



## **Case Study: Positioning 826 Boston for Future Success with Interim Leadership**

### **Overview:**

826 Boston is a nonprofit writing, tutoring, and publishing organization serving more than 3,000 K-12 students. 826 Boston's free programs and services are structured around the understanding that great leaps in learning can happen with individualized attention and that strong writing skills are fundamental to future success. Founded more than 15 years ago, 826 Boston aims to build communities of empowered young writers who will succeed in school, attend college, and carry with them a lifelong love of writing and reading.

### **Challenge:**

Following the departure of the previous Executive Director, 826 Boston was in need of a leader to provide organizational stability and improve staff culture. Among the challenges faced were: creating a more positive and inclusive culture, providing better support for employees, and dealing with changes in how services were delivered following COVID-19.

### **Opportunity:**

These challenges created an opportunity for 826 Boston to reassess its organization and better align itself for future success. Recognizing the benefits of having an interim leader help provide stability, 826 Boston's Board members, especially Board Members Gillian Kohli and Donna Cowan, enlisted Interim Executive Solutions (IES) to provide an interim Executive Director. The priorities for the interim Executive Director were the need to maintain operations in accordance with 826 Boston's mission and values, as well as provide a strong foundation for continued organizational growth.

### **Solution:**

After interviewing candidates proposed by IES, John Williams was selected to be the interim Executive Director of 826 Boston. With multiple decades of experience in nonprofit leadership, management consulting, and organizational strategy, John was the perfect choice to position 826 Boston for future advancement. In a little over a year as interim Executive Director, John worked in close collaboration with 826 Boston's senior management team to stabilize the organization and maintain its operations. He made it a priority to understand 826 Boston's culture and operations by connecting with staff members, and helped the organization remain connected to its mission throughout this period. He also set a foundation for future growth within 826 Boston by empowering members of the organization's senior management team to step up into increased leadership roles and take on added responsibilities.

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### **Reinvigorated Culture for Success:**

When Corey Yarbrough was hired as the permanent Executive Director of 826 Boston in July of 2023, the organization was in a much more stable place due to the interim leadership of John Williams. Building on a sound operational base and a positive staff culture, Corey was able to share and begin to implement his own vision right away. Among 826 Boston's current goals are expanding its connections with schools and providing services to more students. Thanks to the strong foundation that was built under John's interim leadership to help pave the way for Corey to step in as Executive Director, 826 Boston is now well on its way to achieving those goals.

### **About Interim Executive Solutions**

Capitalizing on the pivotal opportunity that leadership transitions offer, [Interim Executive Solutions](#) (IES) strengthens nonprofits by placing and supporting experienced leaders who work inside organizations to provide confidence, reduce stress and take action that prepares the organization to thrive.

Through ...

- Inquisitiveness: uncovering and prioritizing organizational needs and capabilities
- Inclusiveness: embracing the power of diverse perspectives, experiences and orientations
- Transparency: gathering and sharing factual information to improve operations, and
- Collective Action: building the capacity of team-members to sustainably achieve the mission

... IES gets nonprofits to what's next.

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