School

Affectionately known as “Bliss,” the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Woman enrolls 501 students in grades six through twelve, offering a comprehensive all-girls’ experience unique in the city of Baltimore. Open to all Baltimore city young women, BLSYW accepts students through a lottery process with no admissions testing or
screening; in order to receive an application, students and families are expected to attend an informed choice session, familiarizing themselves with the school’s academics, leadership development, college preparatory program, and uniform requirements. Ninety-eight percent of the student body and 65% of faculty are people of color.

With a strong sense of BLSYW pride and community, the school supports academic, emotional, and social growth through its four targeted program anchors—"Academics: Excellence and Enrichment," "Leadership: Girl Power," “S.T.E.A.M.: Girls Only,” and “Destination: College.” As a public charter school, BLSYW is publicly funded, with additional support for enrichment activities and professional development coming from the Foundation for BLSYW. The school’s charter status offers the flexibility to set schedules and determine curriculum in service of student accountability and academic results. Among these results are strong standardized test scores—the average SAT score for members of the Class of 2016 was more than 200 points above the Baltimore City average—and a 100% rate of college admission for graduating students.

**Academics**

The academic program at BLSYW combines traditional and progressive teaching methods in a rigorous and supportive program that cultivates achievement, work ethic, and self-reflection. Faculty draw on student-centered, active, and collaborative learning to deepen students’ understanding, while also teaching discrete skills that prepare students to excel on standardized tests and other assessments. Class sizes of 25 students and advisories of 15 to 17 allow teachers to know each girl “by name and by need,” and many teachers offer before- and after-school tutoring in their subjects. Of the school’s 65 faculty, 45% hold advanced degrees.
The school’s commitment to “Educate Every Student” in this diverse community is supported by full-time math and reading intervention teachers and a Saturday Academy, which provides extension and additional practice in the areas of literacy and mathematics. For gifted and advanced learners, BLSYW offers honors classes in math and English to push students forward. Across the board, BLSYW fosters academic excellence, with graduation requirements that go beyond those of other Baltimore public schools: all students are expected to complete four years of math and science, in keeping with the school’s S.T.E.A.M. focus.

**Middle School**

In grades six through eight, BLSYW students build a strong academic foundation, cultivating critical reading and writing skills, practicing mathematical and scientific thinking, and developing an awareness of the world around them through history and language study. Courses in English, math, history, science, Spanish, music, visual art, and physical education prepare middle schoolers for high school and beyond, and field trips and special programs such as Young Science Explorers enhance student learning across disciplines.

The sixth grade leadership seminars offer each girl a chance to explore her own leadership style, and in seventh grade, students study the qualities of effective leadership in action, preparing to implement their new skills to make change in their own lives and those of others. Every eighth grader at BLSYW completes an Action Research Project, researching a contemporary issue and presenting their findings in a paper, which is presented to faculty and peers.
Upper School

The Upper School program at BLSYW fosters well-roundedness and engagement, with course requirements in English, math, history, science, Spanish, technology, visual art, physical education, and electives including an African-American studies program, an Introduction to Law course, and an optional certification in computer science.

At BLSYW, learning is both college-preparatory and pre-professional: in addition to laying the foundation for future study, BLSYW students practice applying their knowledge and skills through projects like the Senior Capstone, an in-depth independent study of an issue related to S.T.E.A.M. and/or the improvement of a social condition affecting the city of Baltimore. Working closely with an outside mentor, seniors complete a literature review, compose a theory of action, adopt a research methodology, and propose a plan to address their area of concern. Final projects are defended before a professional panel, and exceptional capstones are eligible to earn AP credit from the College Board.

College Placement

2017 college acceptances included:
- Alabama A&M University
- Allegany College of Maryland
- Baltimore City Community College
- Community College of Baltimore County
- University of Baltimore
- Bethune-Cookman University
- Bowie State University
- Claflin University
- Clark Atlanta University
- Coppin State University
- University of Dayton
- Delaware State University
- University of Delaware
- Elizabeth City State University
- Geneva College
- Gettysburg College
- Goucher College
- Grace College
- Howard Community College
- Johns Hopkins University
- Johnson C. Smith University
- Liberty University
- Lincoln University
- University of Maryland, Eastern Shore
- Maryland Institute College of Art
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County
- University of Maryland, College Park
- McDaniel College
- Morgan State University
- Norfolk State University
- North Carolina Wesleyan College
- Northampton Community College
- Philander Smith College
- Potomac State College of West Virginia University
- Saint Vincent College
- Southern University and A&M College
- Stratford University
- Susquehanna University
- The Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College
- Tuskegee University
- Virginia State University
- Virginia Union University
- Washington College
- Wesley College
- West Virginia State University
- Winston-Salem State University
- Winthrop University
- Xavier University of Louisiana
DESTINATION: COLLEGE

Destination: College, one of BLSYW’s signature programs, is a comprehensive college preparatory program that begins in sixth grade with college visits and continues through high school, with one-on-one and small group college counseling, financial aid workshops for parents and students, on-site standardized tests, and support for test preparation. Through the school’s efforts, 100% of the class of 2017 participated in pre-college summer programs as rising seniors. Of BLSYW’s first graduating class, 100% of students were accepted to a college or university. Eighty percent of alumnae enrolled in a two- or four-year institution, while another 8% enrolled in a post-secondary program corresponding with their career aspirations.

SCHOOL LIFE

Life at BLSYW is enriched with a growing slate of after-school programs, from chapters of organizations including the National Society of Black Engineers and Future Business Leaders of America to the BLSYW Body Love Club and step team. Community service is another key component of the BLSYW experience, with each high schooler completing a graduation requirement of 125 hours of service before the end of her senior year.

ARTS AND ATHLETICS

In keeping with BLSYW’s commitment to offering a well-rounded education, music, visual art, and drama are offered at the middle and high school levels. Classes in art and music appreciation and creation allow students to cultivate creativity and expertise, while after-school opportunities allow students to devote extra time to their passions.
Physical education is also a requirement for middle and high school students, with Personal Health and Personal Fitness classes at the Upper School level covering nutrition, diet, mental health, the development of fitness plans, and the ability to link the importance of physical activity with life-long endeavors. In the past several years, BLSYW has also developed an athletic program, featuring cheerleading, basketball, volleyball, and track and field.

BLSYW’s step team was the subject of a documentary film, which was recognized with the U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award for Inspirational Filmmaking at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival. The film follows members of the first graduating class through their senior year at BLSYW and was released in theaters by Fox Searchlight.

Baltimore, Maryland

With an urban population of approximately 620,000, Baltimore is the largest city in the state of Maryland. Dubbed “Charm City,” Baltimore is known for its beautiful harbor, diverse neighborhoods, and famous blue crabs. Historically, it has been home to writers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Frederick Douglass, singer Billie Holiday, and baseball player Babe Ruth. Today, it is notable for its monuments and architecture, including more designated historic buildings than any other city in the U.S. Arts and culture are another central part of the city’s identity, with theater, opera, chamber music, and the internationally renowned Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, a tribute to African-American history, is a popular tourist designation. Two Major league sports teams, the Baltimore Orioles and Baltimore Ravens, and the Preakness, a horse race that constitutes the second leg in thoroughbred racing’s Triple Crown, all call Baltimore home.

With a population that is 63% African-American, Baltimore is a majority-minority city with a history of Democratic leadership. The past three mayors, including current mayor Catherine Pugh, elected in
2016, have been African-American women, and in recent years, the city has made concerted efforts to address social and economic issues in Baltimore. Significant funds have been invested to redevelop areas such as the abandoned Port Covington, and a recovering economy has resulted in job growth every year since 2011. John Hopkins Hospital and University are the city’s two largest employers, and health, biosciences, higher education, and technology are all major industries. Forbes recently named Baltimore to a list of “new tech hotspots,” and analysts expect continued growth.

Since 2010, BLSYW has been housed in a former YWCA, which was refurbished and remodeled specifically for the school and the programs. Its location in the heart of downtown Baltimore is just a few blocks from historic landmarks and institutions such as the Walters Art Museum and the Enoch Pratt Public Library.

**Opportunities and Challenges**

The Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women is a strong and vibrant school for girls in grades six through twelve rooted in the mission of providing a college preparatory, STEAM-based curriculum steeped in academic rigor, emotional and social support for the “Whole Girl,” with a commitment to help each student develop as a learner and a leader. Since opening its doors in 2009, the school has committed itself to the growth of exciting programs, the intentional use of technology, and the establishment of community partnerships (such as mentorship programs). The faculty, staff, and Foundation work every day to distinguish BLSYW among its peers as the school that graduates the future leaders for Baltimore in both the private and public sectors. The school’s goal is to create a continual pipeline of 540 homegrown, exceptional, diverse, female change-makers to provide the civic and business leadership Baltimore deserves and needs to the world-class city it can be.
The new CEO must come ready to build upon the existing strengths of the school and be prepared to lead BLSYW in meeting the following challenges and opportunities:

Culture
• Create, support, and encourage a culture that fosters the BLSYW mission of an all-girls, college preparatory school known for supportive environment, academic rigor, and S.T.E.A.M.-based curriculum.

Communications & Relationship Development
• Effectively communicate internally with staff and externally with all school stakeholders, including families, prospective students/families, district, Board of Directors, funders, corporate partners, founder, charter school coalition, public officials, overall community.

Leadership Development
• Support and foster principals and foundation leadership team, including enhancing professional development opportunities.
• Improve teacher retention.

Compelling BLSYW Experience & Brand
• Evolve and create Upper School experience, culture, and traditions, increasing student retention in the Upper School (particularly, the transition from 8th to 9th grade).

Fundraising & Fiscal Management
• Provide leadership on fundraising, capital campaign, identification of corporate sponsors, et al.
• Take on overall responsibility for management of budget and day-to-day financial operations.
• Support 6th grade enrollment, which is key to revenue from District.

Daily Business Operations
• Manage facilities, insurance, human resources, and accounts payable.
Desired Qualities and Qualifications of the Next CEO

For this position, the school seeks an individual who is:

- An inspirational, visionary leader who can lead strategically and encourage innovation in her team, including being open to all that is possible in this still new and very promising school.
- A role model and someone who relates well to adolescent girls in underserved communities.

The ideal candidate will possess:

- Administrative experience in an urban school setting and a cultural understanding of the community it serves.
- Strong managerial and leadership skills demonstrated in a school setting—preferably in a charter or public school.
- Strong business and financial management experience in order to support sustainability and growth of the school.
- Strong, open, and eager communicator—both spoken and written, among a wide range of constituents.
- Strong understanding of organizational development—specifically, able to build a thriving, cohesive team that includes staff employed by two different employers: Baltimore City School System and the BLSYW Foundation.

The next CEO will also be:

- Able and eager to manage and work with the school principals and leadership team on curricular alignment and pedagogy, as well as the full range of programs and school culture.
- Able to work effectively with a wide range of constituents—including students and their families.
• Able to market the school and to connect with business and local community leaders.
• Able to appreciate and nurture a school culture that is on-task but also vibrant and fun.
• Comfortable with and eager to lead and participate in the full range of development activities: events, cultivating relationships with major donors, and direct solicitations.

An advanced degree is required.

**TO APPLY**

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

• A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position.
• A current résumé.
• A one-page statement of educational philosophy and practice.
• A list of five (5) professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each to:

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