



ARBOR MONTESSORI SCHOOL
Decatur, Georgia

HEAD OF SCHOOL
Start Date: July 2022
arbormontessori.org



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES



Mission

The mission of Arbor Montessori School is to develop the unique capabilities of each child through supportive relationships, joyful learning, and meaningful work in a Montessori environment. We seek to foster independence in each child, preparing him or her to contribute with integrity to the community of the larger world.

OVERVIEW

Arbor Montessori School, located in Decatur, Georgia, a thriving city in the metropolitan Atlanta area, is doing well. Enrollment for the current school year substantially exceeds projections and the school's finances are solid. Even so, Arbor has ambitions for the future.

Under the capable leadership of an Interim Head of School (a former teacher who was persuaded to take on the Head of School role, but who is not interested in the permanent position), the school is doing a wonderful job educating its children from 18 months through 14-years-old. Arbor enjoys a positive reputation in the Atlanta area as a leading Montessori school. At nearly 250 students, the school is well on its way to the 300 students that were its peak pre-COVID.

Most importantly, Arbor Montessori knows who it is. This is a school that is committed to the practices of AMI Montessori in all respects. At the same time, it also welcomes innovation within the AMI framework and is blessed with many long-tenured faculty who are passionate about the students they guide.

The future has exciting possibilities. Presently located on two campuses, the school is considering options for strategic use of its land, including newly acquired property, as well as the possibility of adding a high school. As with all schools, Arbor is eager to build its efforts to address diversity, equity, and inclusion, including the necessity of serving a student body with a broad range of learning styles and abilities.

The Arbor Board is eager to welcome a new Head of School to start in the summer of 2022 to partner with the Board to build on Arbor's strengths and embrace the many exciting options going forward.

At a Glance

Founded: 1970

Programs: Toddler through Adolescence

Campuses: 2

Total Staff: 48

Average Faculty Tenure: 9 years

Average Teaching Experience: 19 years

Enrollment (2021-22): 242

Average Yearly Revenue*: \$4,077,558

Average Annual Funds Raised*: \$87,025

Accreditations: AMI, SAIS, AAIS

* 5-year average (2016-20)



THE SCHOOL

Arbor was founded in 1970 by a group of ten newly trained teachers with the goal of creating an educational institution that reflected the educational values they learned in their AMI training. In keeping with this founding vision, Arbor has been recognized by AMI-USA since 1971. Arbor is an accredited member of the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) and recognized by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Today, Arbor serves toddlers and primary students on both its Scott and Lavista campuses, as well as lower and upper elementary and adolescent program students (equivalent to middle school) on the Lavista campus.



ARBOR FACULTY AND STAFF

- Work to support each child's development and self-discovery.
- Build relationships with students and establish partnerships with families
- Create welcoming environments which celebrate diversity.
- Model and nurture a love of life-long learning.
- Dedicate themselves to authentic Montessori education.

GOALS OF AN ARBOR GRADUATE

- To embrace their role as citizens of the world.
- To establish meaningful relationships through communication and collaboration.
- To expand their horizons and blaze their own trails.
- To explore the world with curiosity, confidence, and compassion.



ARBOR'S BOARD

While the governance structure is typical of most schools with the Head of School being the sole employee of the Board of Trustees, the Board composition is less typical because of the majority being faculty in the school. As much as this might be a red flag in many schools, at Arbor, it not only works, but works very well. Faculty who are Board members are able to separate their roles and act with their non-faculty Board colleagues in the best interests of the school. Because the school is so committed to being an exemplary AMI Montessori institution, the faculty on the Board are “keepers of the Montessori flame” Beyond that, however, they function with the all-school-community perspective that exemplifies most high-functioning boards. The school’s more than 50-year history of success in all things is a testament to the success of the partnership between the Board and the Head of School.



STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

Among many strengths at Arbor Montessori, the new Head of School will find:

- An excellent, long-tenured faculty who emphasize that they “always put the children first” and believe in and utilize all the resources of AMI Montessori pedagogy and practices.
- An administrative team that is well established and excellent in their jobs.
- A community that unites faculty, staff, and parents in support of the children and the school. Indeed, one administrator said that “we want the entire family to feel that Arbor is their home, not just the students.” *Note: While COVID-19 has necessitated minimizing parent presence at the school, the sense of community persists.*
- Multi-generational continuity as some current parents themselves went to Arbor.
- A strong financial position with essentially no debt and “money in the bank.”
- A Board that, while somewhat unusual, has served the school well and continues to be an excellent partner for the Head of School and the administration.
- Physical facilities that make possible the full implementation of AMI Montessori practices.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The new Head of School will have the opportunity to have real positive impact in a number of areas including:

- Rebuilding enrollment to an “ideal target” of 300 students, with particular focus on retention.
- Working with the Board on strategic use of Arbor’s land, including the recently purchased adjacent property.
- Working with the Arbor community in the further development and implementation of a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan.
- Exploring the possibility of a special learners program within the school.
- Building a more intentional external relations program that supports its Arbor’s enrollment goals as well as its fundraising.
- Establishing an endowment to benefit from Arbor’s long-term stability and build on the school’s solid financial footing.
- Exploring, with intent, the addition of a high school.
- Expanding the parent-education program to activate current parents even more in support of the school.
- Serving as the “face of the school” with both internal and external audiences, particularly in support of the school’s growth ambitions as well as desire for greater diversity in its student and adult populations. It will be important for the Head to be well connected in the larger Atlanta independent school world and that of AMI-USA.



DESIRED SKILLS AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- A collaborative leader who seeks broad input whenever possible, but also can be decisive when necessary.
- A charismatic, cheerful spokesperson who can exude enthusiasm and make the compelling case for the Montessori program of the school.
- Someone committed to Montessori pedagogy and practices, ideally with classroom experience and AMI training.
- Financial literacy and experience sufficient to partner with the Board and Business Manager to develop and execute budgets.
- Familiarity with advancement practices in independent schools including marketing/recruitment/fundraising and community engagement.
- Proven ability to hire, motivate, evaluate, and develop excellent talent on the team.
- Experience with effective approaches to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Ability to be both a visionary strategic leader and an effective hands-on manager.



TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultant in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position.
- A current résumé.
- A statement of experience with and philosophy of Montessori education.
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

Skip Kotkins

Senior Consultant

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