

# INTERIM DIRECTOR SEARCH

## UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LABORATORY SCHOOLS

Chicago, Illinois

[ucls.uchicago.edu](http://ucls.uchicago.edu)

Start Date: Summer or Early Fall 2025



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

[CARNEYSANDOE.COM](http://CARNEYSANDOE.COM)

# Mission Statement

The University of Chicago Laboratory Schools are home to the youngest members of the University of Chicago’s academic community. We ignite and nurture an enduring spirit of scholarship, curiosity, creativity, and confidence. We value learning experientially, exhibiting kindness, and honoring diversity.

## At a Glance



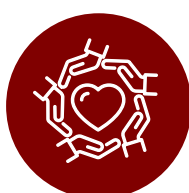
Established  
1896



Enrollment  
2,203



Total teaching faculty  
288



Students of color  
61%



Athletics  
58 teams,  
MS and HS



Faculty with advanced degrees  
80%



Languages spoken at home  
60



## Overview

The University of Chicago Laboratory Schools (Lab) is unique amongst K-12 schools nationally in that it is located on the campus of a world-class university. Founded in 1896 by progressive educator John Dewey, Lab serves over 2,200 students from age 3 through Grade 12 and is known as one of the nation's finest private schools. An integral academic unit of the University of Chicago, Lab provides opportunities for students to study in an environment known for intellectual rigor, open debate, and the ability to develop and express diverse views as part of and in connection with the University and the University community.

The school's passionate and curious students are nurtured in an environment that challenges conventional norms, nurtures critical thinking, and prepares students to be active participants in a democratic and ever-changing society. The school's student body is drawn from the University community, including children of University and Laboratory Schools faculty and staff as well as children whose families are not affiliated with the University of Chicago. Students come to Lab from the surrounding South Side neighborhoods and from throughout Chicago and its suburbs. Lab students benefit from the school's outstanding teachers, interdisciplinary and experiential curriculum, collaborative ethos, tradition of academic excellence, and proximity to the academic and cultural resources of a world-class research university.

The University of Chicago Laboratory Schools seeks as an Interim Director an experienced, steady, and mission-driven educational leader to steward the Lab Schools through a vital period of reflection and transition, offering leadership and clarity as the community prepares for its next Director. The Interim Director will work in partnership with the University and Lab Schools leadership. Reporting to the Office of the President of the University of Chicago, the Interim Director will work in close alignment with University leadership and the Laboratory Schools Board, which functions in an advisory capacity, to support Lab's mission and ensure institutional continuity. This is a distinct opportunity for a thoughtful leader who is inspired by the possibilities that this unique organizational structure and environment present as they guide one of the nation's most respected independent schools through a period of evaluation, stabilization, and, where needed—renewal.

## Connection to the University of Chicago

The Laboratory Schools are part of the world-renowned University of Chicago, and the importance of intellectual life—of thought and exploration—infuses every aspect of Lab's curriculum and co-curriculum. Foundational to the work of the Lab Schools are its shared identity and values, including commitments to free, rigorous and open inquiry, civic engagement, and fostering a diverse and inclusive environment where each person's ideas and contributions can flourish. Nestled within the fabric of the University of Chicago, the Laboratory Schools and their students also benefit from the extraordinary people, programs, and facilities that comprise the University, resources that allow Lab students' learning to extend well beyond their campus walls.





Consistent with this vision, the Laboratory Schools teach children to be creative agents, critical thinkers, analytical problem-solvers, and, as John Dewey had hoped, “contributing members of a democratic society.” To do that, Lab nurtures children to have the social-emotional skills, confidence, curiosity, and openness to be full participants in their world now, in college, and beyond.

## Interim Director Responsibilities

The work ahead for the Interim Director is likely to include:

- Maintaining the momentum of the Laboratory Schools’ academic excellence and student-centered mission, ensuring high-quality teaching, learning, and community life;
- Working in close partnership with the Office of the President and other University leaders, Laboratory Schools leadership and faculty, and the Board of the Laboratory Schools to strengthen and maintain alignment on policy, operations, governance, values, and strategic priorities;
- Bringing strong leadership to bear where there is lack of clarity and upholding high expectations across the community;
- Providing support to the Laboratory Schools’ administrative team while partnering constructively with the union representing the Laboratory School’s faculty to foster a collegial and purposeful professional environment;
- Successfully completing the ongoing ISACS reaccreditation process and facilitating continuity of the LabVision strategic planning process;
- Serving as an accessible and transparent communicator with students, families, faculty, staff, and alumni; and
- Collaborating with University and Laboratory Schools leaders to facilitate the search for a permanent Director and ensuring continuity in key areas.

## Qualifications and Personal Attributes

### Professional Qualifications

The successful Interim Director will be a seasoned educational leader with a track record of institutional leadership in complex school settings. The Interim Director will bring wisdom, emotional intelligence, and a calm, principled presence to the role. The most compelling candidates will offer the following qualifications and qualities:



- A deep understanding of and appreciation for the joys and compelling qualities of a multidivisional school and substantial experience leading in a large and complex educational organization;
- Demonstrated ability to lead through transition, providing continuity while addressing challenges forthrightly, honoring multiple perspectives, and upholding the highest standards of integrity;
- Personal and professional alignment with the school's mission and its commitment to intellectual curiosity, progressive education, and respect for all learners;
- Appreciation for University of Chicago's distinct culture, core values, and commitment to fostering an environment that champions free and open discourse, diversity and inclusion, and supporting the community in Chicago and beyond;
- Experience recruiting, hiring, supporting, and retaining talented, broadly diverse, and mission-aligned faculty;
- Depth of experience in curriculum, instruction, and school operations;
- The ability to articulate vision and strategy and the tactical skills necessary to manage the systems and processes necessary to implement strategy; and
- Experience working in partnership with a highly engaged and diverse parent community.

### **Preferred Competencies**

- The confidence and humility to advocate for new ideas, invite alternative perspectives, welcome feedback, and engage in challenging conversations with grace;
- Capacity to keep pace with a highly intellectual and high achieving community;
- The ability to communicate with inspiration and clarity across a wide range of audiences; and
- Adaptability, flexibility, creativity, and commitment to working in a spirit of shared success.

### **Educational Requirements**

- A bachelor's degree is required and a master's degree is strongly preferred.

# Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about University of Chicago Laboratory Schools.

[School Website](#)

[College Matriculation](#)

[University of Chicago](#)

[About Chicago, Illinois](#)

[School History](#)

# To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates are encouraged to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents as soon as possible:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position
- A current résumé

Selected candidates may be asked to provide:

- Writing samples specific to this search
- 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)

Materials should be sent to:

**Marsha Little**

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**Devereaux McClatchey**

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**Allison Gaines Pell**

Senior Consultant

Allison.gainespell@carneysandoe.com

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