THE POSITION

Victoria Educational Organisation (VEO), part of the Chow Tai Fook Educational Group in Hong Kong, seeks a Director of Victoria Educational Organisation of its eight kindergartens which serve 2,600 students. Using the Primary Years Programme (PYP) in a trilingual (English, Putonghua (Mandarin), and Cantonese) immersion setting, the curriculum is supplemented with the Columbia University Teachers College reading and writing program.

VEO is a high-performing group of schools, and, like other schools that hold to the highest educational standards, can be a keen self-critic concerning what could be even better. The next Director of VEO should be prepared to honor the legacy and mission of the organization and to spend time listening and learning about the unique qualities of the program at VEO. At the same time, he or she, working closely with the owner and the CEO, should also lay the groundwork for a strategic planning effort through shared leadership practices that will excite interest in a new vision for the future.

This is a significant opportunity for a highly-qualified candidate seeking a new leadership position at a well-respected group of schools that provide an inquiry-based approach to education in the dynamic city of Hong Kong. The Director of VEO will report directly to the CEO and will play a vital role in leading the premier network of VEO kindergartens. The Director of VEO will support, coach, and work closely with the Principals of each of the eight campuses, the central administration team, and the curriculum team in order to ensure high quality dynamic schools with successful and happy students. S/he will provide supervision and leadership to the kindergartens, be responsible for the implementation of VEO’s policies, programs, and services, as well as provide advice on performance of schools to the CEO.

Mission

To develop innovative learning and teaching environments that foster teachers’ professionalism and help children reach their full potential. We deeply believe that the childhood years are the most important for growing and learning. Therefore, we must provide our children with…

- a safe and richly stimulating learning environment with facilities that encourage the children to take an active role in learning
- a nurturing and caring learning atmosphere in which children can establish close relationships with classmates and teachers, and where social skills and individuality are promoted.
- a wide variety of learning opportunities that encourage children to actively participate in daily experiences, including discovery and creative learning; designed to nurture and promote social, emotional and physical, as well as cognitive and language development.
- a code of proper manners and social skills which encourage children to cooperate, interact, appreciate and respect others so that they will grow up to be polite, caring, self-confident and assured.

Motto

MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS TODAY - GLOBAL CITIZENS OF TOMORROW
Together we care, learn, and inspire.
**HISTORY**

VEO has a long history of educating and inspiring young minds. In 1965, Christina Ting Yuk-Chee and her sister Cecilia Lee Ting Yuk-Kuen opened a nursery that would provide a more caring and enjoyable place for their own children and others to attend. From this family-based foundation, the school flourished under the visionary leadership of one of its first students when Ting’s daughter, Dr. Maggie Koong May-Kay, returned from attending university in America to serve as the Chief Principal of the two nursery schools.

Dr. Koong expanded the Victoria family school into what is now known as Victoria Educational Organisation. VEO was the first kindergarten to introduce English teachers into the classroom, and to establish a collaborative, co-teaching environment with Chinese and English native speaking teachers working side by side. In 2005, the first Victoria kindergarten was authorized as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, and all Victoria kindergartens have followed suit. Trilingual (Cantonese, Putonghua and English) classrooms began in 2007.

**THE ORGANIZATION**

Serving more than 2,600 students, Victoria Educational Organisation is one of the largest providers of early childhood education in Hong Kong, serving families of pre-nursery and kindergarten children at its eight kindergartens and nurseries. VEO has built a legacy and reputation for its excellence in education as it continuously explores and embraces innovations to enhance children’s learning. The schools share a common vision and curriculum, with each campus celebrating its own style and
individual qualities. At the heart of VEO is the desire to be at the forefront of top quality educational provision while nurturing happy, joyful, enthusiastic learners. Graduates are equipped as multilingual learners today, and have the foundations to become global citizens of tomorrow. VEO is proud of its network of global alumni with representation across diverse industries. Leading doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, CEO’s, educators, musicians, artists and many others all took their first steps at Victoria.

The individual campuses report to their own principal who in turn reports to the Director of VEO. Each kindergarten has a school management committee of six members who reports to the VEO Board of five members. The Board is responsible for strategic planning, formulation of policies, and oversight of each kindergarten. They perform a very strategic role and leave the management of the schools to the CEO and Director of Schools.

**The Staff**

Knowing how precious each child is, VEO hires the best teachers from around the world who engage, inspire, and care for the children in their classes. In recruiting teachers, VEO looks for native English, Putonghua, and Cantonese speaking early childhood educators who care about children, are committed to working in a dynamic environment, and who will include the parents every step of the way. Teachers are expected to be role models for children, demonstrating an open-minded international outlook and inspiring students daily.

Twenty percent of faculty have a master’s degree, 14% have a PGCE/PGDE, and 13% have a Certificate of Education as a Qualified Kindergarten teacher. Teachers represent a variety of
nationalities, which is representative of Hong Kong’s multicultural community. Of the faculty, 15% are American, 5% Australian, 30% British, 1% British/Canadian, 24% Canadian, 3% Chinese, 3% Filipino, 1% German, 1% Indian, 12% Irish, 4% New Zealander, and 1% South African.

Teachers are supported with a professional review and development program. Every teacher at Victoria has an individual professional growth program by which they are evaluated according to VEO’s quality standards and which provides high-level feedback and career guidance. VEO offers opportunities for teachers to attend professional development courses led by in-house experts as well as consultants from around the globe. This enables them to be lifelong learners who keep ahead of the best and latest practices in education, and who are always prepared for the ever-changing classroom.

VEO’s mentor programs begin the moment a teacher is appointed, matching a new teacher to a “buddy” who assists with orientation, regular support, and training sessions so that all new teachers, no matter how experienced, feel supported and ready for action in the classroom. Further, Victoria is an extremely well-resourced organization, meaning that teachers—both new and old—have all the resources they need to perform according to the highest standards.

**Academics**

All Victoria Nurseries and Kindergartens are International Baccalaureate (IB) World Schools offering the Primary Years Programme (PYP). Classes are bilingual or trilingual, and staffed by caring and nurturing qualified teachers.
The inquiry-based PYP is underpinned by a rich and challenging curriculum that motivates and excites young learners. High standards of language and literacy development are ensured by VEO’s use of the Columbia University Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, and the bilingual and trilingual immersion program in Putonghua, Cantonese, and English. These multilingual classes follow the one teacher one language co-teaching approach, where teachers work as a team to provide a total immersion language environment for children. Classes are taught by native speaking English, Putonghua, and/or Cantonese teachers who are experts in early childhood development. Students thrive in this inquiry based multilingual environment.

The schools' low average student-to-teacher ratio of 1:8 ensures that teachers can work closely with children to facilitate the many aspects of their development. Enrichment activities for children in the areas of music, art, and physical activity are also a vital part of daily life, fostering a balanced development for children.

VEO is consistently reviewed by the International Baccalaureate PYP evaluation team and receives glowing reports.

COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

In line with the VEO belief in the value of family and the importance of including everyone within the school community, there is much emphasis placed on the Parent/School Partnership. This is integral to the success of Victoria. Research shows that the students who are more likely to be successful academically, as well as socially and emotionally, are those who have significant involvement of their parents in the school. Parents are invited through the “Parental Participation Scheme” to be actively
involved in supporting what is happening in school. This could be by assisting in the classroom, reading to students, participating at Parent Child Sports Day, accompanying on field trips, or visiting class to talk about their jobs or a hobby that fits the unit of inquiry students are studying.

A more formal approach to partnership is supported by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Victoria was one of the first kindergartens to form this type of group in 1996, and the PTA is a vital support and essential part of the organization. The PTA organizes many useful workshops for parents, on topics such as parenting skills, education approaches, autism, bilingualism, and other pertinent and interesting subjects.

Each year parents, students, and teachers alike are excited at the prospect of participating in the PTA overseas trip to a destination in Asia. A high number of parents participate, with everyone socializing while attending workshops such as making kimchi in Seoul, flying lanterns in Taiwan, and dragon dancing on the Great Wall.

Victoria understands that it is part of a larger community, so each year the children share their talents and perform in various public venues around Hong Kong for the enjoyment of the public. Students and parents are often seen helping to support charities by collecting on flag raising days. Giving back and supporting others is a strong facet of the Victoria experience.

**Campuses**

VEO is comprised of eight nurseries and kindergartens situated in a number of areas in Hong Kong: Harbour Heights, Harbour Green, Belcher, Homantin, Upper Kornhill, Middle Kornhill, Lower Kornhill,
and South Horizons. Each campus is purpose built and equipped to enable high-quality teaching and learning. They provide secure and well supervised places for children to flourish. The schools share a common vision and curriculum, with each campus celebrating its own style and individual qualities.

Each campus is designed to create an environment that encourages learning and development for students. Classrooms offer aesthetically pleasing environments that encourage children to explore various learning centers related to their units of inquiry. Large windows filled with natural sunshine, filtering throughout the greenery-filled school corridors, enhance the students’ learning. Spacious earning areas allow children to move around with ease and engage in interactive lessons, and allow enough space for quiet activities, small group activities, and for individualized learning.

The bilingual libraries are comfortable and well organized so that students can access books on a variety of interesting and exciting topics. Large construction areas, sand and water areas, and purpose-built sensory rooms all allow children to develop their self-awareness within a hands-on, inquiry learning structure. Interactive sensory areas allow children to explore textures, media, and materials.

**Hong Kong, China**

Hong Kong is an autonomous territory, and former British colony, in southeastern China with a population of around seven million. Its vibrant, densely populated urban center is a major port and global financial hub with a skyscraper-studded skyline. Nicknamed “Pearl of the Orient,” Hong Kong is renowned for its deep natural harbor, which boasts the world’s fifth busiest port with ready access by cargo ships, and its impressive skyline, with the most skyscrapers in the world. It has a very high
Human Development Index ranking and the world’s longest life expectancy. Central (the business district) features architectural landmarks like I.M. Pei’s Bank of China Tower. Hong Kong is also a major shopping destination, famed for bespoke tailors and Temple Street Night Markets.

Underneath the glass and steel of Hong Kong’s commercial persona is a dynamic cultural landscape where its Chinese roots, colonial connections, and the contributions of its home-grown talent become intertwined. Arts enthusiasts enjoy attending Asia’s top film festival, listening to poetry matched to the drumbeat of a dragon boat, or taking in a night of indie music by the harbor or at the Chinese opera in a bamboo theater. Thousands of shows are staged year-round at the city’s many museums and concert halls. One of the world’s top culinary capitals, Hong Kong offers a broad range of cuisines, from Cantonese to Sichuanese, Japanese to French.

Over 70% of Hong Kong is mountains and sprawling country parks, some also home to geological and historical gems. Visitors and residents can escape the city limits on one of the world’s smoothest transport systems and spend the day wandering in a Song-dynasty village, hiking on a deserted island, or kayaking among volcanic sea arches.

**STRENGTHS OF THE ORGANIZATION**

- Academic program features tri-lingual immersion learning with three fully qualified teachers in each classroom
- IB PYP and Teachers College Reading and Writing Project curricular frameworks
- Favorable teacher student ratios by comparison to other Hong Kong schools
- Strong reputation after 50 years in Hong Kong
• Excellent professional development opportunities for teachers
• Impressive facilities and ample resources to support learning
• High quality of teachers, both international and local
• Experienced, long tenured principals
• Despite a large number of students overall, the school maintains a family-like feel
• Long history of school improvement efforts under leadership of Dr. Koong
• Balance between strong academics and “happy school” environment for students
• Supportive and active parent involvement
• Collaborative work environment

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT DIRECTOR OF VEO**

• Teaching three languages through the PYP and Teachers College frameworks challenges teachers and the timetable
• Given the varied demographics of families, VEO has to balance between international and local school (play based vs academic) approaches to learning
• Parents have high expectations and have some concern about the change of leadership
• There is a great collaborative spirit amongst the teachers and extended time for planning could be considered
• Strengthening systems and policies in place will be a priority
• Principals of each campus would benefit from leadership professional development
• Strategic Planning is an area of opportunity for the Director of VEO
• Placement results into primary schools will continue to be a focus in the competitive Hong Kong market
Keeping a 50-year heritage alive will be important, even while developing a new vision for the future.

There is a strong possibility of opening additional schools in Hong Kong, according to market need.

QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE NEXT DIRECTOR OF VEO

- Culturally sensitive with an understanding of Hong Kong’s culture, with proven experience as an international leader
- Strong communicator—a listener; and is visible at school events, approachable, and involved in the community
- Strong in early childhood education, with PYP and Teachers College program experience preferred
- Fluency in English and in Cantonese and/or Mandarin would be a bonus
- Open-minded, energetic, caring, and encourages collaboration
- Respects VEO’s history while having a vision for the future—has strategic planning experience
- Will build a strong leadership team, empowering leaders to take on more responsibilities
- Entrepreneurial and looking for growth opportunities
- Will strengthen connections with Hong Kong primary schools to assure best placement of students

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 (references will not be contacted without permission) to:

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