



Head of School Search

The Parish School
Houston, Texas

Appointment for July 2019

*Educating children
ages 2-12 who
have communication
delays and learning
differences.*

<http://www.parishschool.org/>



The Parish School is a private, non-profit, coeducational school, for children ages 2-12, with a maximum enrollment of 150. The school is located in West Houston on a 17-acre campus. Founded in 1983 by Houston native, Robbin Parish, MA, CCC-SLP, the goal and mission for the school remain the same today: to educate children with communication delays and learning differences, empowering them with the tools to succeed. Her vision is shared by an affiliate, The Carruth Center, a private, non-profit pediatric therapy clinic located on campus. By providing a supportive learning environment with student to teacher ratio of 5:1, children are able to tell their story, to share their feelings, and to discover their voice. The School features a highly collaborative environment where education is focused on the whole child, known as “The Parish Way”. This fully-integrated approach includes an experience-based curriculum, communication and auditory support, and a social-emotional learning program. Additionally, academic preparation is enhanced by an arts and sciences program and an outdoor learning environment. The Parish School is dedicated to educating its students and working with parents and families to nurture and advocate for a child’s strengths and identify their learning needs.

The Position

The person chosen to assume the Head of School will be offered an extraordinary opportunity. This national search will identify a candidate who will inherit a qualified and tenured faculty, devoted families, and excellent institutional reputation. The successful candidate will demonstrate effective leadership in overseeing day-to-day School and Clinic operations, recruiting and retaining outstanding teachers, and shaping the quality of life in the school community. The Head of School will foster the traditions, relationships, and practices that determine the climate and culture of the campus.



“Learning about nature and the environment and having the experience to be a part of nature and its marvelous wonders is integral to the program of educating the whole child.”



The Campus

Walking onto the campus of The Parish School, one is reminded of a Texas hill-country type summer camp with beautiful trees, grassy play areas, outdoor learning spaces, and open areas for exploration. The campus and physical buildings deliver on the vision of Robbin Parish, with 5 limestone cottages which house classrooms, common areas, a library, music, drama and art rooms, and the Carruth Center. Learning about nature and the environment is integral to the philosophy of educating the whole child at The Parish School. The Margaret Noecker Nature Center, dedicated to former Head of School, Margaret Noecker, further emphasizes the strong commitment the School has to her legacy and her belief that children thrive and learn, academically, socially and emotionally, in nature-based settings.

The School is also fortunate to have one of only five site-based Adventure Playgrounds in the United States and the only one based at a school. Adventure Playgrounds are environments where children create their own play space with a variety of tools and scrap material: lumber, hammers, nails, house paint, yards of fabric, pallets, wooden crates, and plenty of time and freedom. When participating in Adventure Play children are supported by adults trained in the professional practice of *playwork*, a unique approach that puts the child’s ideas and objectives first. Think of an Adventure Playground as a giant, very well stocked back yard that belongs entirely to children, but supervised by teachers to facilitate teamwork, conflict resolution, and problem solving.

The Carruth Center

In conjunction with the mission of the School and the dedication to early intervention for students, The Carruth Center, a private, multidisciplinary clinic, is located on the campus. The thriving Center offers an array of assessment and therapeutic services and is led by a Clinical Director and a staff of speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, a music therapist, a neuropsychologist and mental health professionals. The Center serves both the Parish community as well as children and families from the greater Houston area. The Center is a unique part of The Parish School and supports the School as the best approach to

maximize a child's learning potential and to assure a seamless transition from classroom work to the therapeutic needs of the children.

Faculty at The Parish School

The faculty is divided between two divisions:



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Research has proven that children with any developmental delay are at risk for falling behind academically. The Early Childhood faculty address the needs of children as young as 2 years old. The faculty follows the guidelines of the American Speech Language and Hearing Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children in providing a developmentally appropriate experience to enhance the communication and learning of each student.



Each educator holds a master's degree in Communication Disorders and a certificate of Clinical Competence issued by the American Speech Language and Hearing Association. Each educator is also licensed by the State of Texas. The faculty/teachers (known as SLPs) have the skills and experience to address the communication and learning needs of the students and are highly knowledgeable regarding motor development and sensory integration. In addition to the designated faculty, a certified and licensed educator with a master's degree in Special Education visits the classroom regularly and provides lessons that support the academic program.

“Every individual has the right to communicate and connect – to tell their story, to share their feelings, to have their voice.”

ELEMENTARY

Elementary students are placed into classroom levels based upon the School's assessments. Faculty in the primary elementary level teach students from ages 5-7 years; this group is the youngest cohort for full-day instruction. Faculty in the lower elementary level teach students from ages 7-9. Faculty in the upper elementary teach students from 9-11 years old. All of the elementary faculty are supported by an SLP (speech language pathologist) educator, who teaches, supports and observes in the classrooms on a regular basis.



Living in Houston

Houston has one of the youngest, fastest growing, and most diverse populations anywhere in the world. People from across the globe relocate to Houston every year to take advantage of the abundant opportunities the region provides. Currently home to the World Champion Houston Astros, Houston's cultural, educational, medical, and employment opportunities are unparalleled.

The majority of the elementary school faculty have a master's degree if not they have a bachelor's degree in education. The faculty follow an academic program that meets the standards developed by the State of Texas and follows research-based outcomes as outlined by the Learning Disability Association of America. Teaching to the whole child is at the forefront of the elementary program in order to prepare students to move to the next level at The Parish School or to move on to another school which support their needs. The key commitment of the faculty is to equip students with the tools they need to thrive in many kinds of educational environments.

In addition to the faculty and visiting educators, all classrooms have para-educators, with degrees and /or backgrounds in the areas of special education, child psychology and early or elementary childhood development. Additionally, there are Intra Curricular Activities Educators Teachers (ICATs) who specialize in drama, art therapy, physical education, music therapy, and technology that visit the classrooms regularly to support the academic and communication programs through these intra-curricular activities.

During The Education Group's visit to the school, we met with trustees, faculty, administration, staff, and parents and learned that everyone at The Parish School has a part in the success of the children. Additionally, the School's culture is supportive of the families of children with special needs that are experiencing challenges and anxiety about their education and the future of their child by providing family counseling, parent education, and a community of other parents facing the same challenges. The tone for nurturing and advocating for the children and their families is set by the leadership and in return, the school community responds.

Administration

The Head of School reports to the Board of Trustees and has eight direct reports which include the Early Childhood and Elementary Directors, Director of The Carruth Center, Director of Student and Family Services, Director of Social Learning, Director of Advancement, Director of Finance and Operations, and Director of Admissions.

To Apply

Candidates will be evaluated as materials are received with a deadline of September 15, 2018. Interested candidates should provide a résumé, cover letter highlighting your interest and fit for the position, a statement of educational philosophy, and a list of five (5) references with all contact information, as an attachment to:



Consultants

Allison Lorimer
allison@educationgroup.com
214-587-3694

Carolyn Miller
carolyn@educationgroup.com
512-323-6090

The Parish School does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

Head of School Candidate Qualifications

The successful candidate should be:

- A person with who has the ability to set vision and priorities for the future success of The Parish School and its students
- One committed to educational best practices and professional development of the faculty
- A person with demonstrated ability to recruit, supervise, retain, and empower faculty
- Approachable and compassionate
- One with financial acuity needed to manage a special needs school and comfortable with advancement and fundraising
- A person consistent in making firm and fair decisions
- An effective communicator with verbal, written, and presentation skills
- A person who will value the culture and traditions of the School
- A good listener

This person should have:

- An advanced degree in education, speech language pathology, or related field
- The ability to inspire, engage, and bring joy to the community
- A genuine, positive, and warm personality and one who makes others feel comfortable, included and respected
- The flexibility to set and change priorities as circumstances dictate
- Compassion with families, students, and faculty as they struggle with challenging situations
- High moral ethics and values
- An enthusiastic, self-motivated and hard-working personal ethic
- Experience with fiscal and operational management of an organization
- Ability to cultivate relationships and lead fundraising efforts
- Public speaking experience and ability to promote the School and Clinic in the community