

THE  
LAB  
SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY  
WASHINGTON, DC

# HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL





*Our students —  
Curious. Intelligent. Empathetic.  
Bursting with potential.  
This is Lab.*

# LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Lab School of Washington DC, an innovative, grades 1–12, independent school, serving students with language-based learning differences, seeks an experienced, mission-driven educational leader to serve as its next Head of Lower School.

The new Head of Lower School will join a dedicated leadership team and expert faculty and will report to the Head and Associate Head of School beginning July 1, 2022.

Led by Kim Wargo, only the third Head of School in its 50-year history, The Lab School has enjoyed strong and stable leadership. The Lab School is an arts-rich, project-based, diverse learning environment where students are prepared to be successful learners

no matter where they go. The Head of Lower School will lead and inspire the faculty and staff of the division, manage day-to-day operations of the Lower School, and contribute to the strategic priorities of The Lab School within the talented and dedicated senior leadership team. The Lower School faculty and staff, and the entire school community, stand poised to welcome a compelling and strong leader who is dedicated to the school's mission and the power of the arts and project-based learning.



## THE POSITION

The Head of Lower School will be responsible for all aspects of leadership of both the elementary and intermediate programs. The Head of Lower School will be supported by an administrative team that includes Associate Heads, social workers, and administrative assistants. The Head of Lower School works in concert with two other division heads for grades 7–8 and 9–12 to develop continuity throughout the school with regard to mission, philosophy, and instruction.

### Strategic priorities and opportunities for the Head of Lower School include:

- Aligning the Elementary and Intermediate programs while highlighting the unique aspects of each.
- Enhancing the communication pathways between the two programs.
- Coordinating the practices and curricular areas of the two programs.
- Building, maintaining, and partnering with faculty and staff, parents, and other administrators.
- Identifying leadership skills in faculty and staff and finding opportunities to hone and grow these skills.
- Seeking innovative opportunities to enrich the academic, social, and emotional development of students.
- Challenging students to explore all aspects of their learning to become confident self-advocates.

## ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Being an active and effective member of the School's senior leadership team.
- Acting as the educational leader of the Lower School, responsible for its day-to-day operation.
- Supervising and mentoring the division's leadership team.
- Working in concert with the Associate Head of School and Head of School to hire and retain an expert faculty.
- Supporting and supervising the Lower School faculty and assessing staff performance.
- Overseeing the delivery of educational programs to students, which includes responsibility for the creation and evaluation of divisional and faculty/student schedules.
- Promoting and modeling Lab's community norms, mission, philosophy, and beliefs.
- Overseeing the education of approximately 165 students with diagnosed learning differences from ages 6 to 12 in an ungraded program (equivalent to grades 1–6) across two campuses (approximately 0.5 miles apart).
- Supervising, coaching, and scheduling a staff of approximately 70 teachers, classroom assistants, and specialists including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, and reading tutors.
- Participating in admission events and decision-making processes regarding student enrollment and retention.
- Attending school events and being actively involved in all aspects of school life.
- Communicating in effective, efficient, timely, and meaningful ways with faculty, staff, students, and parents/guardians within the division.
- Maintaining a safe and secure working, learning, and teaching environment, while promoting a culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion.



# THE POSITION

## QUALITIES OF THE NEXT HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL

The next Head of Lower School will be a collaborative, educational leader who has demonstrated successful experience in working with students with language-based learning differences and project based learning. The Lab School's focus on the arts requires a Head of Lower School who has a deep appreciation and passion for the value of the arts. Rooted in a genuine love of working with children, the Head of Lower School will have a strong understanding of and background in child development. A solid knowledge of reading and writing instruction for students with learning differences and guiding professional growth is essential.

As the primary voice conveying the strengths and uniqueness of The Lab's Lower School, including signature programs, to all constituencies, the Head of Lower School must have excellent skills in written and verbal communication. Substantial leadership experience in a lower school setting and insightful understanding of the role of the teacher coupled with a collaborative and collegial leadership style that encourages faculty to take risks and explore passions will position the Head of Lower School for success. The Head of Lower School will model intellectual curiosity, and an analytical approach to problem solving, while maintaining a generous spirit, positive attitude, and sense of humor. Possessing a personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and the requisite skills to facilitate critical conversations is a must.

In addition, the next Head of Lower School will possess:

- A Master's degree in a relevant field of study.
- A minimum of five years of teaching and administrative experience.





## ABOUT THE LOWER SCHOOL

### *Strengths & Unique Attributes*

The Lower School comprises two programs: The Elementary Program & The Intermediate Program.

On the Foxhall Campus, The Elementary Program is generally the equivalent of grades 1 through 4. Although there are no designated “grades,” students are grouped by age and developmental needs. Students move through the curriculum at their own pace, developing their strengths, skills, and confidence as learners.

Reading and language arts are an intensive part of each day’s work. Art, music, drama, and dance are core components of Lab’s curriculum at every level. Math, science, physical education, and The Lab School’s signature Academic Clubs round out an elementary education at Lab. Students also manage a beautiful garden — studying, planting, and harvesting vegetables and herbs.

Geared toward children ages 10–12, The Intermediate Program focuses on growth and transition. Although

still “ungraded,” students move to The Lab School’s larger campus on Reservoir Road and their daily routine begins to assume a more traditional academic structure, as attention to executive functioning skills becomes a priority.

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The Lab School values its progressive philosophy of education that for over 50 years has guided project based learning for students whose minds are nourished through a program that allows the extra time they need to acquire proficient reading and writing skills. Through exposure to the arts, immersion in historical time periods, and engagement in hands-on science labs, Lab students discover the joy of learning and have practice in problem solving at an early age. Diversity is celebrated and cultural competency is a primary goal.

A strong sense of a community with a common purpose is fundamental to the daily success with Lab students. Strengthened by their passion and faith in the school’s mission, Lab administrators are instrumental in building a community of professionals

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that are well-prepared to take on the challenges of delivering a life changing education. Administrators are encouraged to engage in professional development in leadership, innovation, and instruction. In turn, Lab teachers thrive in an environment that is fueled by optimism and professional support. Working alongside their leaders, they are encouraged to develop inspired curricula and effective methodologies. Their efforts are supported by professional development in a wide range of topics including reading, arts, learning differences, health and wellness, mindfulness, inclusivity and equity, and classroom management to name a few.

At Lab, the arts are not electives; students take one or two classes in the arts every day. Art has been found to be a pathway to deeper learning as it engages the child's procedural memory, strengthens attention and stamina, deepens perspective and empathy, and allows learning to truly "stick." At Lab, all academic subjects, including math, engineering, science, language arts, and set design, can be taught through the arts, which in turn helps students problem solve and think analytically — crucial life skills.

## HISTORY

The Lab School of Washington was founded by Sally L. Smith in 1967 as a day school for The Kingsbury Center, a diagnostic and tutoring resource for children with language-based learning differences. For 15 years, the school was located on Phelps Place, NW in Washington, DC. In August, 1982, The Lab School of Washington was incorporated as an independent non-profit educational institution with its own Board of Trustees. In 1983, the Trustees of The Lab School bought the former Florence Crittenden Home and 3.6 acres of property at 4759 Reservoir Road, NW, in Washington. The Lab School moved into its present home that fall with an enrollment of 123 students. In 2008, The Trustees acquired the long term lease on the former Hardy School at 1550 Foxhall Road, NW, which is currently the home of its elementary students and teachers. Lab launched its Global Division in 2021.

## COMMUNITY NORMS

As members of The Lab School of Washington Community:

- we treat each other with respect,
- we embrace personal differences,
- we are committed to learning, exploring, and growing,
- we collaborate and communicate effectively,
- we act with integrity, and
- we recognize that we are representatives of The Lab School of Washington.

In addition, as faculty and staff members of The Lab School:

- we celebrate and are committed to Lab School's philosophy, mission, and beliefs and will advance this mission with enthusiasm,
- we perform our work with competency, dedication, and good judgment,
- we promote teamwork, cooperation, and collaboration,
- we follow safe and healthy work practices,
- we understand and maintain professional boundaries between us as members of the Lab staff, and parents and students,
- we are positive members of the community, and
- we embrace and celebrate the uniqueness and distinct differences that each member of our community brings to Lab.

## BELIEFS

As members of The Lab School of Washington community, we believe that:

- all children can learn, and it is our responsibility to identify their unique gifts;
- we must provide a safe, secure, inclusive, and nurturing environment in which children can learn;
- kindness, compassion, and perseverance are essential to helping students be successful;
- there is power in positive reinforcement, and we should foster self-confidence in students;
- successes, grand or small, should be celebrated;
- each person must be respected and diversity is prized;
- students with learning differences need highly differentiated and structured experiences;
- organization and social skills are keys to academic success;
- the most effective education for children with learning differences combines multi-sensory instruction, experiential learning, and an arts-infused curriculum;
- the arts provide a valuable and effective vehicle for organizing the learning process for students with learning differences;
- a talented, enthusiastic, and creative staff is essential to the success of every student;
- innovative and non-traditional teaching methods as part of a rigorous instructional model are beneficial;
- all students should develop the ability to self-advocate by learning to identify their strengths, needs, and unique learning style.



## LOCATION, CAMPUS, AND FACILITIES

The Lab School of Washington is situated in the Palisades neighborhood of Washington, DC. Located minutes from historic Georgetown, the Potomac waterfront, and a short drive to the museums, monuments, and other local historic sites, The Lab School spans two campuses, just a half-mile apart from each other.

At The Lab School of Washington, students learn through experiential learning. This model is enriched when the learning is out in the world. The Washington, DC area and its environs are prime locations for “place-based learning” — a method of instruction that engages students in learning by

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connecting them with their existing environment, the place and location in which they live or go to school. Washington, DC has more than 70 official museums and art galleries, more than 175 embassies and cultural centers in addition to countless parks, theaters, places of worship, and not-for-profit organizations. And that doesn't even include the surrounding areas brimming with learning opportunities like Baltimore, Maryland's American Visionary Art Museum or Virginia's Mount Vernon.

Like the freedom Lab teachers are afforded to create their own curricula, they are also encouraged to implement place-based learning within their units of study. Examples of these rich learning experiences range from Intermediate Museum Club's visits to various places of worship including a synagogue, church, mosque, and Buddhist and Hindu temples when learning about the world's religions to the High School Physics' trip to an amusement park to use video to measure, test, and calculate a rollercoaster ride's "g force."

**388**

*Total Enrollment*

164 in Lower School;  
6 additional students in Global Division

**150 school-wide  
60 in Lower School  
(80% with advanced degrees)**

*Faculty*

**27%**

*Students of Color*

**25%**

*Faculty and Staff of Color*

**18%**

*Families receiving Financial Aid*

**over \$1.7 million**

*Financial Aid awarded in 2021-22*

## ACCREDITATION

*Middle School Association of Colleges and Schools  
(since 1990)*

## MEMBER

*National Association of Independent Schools,  
Association of Independent Schools of Greater  
Washington, Association of Independent  
Maryland and DC Schools*

## MISSION

*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.*

# PROCEDURE TO APPLY

## THE SEARCH PROCESS & APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Lab School of Washington is an inclusive and welcoming school that celebrates diversity, including race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, age or any other status protected by applicable law. We welcome candidates representing the diversity of today's global world.

The Lab School of Washington is committed to attracting and retaining outstanding employees through a compensation plan that compares favorably with those of peer schools. A full benefits package includes retirement and medical/dental coverage. The Lab School requires its faculty and staff to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

Interested candidates should submit via [https://bit.ly/Lab\\_HoLS\\_app\\_form](https://bit.ly/Lab_HoLS_app_form) the following materials confidentially as a single PDF file:

- A cover letter indicating the candidate's particular interest in and qualifications for the position.
- A current résumé.
- A statement of educational philosophy and, optionally, other supporting materials (e.g., articles or speeches).
- The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three references. References should speak to the applicant's ability to be an effective educator and administrator, to work successfully with children, and to work collaboratively and collegially with adults (references will be contacted only with the candidate's permission).

Please address any questions by email to [jobs@strategenius.org](mailto:jobs@strategenius.org) or by phone at 415-881-7105.



## SEARCH CALENDAR

**December 6, 2021**

*Applications Due*

**Early January, 2022**

*Semifinalist Interviews*

**Late January, 2022**

*Finalist Interviews*

**February 11, 2022**

*Announcement*

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