



BUSH

LOWER SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Start Date: July 1, 2026

The Bush School

Seattle, Washington | bush.edu



**Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES**

MISSION AND VISION

MISSION: To spark in students of diverse backgrounds and talents a passion for learning, accomplishment, and contribution to their communities.

VISION: The Bush School is committed to preparing students to lead purposeful lives, setting them on a path to change the world. Founded on the principles of progressive education, our experiential program inspires students to drive inquiry, actively engaging their teachers, curricula, and environment.

BELIEF STATEMENT: At Bush, we believe a great education challenges you to develop your own great mind. Every day in every grade, students are introduced to new ideas, varied perspectives, and bold questions. Because when we nurture our students' innate curiosity and ambition, they become confident intellectual explorers ready to blaze new trails in college and beyond.

At a Glance

 **1924**
established

 **743**
total enrollment

 **220**
lower school enrollment

 **51%**
students of color
(Lower School 64%)

 **87**
total faculty

 **7:1**
student-faculty ratio



OVERVIEW

Located in Seattle's charming Madison Valley neighborhood, The Bush School is the only independent school in the Seattle area offering a K-12 education on a single campus. In a dynamic, inclusive, and joyful learning community, students at Bush not only love to learn, but learn to lead. Bush acknowledges that students live in a diverse and multidimensional world that requires them to be problem solvers, clear thinkers, ethical actors, and global stewards; these critical skills are taught intentionally from Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade in all areas of the school program. Education based on these foundations prepares students and graduates to make a meaningful difference in the world.

For the past 100 years, the school's educational philosophy has centered on the belief that students learn most effectively through active engagement with ideas. Bush offers unique, stimulating educational experiences, characterized by experiential learning. Students learn how to learn, and are eager to continue learning—confidence, curiosity, and a thirst for challenge become a part of who they are.

Bush's Lower School is "full of joy," commented a faculty member, "Bush considers and cares for the whole child, and my colleagues are joyful, compassionate people who love to see the kids grow as humans." In its next Lower School Director, Bush seeks an inspiring, effective, and student-centered leader who will continue to foster a sense of joy, curiosity, and community. The Lower School Director reports to the Head of School and is a member of a highly collaborative, dynamic, and strategic Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The Lower School Director oversees a division that includes 220 students and 38 faculty and staff and leads a leadership team that includes two Academics Deans (one for the humanities and one for STEM), a learning specialist, and two counselors. With strategic planning underway and current construction of the Center Campus, it's an exciting time to join the Bush community!



PRIORITIES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES

The current Lower School Director has served Bush for seven years and cultivated a strong culture of joy, love, and belonging in the division. Building on this strong foundation and in partnership with a dedicated, talented, collegial, and whole-child-oriented faculty and staff, the next Lower School Director is set up for success. All of the division directors at Bush are expected to: in collaboration with the Head of School, set the vision for the division; provide clarity on curriculum, pedagogy, and instructional practice; support, partner, and communicate frequently with parents and guardians; serve as a compelling advocate and storyteller of their division; and partner with the Senior Leadership Team with a warm and collaborative spirit. The immediate priorities, opportunities, and challenges for the next Director include:

Refining and articulating Lower School systems and structures. As the Lower School's work has grown in scope and complexity, the school has invested in and expanded the division's leadership and teacher support structures. Bringing clearer definition to the roles and corresponding responsibilities, as well as to decision-making structures in the division, will maximize the benefit of the school's investment in the division and in the strengths of the team members.



Assessing the division's curricular programs. Over the last five years, the Lower School division has adopted several curricular programs that align with the school's progressive educational philosophy, e.g., Illustrative Math, FUNdations, Fishtank Literacy, Writing Revolution, and Inquire Ed. With a focus on ensuring academic excellence and preparation for middle school for every student, this transition will be an ideal time for the division's leadership and faculty to fully assess and reflect upon these programs' effectiveness and identify how they may be further adapted to better reflect Bush's mission and serve the students more fully.

Continuing to evolve the student support program.

Consistent with national trends, the school has experienced an increase in the number of students with learning differences. The division has worked to meet the needs of an increasing number of neurodiverse students, as well as those seeking support from the school's counseling team, by adding staff and examining alternative structures for direct student support. That work will continue as the next Lower School Director provides oversight and co-creates a vision that meets current needs, anticipates future needs, and aligns with the K-12 vision for this work.

Advance the work articulated in the 2026-2031 strategic plan.

The incoming Lower School Director will arrive soon after the school publishes its next strategic plan. While the specifics are yet to be determined, it will likely include efforts to enhance K-12 connectivity, expand the school's experiential education programs, ensure academic excellence for all students and deepen its Community, Equity, and Inclusion (CEI) work, all of which will provide the Lower School Director with the opportunity to collaborate with members of the Senior Leadership Team and coordinate the Lower School Team's involvement in the work.

Serve as an articulate and compelling voice for the Lower School. Bush has carved a strong and distinctive place for itself in Seattle's crowded independent school market. Its leaders are frequently called upon to share the school's strengths and stories to prospective and current families and employees, and the Lower School Director will be key to making the case for Bush and its Lower School for those considering joining the community.



\$5.6M

financial aid awarded



22%

students receiving aid



73%

faculty with advanced degrees



\$30M

endowment



\$28M

annual operating budget



7

art studios



9 acres

campus size



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QUALIFICATIONS & PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Bush School is seeking in its next Lower School Director a progressive, innovative, visionary, and inspiring educator who is eager to lead, guide, and serve a dynamic Lower School community of students, parents and guardians, and educators and to collaborate with an exceptional Senior Leadership Team. The next Lower School Director will offer the following qualifications and qualities:



- Deep appreciation and affection for the joys of a K-12 community
- Experience as a classroom teacher, ideally across multiple grade levels, who understands, nurtures, and delights in Lower School children
- Understanding of evolving best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the support of a progressive pedagogy with a strong diversity and social justice lens
- Ability to analyze data and use for instructional, curricular and programmatic decision-making
- Exceptional communication skills, including close and active listening, confidence and comfort in public speaking, and a clear writing style
- Personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and belonging and the requisite skills to support a diverse student body and faculty and to facilitate critical conversations in the design of ever more inclusive culture, curriculum, and programs
- A disciplined approach to agenda and priority setting, including maintaining awareness of the demands on the Division's educators
- A strong grounding in serving the needs of neurodivergent students and collaborating with their parents and teachers
- Ability to make clear and decisive decisions, and articulate the rationale behind those decisions to all involved
- Ability to develop and articulate vision and strategy and the tactical skills to manage the systems and processes necessary to implement program evolution and growth
- Experience leading and managing professional educators, supporting their growth and development, providing and inviting feedback, and delegating and leading through others to advance the Division's agenda
- Experience building collaborative relationships with parents and guardians, including proactively engaging with and educating the parent community and aligning them with the School's educational philosophy and practices
- A collaborative leadership style built on approachability, responsiveness, humility, and transparency
- Well-honed executive function skills
- The confidence and humility to advocate for new ideas, invite disagreement, and welcome feedback
- Alignment with The Bush School's mission and vision, including a fundamental belief in the joy of working with young children
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate the "why and how" of change with inspiration and clarity across a wide range of stakeholders
- Eagerness to engage actively with students, faculty, staff, and families and willingness to prioritize visibility amidst the demands of a busy schedule



LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)
- [School History](#)
- [Community, Equity, and Inclusion](#)
- [Strategic Framework](#)
- [Virtual Campus Tour](#)
- [About the Lower School](#)
- [Lower School Curriculum Guide](#)
- [About Seattle, Washington](#)





TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants 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 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); and
- Responses to writing prompts that will be shared with candidates upon expression of interest to:

JENNIFER WONG CHRISTENSEN

Senior Consultant

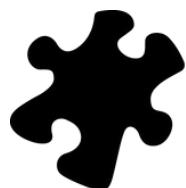
jennifer.christensen@carneysandoe.com

CHRIS BOYLE

Consultant

chris.boyle@carneysandoe.com

The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$170,000 to \$200,000. Important context: The State of Washington does not collect income tax. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors that include years of experience, education level, and expertise.



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