

Newgrange School of Princeton, Inc.
Executive Director Search
July 2018

The Newgrange School

The Laurel School of Princeton

The Ann Robinowitz Education Center

The Board of Trustees of The Newgrange School of Princeton, Inc. seek an Executive Director to succeed Gordon Sherman, Ph.D., who recently announced his plan to retire at the conclusion of the current academic year. Dr. Sherman is an acknowledged leader as a research-practitioner in the field of dyslexia and special education and over the last eighteen years has established Newgrange as a leader in teaching students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities.

The Mission of the Newgrange is to improve educational outcomes for people with learning disabilities and to empower them to become accomplished, dynamic members of society. We will achieve this through evidence-based instruction for our students and expert professional development for educators.

The Newgrange School of Princeton, Inc. organization includes two separate schools and an education center:

The Newgrange School in Hamilton, NJ, is a state-approved special education school serving students from 37 different school districts in ages 6 - 21 (<https://www.thenewgrange.org>).

The Laurel School of Princeton was established as an independent school for students in grades 1 – 8 who have shown signs of dyslexia (<https://www.laurelschoolprinceton.org>).

The Ann Robinowitz Education Center serves as a resource to the Newgrange organization, public and independent schools, parents and the greater community by providing tutoring, testing, assessments, public awareness, and professional development in dyslexia and special education (<https://www.robinowitzcenter.org>).

Founding Cornerstones

The Newgrange School, founded in 1977, is a state approved private, coeducational school for students who have a range of diagnosed learning disabilities, including dyslexia, autism spectrum disorders, and nonverbal learning disabilities. Newgrange School serves students who are funded by 36 different school districts and—as a state-approved special education school—follows State regulations and mandated policies. The Education Center was established in 1991 to extend the Newgrange mission, instructional methods and practices to the larger community of New Jersey public and independent schools, as well as to raise public awareness of learning disabilities and learning differences. The Center also serves as a resource for families with children with learning disabilities and differences and provides professional development to educators nationwide. With the evolution of special education programs in public schools and the expanding range of learning disability students being served by Newgrange School, The Laurel School of Princeton was established as an independent elementary-middle school in 2012 for children with dyslexia. Laurel School was inspired by the research and work conducted by Dr. Sherman, “celebrating cerebrodiversity” and the belief that students with dyslexia can contribute “extraordinary gifts to our world when they are provided with a properly enriched learning environment.”

Both Newgrange and Laurel Schools share a common vision tied to the importance of research-based schools for students with learning challenges. The next Executive Director will want to pay close attention to the foundational beliefs and mission of the Newgrange organization, continuing the collaborative, research-practitioner model.

Program

The Newgrange School and The Laurel School have many similarities, yet also are uniquely different. As a state-approved school, Newgrange follows specific policies and procedures, whereas Laurel, as an independent school, has the flexibility to differentiate and individualize programs for their students.

The New Jersey Core Content serves as the basis of both The Newgrange School and The Laurel School academic programs. Dedicated and experienced faculty and administrators guide and challenge students in their pursuit of academic competency, encouraging them to develop social-emotional skills for school and life beyond. The Director of Education oversees the curriculum with the administration and the faculty, which is designed to balance academic, social, and emotional needs and addresses the students' talents and imagination in music, art, and other forms of creative expression. The family-like environment at Newgrange supports a program that includes:

- Dyslexia programs
- Orton-Gillingham & Wilson Reading methodologies (cognitive skill building)
- NoticeAbility (strength-based, blended curriculum in social-emotional learning and executive functioning)
- Social Skills learning program (Social Strides)
- Intensive transition program (preparation for college/life post-Newgrange)
- ILS (Independent Living Studio, for household skills)
- Super Seniors (supplemental year of preparation)
- Extended School Year (ESY) – 6 weeks during July and August

At Newgrange, speech and language services are provided by a full-time speech and language pathologist and full-time occupational therapist. Both specialists work individually and in small groups and consult regularly with faculty. Newgrange teachers are certified in their respective areas of discipline and value communication with each other and with parents. The collaborative nature of the faculty—as characterized by proactive cross-curricular cooperation and integration—enhances student success and creates a feeling of seamless programming on campus. In addition, there is consistency in the use of Orton-Gillingham reading methodologies across the full range of subject areas. Teachers in all disciplines—including art, music, and physical education—are trained in Orton-Gillingham reading techniques and actively use these methodologies in their programs. Furthermore, students of all abilities are fully challenged academically, and the bar of learning acquisition is set purposefully at a high level.

The Laurel School has a very focused mission in serving exceptionally bright students with dyslexia and related learning challenges. The faculty have years of experience teaching children with learning differences and are certified to instruct using the Orton-Gillingham and Wilson Reading Programs. The curriculum follows the scope and sequence of a highly competitive

independent school with teachers leveraging the unique strengths of their students and nurturing the academic, social, and emotional needs of each child. The program integrates technology and multisensory, evidence-based instruction in a truly student-centered, holistic learning community.

The next Executive Director will want to take the time to fully understand both the similarities and differences between Newgrange and Laurel. There are opportunities to grow each program in uniquely different ways. At Newgrange, serving multiple school districts, there is an opportunity to strengthen programs and services. For The Laurel School, as a young, dynamic independent school, there is an opportunity to grow the enrollment and establish a strong secondary school placement program.

Admissions

The enrollment process at Newgrange is comprehensive and well defined. The student is invited for a two- or three-day visit to allow many members of the Newgrange team to observe the child. The primary criterion for admission is compatibility with the mission and program resources, which in the case of the Newgrange School includes multiple ranges and levels of learning disabilities, generally without behavioral or serious medical complications. Additional testing is completed by the Director of Education and the staff during this visit. The Admissions Committee meets weekly to review applicants. Parents, child-study team members, and the other concerned parties are notified promptly and in writing of the admissions decision.

Given the nature of The Laurel School and its unique mission, the admissions process is somewhat different, yet also relies on parental initiation and involvement on all levels. As with Newgrange, independent or district-provided psycho-educational, speech-language, and learning evaluations, in addition to other evaluations and IEPs, are shared with the Director of Education to help in the admissions process. Since the mission of The Laurel School is dedicated to serving bright children with dyslexia in the early grades, further assessment may be initiated when the child visits the school.

There is no formalized financial aid program at Newgrange since a majority of students are fully funded through their local school districts. The Laurel School has an opportunity to leverage a financial aid/net tuition revenue program to enhance enrollment.

The Newgrange School is currently 97 students from 37 school districts. The Laurel School currently enrolls 27 students.

Resources

The Newgrange organization operates effectively on a \$7 million budget with 53 faculty/staff. Newgrange School is in Hamilton, NJ in a rented facility, a former Catholic school. Laurel School and the Robinowitz Education Center are located on the former St. Joseph's Seminary campus in Plainsboro, NJ in the same building as The French-American School of Princeton (and in the summer of 2019, The Wilberforce School will become a tenant as well). The Newgrange organization has begun a modest fundraising program and the next Executive Director will have an opportunity to enhance fundraising efforts.

Governance & Leadership

The Board of Trustees has 12 members; the Executive Director is an ex-officio member of the Board. The Board adopted The Carver Model of Governance, which has worked exceptionally well with an experienced Executive Director. The Board meets regularly during the school year. The next Executive Director will want to partner with the Board to assess The Carver Model and work to refine or redefine the governance model for the Newgrange organization.

The Executive Director is supported by an experienced Director of Education, who also serves as the Director of the Robinowitz Education Center. The Newgrange organization has an experienced Chief Financial Officer who works closely with the Executive Director on the budget and compliance issues for the State with The Newgrange School. The Newgrange School has an experienced Principal, who will be serving as the Interim Executive Director for the remainder of the school year. Newgrange School has a Supervisor who works closely with the Principal and staff at the school with an emphasis on student life.

The Newgrange School of Princeton, Inc. (The Newgrange School, The Laurel School, and The Ann Robinowitz Education Center) is a member of NJAIS, NAPSEC, ASAH, and has dual accreditation from NJAIS and the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges.

Opportunities for the Executive Director

The next Executive Director of The Newgrange School of Princeton, Inc. will have the opportunity to lead an exceptional organization into its next stage of development and growth. She or he will want to take the time to learn about the three different entities, thoroughly study Dr. Sherman's research and practice, and build a strong partnership with the administrative team, the faculty, the board, and the entire Newgrange community. Some specific opportunities will be:

- Building relationships with sending school districts to further enhance The Newgrange School and The Education Center as a resource for area school districts.
- Clarifying and enhancing marketing and outreach for The Laurel School to build enrollment along with establishing a strong secondary school placement program.
- Working with the Director of Education to leverage the unique program offerings of The Ann Robinowitz Education Center.
- Developing a stronger sense of community to grow a culture of philanthropy.
- Working with the Board of Trustees, administration, and the school community to develop a comprehensive planning process to identify a shared vision and key strategies for organizational growth and development, including opportunities for enhancing educational facilities.

The ideal candidate will:

- Have experience working with students who learn differently.
- Possess curiosity and an inquisitive nature for continual learning.
- Have experience in building programs, collaborative teams, and communities of stakeholders (e.g., faculty, staff, families, students)
- Understand independent school enrollment and have experience in the admissions process.
- Have had success in advancement and fundraising.
- Be a collaborative leader with demonstrated organizational management experience.
- Have worked with a Board of Trustees.
- Possess an advanced degree.
- Have classroom teaching experience and at least 5 years leadership experience.

Dr. Jerry Larson of Educational Directions will serve as the consultant for the search. Confidential inquiries and nominations can be made directly to Jerry at jl Larson@edu-directions.com .

Please submit the following electronically in PDF format as soon as possible:

- Letter of Interest in the position addressed to *Members of the Newgrange Search Committee*.
- Resume with 5 references (references will only be contacted with permission from the candidate. Finalist will be asked to supply additional references.)
- Personal Statement that includes a brief discussion of your educational philosophy and practice.
- Professional writing from school publications or editorials (optional).

This will be a fast-track search timeline with review of candidates beginning immediately. The Board and Search Committee are looking to have an appointment by mid-March 2018 with the new Executive Director taking office this summer.

The Newgrange School, Inc. is a 503(c)(3) non-profit organization and an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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