



CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER
THE LAB SCHOOL OF WASHINGTON
Washington, DC



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with The Lab School of Washington in the search for a Chief Advancement Officer.

The Chief Advancement Officer will build and lead a team of advancement professionals while providing leadership in all of The Lab School of Washington's advancement efforts, including annual giving, planned giving, external relations, alumni and parent relations, and communications and marketing.

The Lab School of Washington is one of the first schools of its kind in the country, pioneering the integration of arts and academics. Founded in 1967 by Sally L. Smith, The Lab School started as a day school for The Kingsbury Center, which was a diagnostic and tutoring resource for children with disabilities. Fifteen years later, in August 1982, The Lab School of Washington was incorporated as an independent nonprofit educational institution with its own Board of Trustees. Today, The Lab School of Washington enrolls approximately 380 students from first through 12th grade and employs 200 faculty and staff members who are specialists in learning differences. The Lab School provides an environment designed to allow students to thrive, and is a place where students turn their differences into advantages. Spread across two campuses, four divisions make up The Lab School—lower school, where students “learn how to learn;” middle school, where students learn to apply their academic skills; and upper school, where students build on their strengths and passions. The final division, the Global Division, was launched in 2021 and is designed for students outside the Washington, DC area who do not have access to a high-quality enriched program for children with language-based learning differences. The Global Division offers virtual access to research-based school curriculum with a focus on reading, math, and writing instruction. The Lab School also has a unique partnership with American University and its Master of Arts in Special Education: Learning Disabilities program. The Lab School offers a Fellows Program to a select group of candidates from AU that allows them to complete a 12-month residency working with students with language-based learning differences at The Lab School.

Arts education is a priority at The Lab School, where arts are not electives but part of the daily schedule. Children with learning differences can excel academically and The Lab School recognizes that the key to unlocking the ability to learn is approaching academics through arts. Math, engineering, science, language arts, and all other academic subjects, can be taught through the arts, which helps students problem solve and think analytically.

As a school designed specifically for students with learning differences, The Lab School's guiding tenets are tailored to meet the unique needs of their learners. Student experience and hands-on learning are the key drivers of curriculum and arts-centered learning is a pathway for students across all academic subjects. Positive psychology and the use of technology serve as transformative tools for mastery while expert teachers and specialists guide students in finding pathways for success.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Chief Advancement Officer will report to the Head of School, Kim Wargo, and will serve on the school's Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team. The Chief Advancement Officer will oversee a team of six, with job functions spanning all aspects of advancement. When the school moves into a capital campaign, it anticipates adding an additional campaign-focused position.

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

For 55 years, The Lab School of Washington has built and fostered an innovative learning community for students with language-based learning differences. In an environment of inquiry, hands-on exploration, and through an arts centered curriculum, Lab supports students in learning to advocate for themselves as they become engaged and compassionate members of a global society.

I have had the privilege of serving as Head of School of this inspiring school since July 2020. Even in an unprecedented time for educational institutions, the profound outpouring of gratitude from current and former parents is remarkable. Hardly a week goes by during which I do not hear from a family that this school “changed our child’s life.”

Our strong sense of a community with a common purpose is fundamental to our daily success with our students. Strengthened by their passion and faith in the school’s mission, our administrators are instrumental in building a community of professionals that are well prepared to take on the challenges of delivering this transformational education.

The next Chief Advancement Officer of Lab will join our team at a pivotal moment. The Chief Advancement Officer will be a true partner as we strive to build upon the gratitude of our community to ensure the long-term financial well-being and sustainability of Lab. With a sixtieth anniversary in our sights, and with a newly appointed Director of Alumni Engagement who has decades of relationships with our graduates, we are well-positioned to build on the philanthropic generosity of generations of Lab parents, alumni, and community members.

—Kim Wargo, Head of School

THE LAB SCHOOL'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

The Lab School considers its diversity work of utmost importance at the school and in the world. The Lab School engages in active listening, talking, and working with more intention around its commitment to the span of issues that fall under the umbrella of diversity.

In 2016, The Lab School community made a renewed commitment to its students, faculty, staff, and families that the school would initiate greater efforts through education, self-reflection, and daily practices to ensure that its community is welcoming and accessible. With guidance from Dr. Derrick Gay, consultant, educator, and author, it surveyed its constituencies on matters of diversity, equity, and inclusivity in preparation for the writing of its [*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan*](#).

The Lab School opened its hearts and minds to the voices of the community, studied best practices for schools, and set aspirations for The Lab School of the future. The school has been energized by the changes it has experienced through the development of the plan and continues to move forward in building a culturally competent, emotionally stronger, and well-connected community.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Advancement Officer will

- create, implement, and manage, in consultation with the Head of School and the Board of Trustees' Development Committee, the school's near-, mid-, and long-term fundraising goals and programs;
- oversee the annual fund planning and solicitation strategy with the Director of Annual Giving;
- identify and cultivate major donors with the Head of School;
- create and oversee a program of planned giving;
- plan and implement strategic initiatives such as capital campaigns and major gift initiatives;
- oversee a comprehensive donor stewardship program, including the processes of gift reporting, acknowledgment, accounting, and data management;
- oversee various special events with the Events Coordinator, including alumni and parent gatherings, annual gala, etc.;
- recommend funding goals for the fiscal year to the Head of School, Chief Financial and Operating Officer, and Board of Trustees' Development Committee;
- write or oversee grant applications and reports;
- steward endowment gifts, with data provided by the Chief Financial and Operating Officer;
- oversee the development of relationships with other institutions, foundations, and organizations;
- oversee the careful elevation of The Lab School of Washington brand through various means and in regional, national, and international settings;
- manage an advancement team whose job functions include annual giving, major gifts, special events, alumni relations, parent relations, advancement services, and communications and marketing; and
- prepare clear financial reports and statements on advancement efforts.

LEADERSHIP

Kim Wargo

Head of School

Kim Wargo serves as Head of School of The Lab School of Washington. Prior to her headship at the school, Wargo served as Head of three independent schools around the country and has also had other senior leadership roles. Wargo served as Head of School at the Katherine Delmar Burke School in San Francisco, as Eugene McDermott Headmistress at The Hockaday School in Dallas, and as Head of School at GEMS World Academy in Chicago. Wargo has also served as Associate Head of School at the Isidore Newman School in New Orleans and as Head of the Upper School at the Louise S. McGehee School in New Orleans. She began her career in education at the Hill School of Fort Worth, a school for students with learning differences, where she taught 2nd through 8th grade students and was named Teacher of the Year. Wargo has also served as Director of College Counseling, History Department chair, and Middle and Upper School History and Government teacher.

At Burke's, Wargo focused on improving professional development for faculty and staff, building parent-school partnership through parent education and conversation, and examining all programs with a focus on mission-alignment. At Hockaday, Wargo led the school through its Centennial celebrations and a successful Centennial Capital Campaign, which included building a state-of-the-art integrated Science and Arts building, while also developing a new strategic plan and guiding the school's ISAS self-study. At GEMS, Wargo focused on building school culture and enrollment, critical components of developing a successful

new school. At Newman, Wargo led a board-level task force to develop principles for civil discourse and a new mission statement highlighting the school's commitment to inclusion, while also leading the school through a successful self-study. At McGehee, Wargo was instrumental in leading the Upper School through the challenges associated with Hurricane Katrina. She also focused on growing the enrollment of the Upper School and fostering excellence in the academic, athletic, and extracurricular programs.

Wargo currently serves on the board of The Heads Network and served for nine years on the board of ERB. She previously served on the boards of the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest, the Southwest Preparatory Athletic Conference, and Aim High in San Francisco.

Wargo holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism from Louisiana State University, where she graduated summa cum laude with minors in History and English. She earned a master's degree in History and is ABD from Tulane University.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Lab School of Washington seeks a Chief Advancement Officer with

- a commitment to the mission of The Lab School of Washington—to ensure that all students have a rigorous, innovative, arts-centered, culturally diverse educational experience reflecting current research in effective educational practices for students with language-based learning differences that promotes the growth of each individual;
- direct knowledge of institutional advancement in the nonprofit sector;
- an ability to devise and implement a significant, multi-part, successful program of institutional advancement;
- a history of successful fundraising, particularly in the cultivation of major gifts;
- experience meeting the advancement goals of sustained institutional campaigns and programs;
- an ability to work on multiple fronts in an advancement operation and deal with frequent deadlines;
- exceptional communication skills, both written and verbal, and an ability to be a vocal and visible advocate for The Lab School of Washington;
- an ability to build, manage, and nurture a talented and strong advancement team;
- strategic thinking skills and creative approaches to problem-solving, linked to practical and effective implementation;
- an ability to manage multiple, complex, financial and operational tasks and projects;
- a commitment to the school's efforts in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; and
- an approach characterized by integrity, collaboration, collegiality, deliberation, and good will.

A bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience is required for this position as is at least five years of experience in roles of increasing responsibility in institutional advancement.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The Lab School offers a salary commensurate with experience as well as a comprehensive benefits package.

LOCATION

This position is in Washington, DC.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of The Lab School of Washington as well as the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the prospectus.*** Preference will be given to candidates that apply by February 28, 2023.

To apply for this position, visit: [Chief Advancement Officer, The Lab School of Washington.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Steven Wallace, [stevenwallace@aspenleadershipgroup.com.](mailto:stevenwallace@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

All inquiries will be held in confidence.