



The Board of Trustees of the Lab School of Washington in Washington, D.C. is pleased to announce the search for the next leader of our 51-year-old institution. The Lab School is a college preparatory school serving children with specific language-based learning differences, most often diagnosed as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and executive function difficulties. The 380-student, co-ed school serves students from Virginia, Maryland and the Washington, D.C. With two campuses in the Palisades neighborhood of Northwest, the school serves grades 1-4 on the Foxhall campus and 5-12 on the Reservoir campus.

**Mission Statement:**

The Lab School of Washington is an innovative learning community fostering scholarship and creativity in students with language-based learning differences. In an environment of inquiry and hands-on exploration, Lab School students learn to advocate for themselves as they become engaged and compassionate members of a global society.

**The Lab School of Washington Goals:**

The Lab School of Washington is an innovative learning community fostering scholarship and creativity in students with different learning styles. The goals of the institution are to:

- Provide a rigorous, college-preparatory education that ensures all students reach their potential;
- Prepare students for a lifetime of learning through an engaging education that fosters curiosity and an eagerness to take on academic and experiential challenges;
- Provide intensive, systematic remediation and differentiated instruction;
- Take full advantage of the visual and performing arts to facilitate the education process;
- Bring multi-sensory and experiential learning methods into the classroom;
- Support and educate parents about learning differences;
- Explore new methodologies in the field of learning differences;
- Incorporate the most effective technologies into all Lab School programs;
- Provide robust professional development opportunities for faculty and staff; and,
- Share the results of its programs with public and private schools that serve students who learn in both traditional and non-traditional ways.

**Strengths of the School:**

The next head will inherit a school with many strengths; among them are:

- A strong connection to the founding mission of the school – the integration of arts and learning at every level.
- A deep understanding of how the arts are powerful pathways to learning across all subjects and how they enrich the cognitive abilities for all students.
- A strong sense of community.
- A committed parent community who sees the school as a resource for them as well as for their children.
- A solid financial base.
- A dedicated faculty who are curious, innovative, collegial, and well-trained in their specialty fields.
- A model of integrated and supplemental related services (speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and psychological services) that is unique to Lab.
- An institutional commitment to staying attuned to the latest brain research and the educational thinking about teaching and learning.
- A commitment to serving a diverse school population.
- A board who is highly motivated to provide long-term financial sustainability, support the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, support the head of school, and promote the school as a model for best practices for children with learning challenges.
- A commitment to partnerships with higher education institutions in the DC area.
- A strong reputation both locally and nationally as an outstanding school for children with learning differences.

### **Opportunities and Challenges:**

As is typical, there are opportunities and challenges for the next leader.

There are programmatic initiatives that the next head will have the opportunity to support and help grow: the literacy program which is in its second year; arts infusion in the high school in a deeper way; the on-going conversation about what high school students need to succeed in their next steps – college or other pathways such as gap years, apprenticeships, or specific career training programs. While Lab School is already focused on program excellence, the next head will certainly continue the dialogue.

Unification and alignment of the divisions will be important. Each division has clarity about itself but the connections and the spiraling of the program will be increasingly important.

While technology has been integrated into the curriculum for some years, the next head will have the opportunity to build on technology and lead conversations about how to explore and adapt technology uses in an increasingly sophisticated way.

The next head will build on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives at the Lab School. This is integral to the mission of the school. The board and the administration are deeply committed to finding ways to finance financial aid and to support growing diversity among

faculty and staff as well as families in the school. Furthermore, the school is focused on hiring and supporting a diverse faculty and staff. The next head will help to further this focus.

Enrollment, marketing, and affordability are critical areas for the school. Historically, The Lab School of Washington has been able to serve families whose child was not being served by the public school system. These families, with the help of the school, were able to get funding from their district to make tuition more affordable. Districts are often fighting this process now, which affects accessibility for many students who are in need of this education.

Moreover, there has been an increase in competition as other independent schools in the area have established more programming for children with special learning needs. As a result, the Lab School of Washington now needs to be more pro-active in articulating the unique nature of the way it teaches, and its value. The next head will be key to this marketing effort, and to making connections in the wider D.C. community to assure the reputation of the school is widely known.

High tuition is always an issue in independent schools and, as stated earlier, certainly affects access. Sharing new thinking and knowledge of new independent school business models will be another opportunity for the next head.

### **Leadership Characteristics:**

The Lab School of Washington is looking for an energetic, visionary leader who both respects tradition and is forward thinking. The next head will model the importance of kindness, caring and listening. An excellent communicator to all stakeholders, the next head will inspire, mentor, and empower faculty and staff. They will work closely with the Board of Trustees to continue the legacy of its founder, Sally Smith, who was a pioneer in learning differences education, and the vision of its current head, Katherine Schantz, who brought that legacy into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A deep understanding of the role of arts in education is foundational to leading this community and preserving the mission of the school.

The school values openness, approachability, and engagement with all members of the school community. High visibility will be key. This head will play a crucial role in helping parents to understand what Lab School offers to their children and to support these parents as their children learn, fail, grow and find their voice. The head will also be expected to play a role in fundraising for a growing endowment, financial aid and capital improvements to the campus.

The next leader will be consensus-builder and, at the same time, a firm and thoughtful decision-maker. Transparent communication and consistency in decision-making are critical. While inevitably this head will lead change, it is important that the changes be grounded in a deep understanding of the Lab School mission, history and culture. He or she will carefully shepherd the school community through the challenges associated with necessary change.

The next head will clearly articulate a dynamic vision for the future of education and for The Lab School of Washington, combining a local focus with a global one. He or she will build on the present partnerships with higher education institutions and will look for further opportunities to strengthen these and build others. The next head will need to explore ways to strengthen university partnerships and look for new ones in order to promote ongoing research of Lab's methodology and introduce new ideas. The Lab School is continuously seeking ways to improve teaching and learning.

Historically, Lab School has been a strong voice in D.C. and the next head will be expected to be an ambassador in this way.

The next head will be a life-long learner – someone who will be engaged in the field of education and brain research and will be bringing new thinking to the school as is appropriate.

### **Requirements:**

A master's degree is required; additional degree work is preferable. Experience with learning disabilities is strongly preferred. Extensive leadership experience is required, with a previous headship preferred. Classroom experience as well as knowledge about development, admissions, and recruiting and marketing strategies, is preferred.

## **Application Instructions**

Interested candidates are asked to submit the following documents via email attachments to <http://educationleadershipsearch.com/Search/LabSchool/>

1. Cover letter addressed to the The Lab School of Washington Search Committee expressing interest in and qualifications for the position.
2. A current resume.
3. A statement of educational philosophy (1 – 2 pages)
4. Two examples of writing on a school or education topic. These may be blogs, letters written to the school community or articles written for the school news, or copies of speeches you have delivered. In other words, the committee would like to see how you would communicate to their community in written word.
5. Five references (including email addresses and telephone numbers) who can be contacted confidentially at the early stage of discovery.
6. Three written letters of reference which can be from the above list of five references.

Applications are being accepted until July 1, 2019, for a headship starting July 1, 2020.