

DIRECTOR SEARCH

ATLANTA SPEECH SCHOOL Wardlaw School

Atlanta, Georgia
wardlawschool.org

Start Date: July 2026



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission

To bring deep reading to each and every child so they can find their voice to determine their own future and make the greatest difference in the lives of others.

Vision

Literacy and Justice for All

At a Glance



Established
1938



Wardlaw enrollment
195



Wardlaw staff
50



Student-teacher ratio
10:1 (homeroom);
5:1 (integrated classes)



Staff of color
16%



Financial aid budget
\$965,888



Faculty with advanced degrees
98%



Campus size
13 acres

Total Atlanta Speech School enrollment: 401
Wardlaw students receiving aid: 16%

Endowment: \$92M (total school)
Annual operating budget: \$4.99M (Wardlaw)



Overview

Katherine Hamm founded the Atlanta Speech School more than 87 years ago when she moved to Atlanta from St. Louis, where her son who was deaf was able to attend a school where he learned to talk. Armed with the knowledge of how language benefited her son, Mrs. Hamm started her free school with the belief that every child should have that same opportunity: the unlocking of language. Over the decades, the program grew into what we now know as the Atlanta Speech School, the nation's most comprehensive language and literacy center. In addition to the Wardlaw School, for children with dyslexia and red flags for dyslexia, the Atlanta Speech School also has three preschools which are the Katherine Hamm Center, serving children through age five who are deaf and/or hard of hearing; Stepping Stones, for preschool-aged children with a primary diagnosis of a speech or language delay, and the Anne and Jim Kenan Preschool, which serves typically developing children preschool through Kindergarten.

Atlanta Speech School professionals are united by a shared vision: **Literacy and Justice for All**. What is available to each child at the Atlanta Speech School is what every child deserves. This belief shapes our Each to Every model—our philosophy that the immersive, individualized instruction provided to each Speech School student should extend to every child.

In the early 2000s, our Rollins Center for Language & Literacy made Each to Every possible by scaling the work of our School beyond our classrooms, through its free online Cox Campus. Today, there are more than 400,000 members on Cox Campus, from all 50 states and more than 130 countries.

The Cox Campus PK-5 Structured Literacy Program is IDA-accredited, the only free professional development platform with this distinction, and includes Margie Gillis, EdD; Deb Glaser, EdD; Laura Justice, PhD; Louisa Moats, EdD; Laura Rhinehart; and Maryanne Wolf, EdD.

The Atlanta Speech School has never turned away a child in need based on a family's financial circumstances. Together, our programs fulfill one mission: to bring deep reading to each and every child so they can find their voice, determine their future, and make the greatest difference in the lives of others.



- Watch our [career video](#), starring staff of the Atlanta Speech School, sharing what it means to be a part of our community.
- An introduction to the Atlanta Speech School and what it means to be a [sanctuary for each child](#) so they are prepared to become sources of safety and support for others throughout their lives.
- Watch [Every Opportunity](#), a video capturing our philosophy of helping every child find their voice.

The Wardlaw School

The Wardlaw School provides unparalleled, focused support for children with dyslexia. Expert staff collaborate to nurture language, build empathy, and guide critical thinking—going beyond reading proficiency to the higher expectation of constructing deep reading for lifelong agency. Wardlaw serves as both a model and a living laboratory, where, through an integrated intervention model, staff implement the sciences of language and reading with fidelity every day. Through the reciprocal partnership between Wardlaw and the Rollins Center, research informs practice, and practice, in turn, advances the science. The Wardlaw School at the Atlanta Speech School seeks an exceptional leader, scholar, and practitioner in language and reading to serve as its next Director, starting July 2026. This role offers a rare opportunity to not only serve as the Director of an internationally recognized program for children with dyslexia, but also to shape the national conversation on dyslexia education—advancing access, equity, and literacy for every child.

Opportunities

Amplifying Influence and Shaping the Future of Dyslexia Education

In the rapidly evolving landscape of dyslexia education, the Director will serve as a future-focused advocate for children whose dyslexia might otherwise go unidentified, particularly in public schools and communities historically denied opportunity.

- The Director will position Wardlaw as the school of choice for immersive, individualized instruction without stigma and distinct from the compliance-based or pull-out models increasingly offered in public and independent schools under dyslexia mandates and other schools serving children with dyslexia with a narrower focus on decoding.
- The Director will position Wardlaw as a national voice in the education of children with dyslexia—building on its legacy of innovation, guiding research-to-practice partnerships, and influencing the field through the School’s structured literacy and dyslexia content featured on Cox Campus, the only free, IDA-accredited, certificate-bearing professional development platform.
 - » Working alongside the Chief Academic Officer, the Director will have a singular opportunity to transform how dyslexia is understood and taught.



Championing a Community of Exceptional Educators United in Purpose

- Provide guidance and mentorship to teachers, Reading Specialists, Speech-Language Pathologists, and assistant teachers.
- Attract, recruit and interview potential staff members, providing recommendations and maximizing their talents.
- Continue the school's commitment to professional development to support and retain talented, mission-driven faculty.
- Create and establish a framework for staff apprenticeships.
- Conduct regular program evaluations and strive for ongoing growth.
- Collaborate with outside professionals and maintain strong relationships with partner schools.
- Collaborate with other Directors and leaders to establish best practices across the Atlanta Speech School.

Advancing the Wardlaw School and the Foundations that Sustain It

- Supervise all key operations and services for Wardlaw students in grades K-6, establishing strategic goals, policies, and a visionary direction.
- Collaborate with the Chief Academic Officer and Executive Director to manage the Wardlaw budget.
- Ensure that each child receives personalized, evidence-based instruction based on the latest research in the science of reading and child development.
- Ensure that Wardlaw remains a place where every child's voice is cultivated, and every family finds partnership and equity.
- Work in partnership with the parent community, which frequently comes to the school in a moment of crisis, and have appropriately high expectations for their child's growth and development while at the school.
- Collaborate with other Directors to develop focused educational programs for the parents in the community.

Qualifications and Professional and Personal Attributes

The Wardlaw School is seeking in its next Director an experienced and inspiring educational leader who fully embraces the Atlanta Speech School's mission and vision. The strongest candidates will offer most or all of the following experiences, skill sets, and mindsets:

Professional Qualifications

- Deep expertise in dyslexia, oral and written language, learning disabilities, and the science of reading.
- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of structured literacy and the science of reading, including evidence-based instruction.



- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of children’s learning profiles and psychoeducational evaluations, including academic development, cognitive processes, executive functions, and social-emotional development related fields.
- Certification in at least one multi-sensory reading methodology; familiarity with other Structured Literacy approaches.
- Teaching and leadership experience beyond the Master’s Degree preferred.
- Active engagement in professional organizations such as the International Dyslexia Association, American Speech and Hearing Association, Learning Disabilities Association, Council of Exceptional Children, or The Reading League.

Leadership Style

- Inspire confidence among parents, students, and colleagues, and honor our commitment to each child as we fulfill our mission.
- Cultivate the School’s core culture of connection among staff, children, and parents.
- Facilitate the individual and collective expertise of colleagues to ensure extraordinary instruction and transformative student outcomes.
- Ensure staff have access to the latest science and the resources to actualize this science with the greatest fidelity possible.
- Support colleagues to build a cohesive team, while affirming agency through a warm, welcoming, and joyful approach to leadership.
- Commit to honoring multiple perspectives to maintain an authentic, inclusive community.
- Compel others to act on the School’s shared vision of “Literacy and Justice for All,” fueled by our shared unconditional conviction of every child’s right to read and the resulting freedom to decide their own future.
- Embrace an understanding and respect for the school’s 87+-year journey toward educational equity and serve as an agent of innovation in that pursuit.
- Advocate and create space for new ideas, invite disagreement, and welcome feedback by engaging in challenging conversations with grace and a keen sense of emotional intelligence.
- Serve as a steadfast advocate for children, a champion for staff, and a compassionate listener for families, offering comfort and guidance with integrity, particularly when needs or perspectives conflict.

Personal Qualities

- Optimism
- Purpose
- Empathy
- Integrity
- Connection

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about the Wardlaw School, the Atlanta Speech School, and the School's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. You will also find a video about careers at the School and The Promise, through which the School shares its philosophy around never silencing a child.

[School Website](#)

[Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging](#)

[Atlanta Speech School](#)

[About Atlanta, Georgia](#)

[Join Us!](#)



To Apply

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

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- Original writing sample describing how your background and teaching philosophy align with the mission and values of the Atlanta Speech School (without AI assistance beyond proofing);
- 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:

Scott Nelson

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