

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH

LUMIN EDUCATION

Dallas, Texas

lumineducation.org

Start Date: July 1, 2024 or sooner



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

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MISSION

To transform education by starting young, involving parents, and creating learning environments to inspire children from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds.

POSITION OVERVIEW

Lumin Education is a remarkable, unique, highly successful organization that, through two programs, changes lives of children and their families. Research shows that the philosophy and practices of Montessori education, starting at the earliest ages, provide an essential foundation for 21st century life and workplace skills that traditional education lacks. What Lumin does is vitally important!

Starting in pregnancy and going through third grade, Lumin's home visiting and classroom programs bring the strengths of Montessori programming to underserved families and the broader community. Lumin serves approximately 500 children each year. All who work within Lumin cite a passion for its mission as the most compelling driver of their work. It is not an exaggeration to say that Lumin Education is indeed, one of a kind.

Located on two campuses in the East Dallas and Bachman Lake neighborhoods of Dallas, TX, Lumin owns its facilities that are custom tailored to its programs. In addition to on-site activities, the campuses serve as a base for a cadre of parent educators who work directly with young families in their homes to provide the benefits and best practices of early childhood education and help families access support services. In addition to the Montessori in-home services, Lumin operates Montessori classroom for toddlers through third grade.

After a 45-year career the founding Executive Director of Lumin Education is stepping back from daily leadership of the organization to focus on planned giving and working with donors with whom she has cultivated decades-long relationships. The Lumin leadership team is strong, experienced, and highly skilled in their respective roles. Lumin seeks an Executive Director to begin July 1, 2024, or sooner if mutually agreeable. The new ED will work with the leadership team to continue Lumin's excellent programs and pursue new directions in early childhood education for greater impact in the future. The Executive Director reports to a Board of Directors made up of a dedicated cross section of educators, Dallas community leaders, and non-profit experts. All others within the organization will report, directly or indirectly, to the Executive Director.

LUMIN PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

In a time of change, the best organizations keep their minds open to discovering optimal solutions along the way. The organizational structure is strong, but the new ED may want to adapt as conditions warrant. Both of Lumin's programs have strong and long-tenured directors responsible for daily operations of the programs. Each director has the autonomy to run the program and oversee the staff to best serve its students. Those directors and administrative directors such as HR, Finance, and Facilities report to the Chief Operating Officer (COO). The COO and the Chief Development Officer report to the ED.



PROOF OF CONCEPT

As a one-of-a-kind innovative organization with a unique mission of breaking the cycle of underserved children in low income families, it is incumbent upon Lumin to be able to demonstrate the success of what it does. Internal tracking of former students over the past four decades reveals a 96% high school graduation rate, with 89% of that population later attending college. Recent research conducted by Southern Methodist University documents that children who participated in Lumin's pregnancy to age 3 program outperformed a matched sample of 4-year-olds in math; and that children enrolled at Lumin for 3 or more years outperformed a matched sample of 5th graders in reading, math, and science.

Not surprisingly, one of the topics of discussion, and an area where the new Executive Director can have great impact, is in determining how to scale the Lumin model for maximum impact. Recent conversations have revealed that there is great demand and potential to expand the pregnancy to age 3 aspects of the program. It is hoped that the new Executive Director will share Lumin's passion for serving this earliest segment of early-childhood education.

A TIME OF EXCITING CHANGE

The new Executive Director will find an organization in the midst of some very exciting changes.

- The retirement of the founding Executive Director presents an opportunity to review the organizational structure to assure that, both programmatically and administratively, it optimally serves not only Lumin today, but is well positioned for Lumin of the future.
- The organization has made the significant and wise decision to shift its Montessori primary and elementary program from being a public charter school to a fully independent private school. Being independent will allow the school unrestrained and innovative opportunity to maximize the delivery of all the aspects of a great Montessori education.
- Until the end of the 2022-2023 school year, Lumin operated on its Bachman Lake Community School campus and two East Dallas campuses, about a mile apart from each other. The 2023-2024 school year will open with those latter two operations consolidated onto the Lindsley Park Community School campus, as well as continuing functions at the Bachman Lake Community School campus.
- With the now unused East Dallas Community School campus, along with a substantial amount of developable property at Bachman Lake, Lumin is in the midst of exciting discussions about how to best utilize these facilities.



LUMIN'S FUNDING

Lumin has a variety of funding sources including:

- Lumin's pregnancy to age 3 programs at the Bachman Lake Community School campus are supported in part by federal Early Head Start funds. Lumin is the only organization in Texas that is Montessori-based receiving Early Head Start funding and one of only a few in the nation.
- While the majority of Lumin's student population comes from low income families, there are also families who pay tuition for the programs. Socio-economic diversity is an important component of the vastly diverse Lumin community.
- Lumin has a loyal base of donors who are passionate about the mission of the school and have provided both annual operating support as well as periodic capital gifts that position the school today with no debt and solid financial reserves. A key part of the Executive Director role will be to continue to inspire current and new donors, foundations etc., with the mission of Lumin, insuring continued financial support.
- Over time, Lumin has built an 8-figure endowment composed of both donor-designated and board-designated funds. Interest and dividends from this endowment provide both restricted and unrestricted annual revenue.
- Until the 2023-2024 school year, Lumin received state funding as a public charter school for PreK3-4 & K, and Grades 1-3. Those funds go away as Lumin returns to a private independent status and will need to be replaced in a variety of ways.
- Like many organizations, Lumin received COVID-19 public sector funding support.

PROGRAMS

Lumin's programs consist of:

Montessori Home Visits: During in-home visits (2 to 4 times per month), parent educators create a "mini" Montessori environment in which they model activities for the child and parent and share individualized child development information. Parents are encouraged to attend regular group meetings to learn more about child development and network with other parents.



Montessori Classrooms (toddler, primary, lower elementary): In Lumin's Montessori classrooms (18 months through 3rd grade), highly trained teachers create nurturing, inspiring learning environments where children develop a strong foundation in executive function skills, social/emotional skills, and academic skills. Lumin follows the Montessori curriculum designed to appeal to each child's naturally emerging skills and interests and allows children to explore areas of interest in depth and at their own pace.

Wrap Around Services: Lumin also provides extensive wraparound services to meet each family's needs. Infants and toddlers receive a developmental assessment within 45 days of entering the program and are referred to early intervention services as needed. Family Advocates also work with Lumin families to facilitate referrals to services such as food stamps, cash assistance, and Medicaid. Play therapy and other mental health services are available for Lumin students, family members, and parent educators.

STRENGTHS OF LUMIN EDUCATION

Among the many strengths of the organization, the new Executive Director will find:

- Established programs and services with a proven track record of success.
- A solid balance sheet with no debt, substantial real-estate assets, and solid operating reserves.
- A leadership team and an entire organization that are not only expert at what they do, but are driven by a shared passion for the mission of Lumin.
- Lumin's credibility and a reputation in the greater Dallas community for innovation, expertise, fiscal responsibility, demonstration of new methods and a commitment to share new approaches with the broader community.
- A Board of community leaders and educators that is committed, generous, and dedicated to expanding the impact of Lumin.
- Two campuses with excellent facilities and the potential for expansion to meet demand to serve more students and families.
- A culture of compassion, passion, warmth, caring, transparency, and always-inspiring mission focus. Commitment to all aspects of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and belonging.

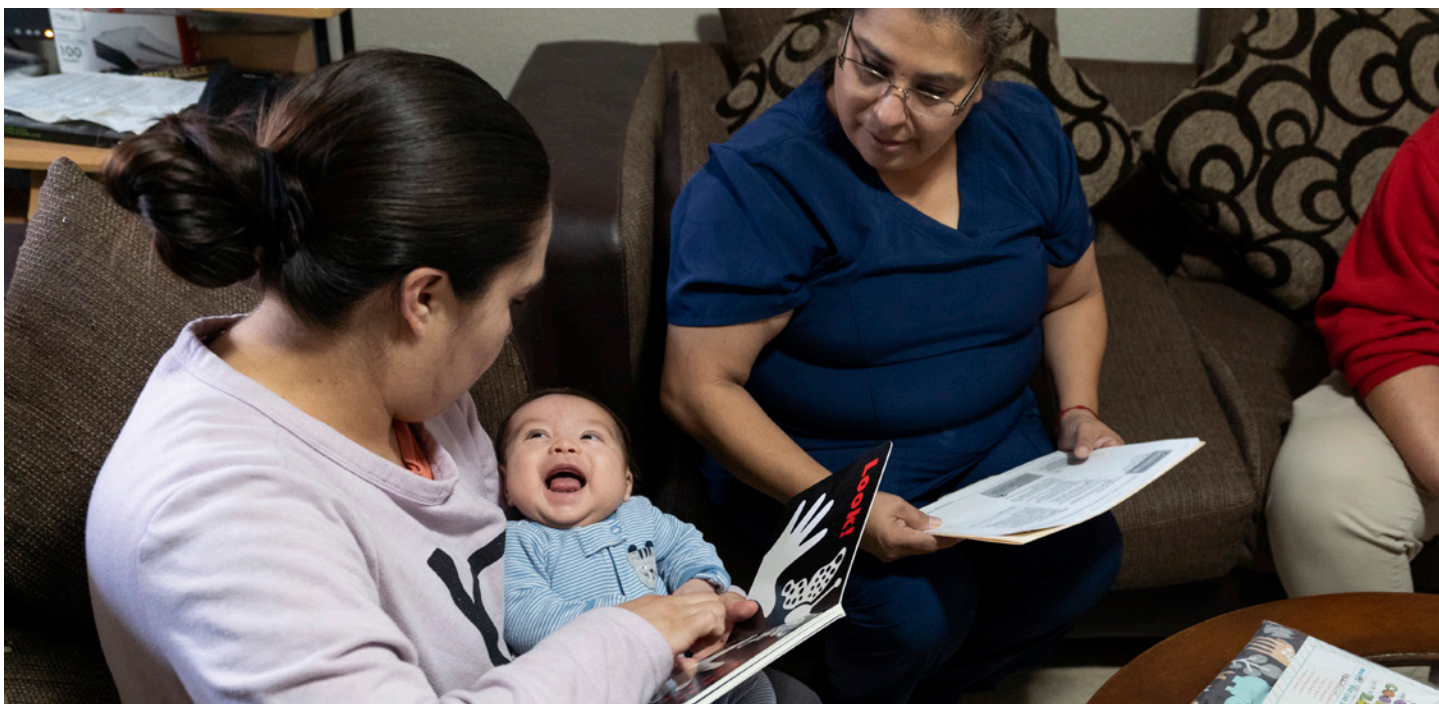


- The work of Lumin can be challenging, intense, and given the population served, at times involve parts psychology, social work, and counseling. Recognizing this, a unique aspect of Lumin is the staffing and implementation of adult wellness programs to provide necessary support for the Lumin staff members who are daily on the front lines of changing the trajectories of families and children's lives.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The solid foundation is in place as is the desire to expand the impact of Lumin. The new Executive Director will find the following challenges and opportunities:

- Lumin's proof-of-concept and dogged determination has resulted in expansion of early-childhood education in the public schools of Dallas and specifically the creation of a number of public Montessori schools. Thus, the opportunity exists to spread the wisdom of even earlier, i.e., the earliest-early-childhood programs to the public sector and more.
- While the Executive Director will have overall responsibility for the success of the organization, day-to-day operations will fall largely to direct reports, freeing the Executive Director to be more externally focused. Those efforts will include sharing the wisdom of Lumin by finding ways to expand the impact. Likewise, since much of what Lumin does is at no cost to the families served, expanding fundraising sources and revenue will be an important focus particularly in the future. In the short term, Lumin has already begun the process of right-sizing the budget in light of the loss of public charter school funds.
- As the organization responds to the many changes listed above and pursues opportunities for greater impact, the Executive Director will be able to assess and modify the organizational structure to assure it continues to be optimal in both administration and delivery of student/family services.
- At the essence of Lumin's success is having excellent staff. It is ongoing work to attract, retain, train, and support the best staff members.
- Among possibilities under consideration for which the new Executive Director will have a significant role in decision-making are:
 - » Expansion of Lumin's programs for pregnancy to age 6.
 - » A capacity-building campaign to bridge the short-term (5-year) funding gap.
 - » An endowment campaign to increase the predictable operating revenue derived from the endowment.
 - » Creation of new revenue streams by finding new earned-income sources and expanded summer offerings, etc.



- » Maximizing the potential of the substantial unused space at Bachman Lake for expanding the scope and number of students/families served.

DESIRED SKILLS AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Proven experience as a successful non-profit organization leader ideally in a complex, multi-faceted organization.
- A knowledge of and passion for early childhood education. An ability to champion the Montessori model is definitely a plus.
- Proven fundraising skills.
- The ability to be:
 - » An inspiring internal leader, hiring, retaining, motivating and holding accountable a team of excellent leaders, dedicated to the mission of Lumin.
 - » An inspiring external face of the organization able to make a compelling case for Lumin with donors, public-sector leaders, and the educational community at large.
- An approachable personal style, welcoming and relating to everyone from the smallest child to the biggest donor, and everyone in between.
- Proficiency in the Spanish language would be helpful but not required.
- Financial literacy sufficient to partner with the staff and board to maximize the impact of Lumin's fiscal resources.
- Cultural awareness and agility; able to relate to the diverse populations in the Lumin community. A champion of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging.
- Strategic visioning and planning.
- Proven experience working in a best-practices relationship with a Board of Directors.
- A pioneering, entrepreneurial spirit.
- A contemporary executive, proficient in use of technological tools, data-driven decisions and systems-efficiencies.
- Familiarity with the North Texas education and nonprofit community and initiative a plus.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Lumin Education.

[Website](#)

[Lumin Results](#)

[History and Philosophy](#)

[About Dallas, Texas](#)



TO APPLY

Candidates may contact the consultant in confidence for additional information. Candidates 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 early-childhood education or other relevant background.
- 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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