

Announcement from MSR Chair of Head of School Search Committee

MSR Community,

The search for The Montessori School of Raleigh's next Head of School is progressing very well -- exceeding our expectations. I write to update you on the work accomplished, our next steps and your opportunity to participate. Earlier this year, the school engaged [Dr. Mary Seppala from Educator's Collaborative](#) a nationally recognized search firm, to advise and assist us in the search for our next Head of School. Mary began her work in early spring, advising us on creating an effective Search Committee. She also met with the MSR community, its faculty and admin, parents and Board of Trustees, to help advise on what attributes the community prioritizes for the ideal Head of School.

Based on Mary's recommendations from those meetings, we sought to assemble a Search Committee that provided a broad and inclusive representation of parents, grandparents and external members who bring a wide variety of skills, experiences and perspectives to the Committee. In May, individuals were identified and invitations were extended to participate on the Search Committee. We are pleased and honored to announce that everyone accepted the invitation.

The following people comprise the MSR 2020 Head of School Search Committee: (LMC—Lead Mine Campus; BCC—Brier Creek Campus)

- Kristina Brunelle: Director, Organizational Development & Learning | Chair, Diversity & Inclusion Council, RTI International; owner Kristina Brunelle & Associates (Child at LMC and BCC)
- Lauren DiGrazia: Assistant Provost and University Registrar at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Child at LMC and BCC)
- Debbie Gordon: Teacher of mathematics; software design engineer; co-founder of the Care First Animal Hospitals with husband Joe Gordon (Grandchild at LMC; parent of two MSR alums, Class of 2008 & 2013)
- Matt Gross: Business owner; former Chief Solutions Officer Duke Clinical Research Institute and Head of Health and Life Sciences Global Practice at SAS; MSR Board of Trustee [current chair of Committee on Trustees] (parent of three MSR alums, Class of 2016, 2022, 2028)
- Peter Karmarchik: Director and Senior Counsel, Intellectual Property at Ampere Computing (Child at LMC and one entering 2020)
- Krystin Knox: 25 years in corporate finance; volunteer consulting with non-profits; treasurer of MSR Board and chair of Finance Committee; chair of Search Committee. (Child at BCC)
- Lois Makoid Ph.D. CCP. Retired senior human resource executive with over 30 years of industry and academic experience; Licensed psychologist and former faculty at North Carolina State University (Psychology and Computer Science Departments) (Parent of two alums, Class of 1999 and Class of 2003)
- Wendy Peele: Former business owner offering services to children with special needs; former Montessori teacher; Middle/Upper School Representative for MPSA (Child at BCC)
- Ad Hoc Member; Linda Nelson: Executive Director of NCAIS

INITIAL WORK: Community Survey, Consultant Campus Visit, Leadership Profile

Mary began the search process in March by conducting a community survey to determine the attributes and personal qualifications that community members feel are important in our next leader. With a robust response (over 200 respondents), a draft leadership profile was developed. [CLICK HERE TO SEE SURVEY RESULTS](#)

In late March, Mary conducted a listening tour at MSR to validate the survey results and more fully understand community perception regarding future leadership. Following this visit, a leadership profile was developed and used in advertising and to seek out those individuals who would be a good fit for MSR. [CLICK HERE TO VIEW PROFILE](#)

The Leadership Profile outlines the following criteria as essential for a Head of School at The Montessori School of Raleigh:

Leadership

- Educational and collaborative leadership experience
- Demonstrated ability to engage and motivate faculty, parents and broader community around common vision and goals for the future of MSR
- Unquestionable integrity
- Experience developing and managing a budget and maintaining overall financial health of the school
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically

Teambuilding

- Active listener and strong communicator who will be highly engaged with the entire school community
- Demonstrated ability to engage and motivate faculty, parents and broader community around common vision and goals for the future of MSR

Academic

- Understanding and appreciation of the value of a Montessori education
- Understanding and appreciation of the value of the High School IB Program
- Advanced degree

These criteria are included in a document link you can find on the MSR website along with additional information regarding the Head Search. Visit msr.org/about/head-of-school-search.

CURRENT PROGRESS

Since March, Mary has leveraged her extensive network to actively recruit candidates. After vetting approximately 20 candidates from around the world, she conducted extensive interviews with nine candidates who met the pre-determined qualifications. Of the nine interviewed, one candidate was eliminated, and one candidate accepted another position. The remaining seven candidates' dossiers were forwarded to the Search Committee for review. On May 23, 2019, the Search Committee, using the established criteria as a guide, conducted SKYPE interviews with all of the candidates. After careful consideration, the Search Committee identified three candidates to advance in the process.

The next step is to bring the three identified candidates to MSR to meet with our community. These visits will allow the candidates to see our school and understand the value and potential of MSR. Because the candidates are highly sought after and active in other searches, we decided to schedule visits as soon as possible to limit the possibility of losing a candidate to another opportunity. We are scheduling campus visits between June 19 and June 27. These visits will provide an opportunity for all constituents to meet with the candidates and share their perceptions.

On a personal note, it has been very affirming that our school has attracted the interest of exceptional candidates from around the world. The three identified candidates are eager to see MSR, meet with all of you, and experience what we all value and admire about The Montessori School of Raleigh. Please look for visit schedules that will be posted soon. We implore each person to make every effort to participate in the campus visits. This is an important step in the process so that we may receive your feedback and the candidates can see what a great community MSR has.

Sincerely,
Krystin Knox
Chair, Head of School Search Committee