



# The Attic

Learning Community



*A unique and innovative pre-K through 12th  
progressive learning community.*

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH

Position starts July 1, 2024

Woodinville, WA



**EDUCATORS COLLABORATIVE**  
EXPERTS IN SEARCH, TRANSITION & STRATEGY



## *Mission*

Nurturing in children a sense of self and a passion for learning, community, and childhood.

## *Core Values*

### **Sense of Self**

Trust in the child is at the center of The Attic community's culture and core academic program. Attic learners are given freedom to self-advocate, to make decisions, and to have a voice in the community and in their own education. Out of this autonomy, a strong sense of self develops. We support autonomy, self-knowledge, and intrinsic motivation as foundational to flourishing in life.

### **Passion for Learning**

The child is the most important agent of learning. Learning looks different for everyone, and the cornerstone of education is respect for each learner's individual developmental journey. The goal is for each Attic child to see him/her/themselves as a capable, confident, self-directed learner.

### **Community**

At The Attic, community is valued as an essential element of education. Children feel safe to take risks, to meet challenges, and to be themselves because they are loved and accepted as they are.

### **Childhood**

At the very center of an Attic education is the child. Play is an active and integral part of the approach to academics. The community values and encourages learning with joy, with creativity, and with new eyes. The Attic supports children to become their true selves, nurtures their innate passion for learning, and surrounds them with acceptance and love throughout their educational journey.



*We see learning as a continuum—and knowledge as a lifelong road one walks.*





## *It Began in an Attic*

In January of 1999, a group of educators and parents began brainstorming their vision of education. Influenced by the research into and practice of developmentally-appropriate education, as well as by their own children's educative experiences, the group came up with what remain key Attic tenets: developmentally-appropriate education, no rewards or punishments, multiage classrooms, child-centered curriculum, and time for childhood. The Attic's founding members honed these ideas into **The Attic Learning Community mission: *Nurturing in children a sense of self and a passion for learning, community, and childhood.***

An Attic education has always been revolutionary. Moving further into the 21st century, the world is beginning to see more clearly what The Attic's leadership has seen all along: that an education focused only on the rote learning of information and skills isn't as essential to a child's long term well-being as an education which fosters adaptability, communication, collaboration, and play. The Attic chooses to re-imagine what is possible in education.



### *At a Glance*

- 8:1 Student to Teacher ratio
- 60 multi-age learners, primary to high school
- Founded in 1999
- No desks, no rows, no grades, no rewards
- Field & Forest Outdoor Preschool
- Five acre campus on a creek
- Progressive, constructivist approach to teaching and learning
- Tuition \$22,676 ('23 - '24)

### *A Unique Learning Community for All*

The Attic offers a unique approach to teaching and learning, while not sacrificing the solid foundation of a core academic and creative education. All Attic learners are registered homeschoolers in Washington State. This designation frees Attic kids from state required testing and mandated in-seat hours, and frees Attic teachers to fully support the core curriculum in a September-May, flexible weekly schedule. Classes are small, and the constructivist, project-based learning is collaborative and attentive to each child's developmental needs.

Attic teens leave high school ready to pursue the course of their own choosing: college enrollment, unique gap year opportunities, and/or work experiences. Attic alumni include architects, teachers, journalists, entrepreneurs, engineers, computer programmers, public servants, musicians, writers, actors, dancers, artists, and humanitarians. All reflect the core values of the Attic: empathy, independence, and self-knowledge.

*At The Attic, we choose to re-imagine what is possible in education.*





## Beyond Academics

At The Attic, education is not just about academics, but about the development of the learner as a whole person. Social-emotional development is a core focus of the program. At the heart of this development is nurturing unconditional acceptance of and respect for all people in our community. From that foundational understanding, Attic learners of all ages are supported to communicate, collaborate, reflect, and self-determine.

### Explore The Attic!

[Field & Forest Preschool](#)  
[Primary Programs](#)  
[Middle Programs](#)  
[Secondary Programs](#)  
[Reading Recommendations](#)  
[Traditions and Events](#)

Supporting an inclusive community is essential to encouraging deep learning, social emotional growth, and critical thinking skills. Engaging diverse perspectives is an important part of being in a community that allows everyone to show up as their authentic selves. The Attic believes that encouraging diversity, working towards equity and inclusion (including working towards becoming an anti-racist organization), and fostering a sense of belonging is foundational to its work and community.

## An Idyllic Setting for Children

Bordered on one side by a creek and a bucolic stretch of wooded land for play and learning, The Attic campus feels remote while still allowing commuting families easy access to major freeways and to the town of Woodinville. In addition, in partnership with The Field & Forest Preschool, The Attic supports a fully outdoor program for children ages 3 to 5. Classes balance freedom and structure, following the energy of the children and nurturing play-based, emergent learning.

In 2015 the community completed the first phase of The Attic's campus vision, moving into a building designed with its constructivist educational model in mind. Open, airy, and full of light, the building inspires creativity, imagination, and innovative thinking. Learners gather for multi-age activities in the large community spaces and enjoy generous decks and outdoor learning areas. Every day kids of all ages can be seen running, playing, and exploring The Attic campus together.



*"I can be myself  
 here. I feel really,  
 really at home at  
 The Attic.  
 I like that I have  
 time to learn."*





## Looking Ahead: The Next Leader

The Attic Learning Community seeks an Executive Director who enthusiastically embraces and champions the school's mission, which is rooted in a commitment to constructivist, child-centered education and ensuring the healthy social and emotional development of all learners. The successful candidate will bring a leadership approach distinguished by a warm and inclusive personal manner, exceptional verbal and written communication skills, and a collaborative, innovative approach to problem solving. They will also bring the skills, initiative, and enthusiasm to help realize a compelling and sustainable vision for the future of The Attic.

The Board of Directors of The Attic is conducting a national search for an experienced educational leader to lead a talented cohort of dedicated professionals and a deeply engaged community. Tracy Bennett and Evan Hundley of Educators Collaborative are guiding this effort to identify and recruit the Executive Director. In collaboration with The Attic community, they have identified the following strengths, challenges, and opportunities, and the desired qualities and skills of the next Executive Director.



## Strengths of The Attic

- A child-driven and learner-responsive approach focuses on the aptitudes and interests of each child. Students engage daily in joyful learning in ways that meet their unique needs while fostering curiosity and confidence.
- Skilled, committed faculty provide highly differentiated instruction that supports the success of every learner. At The Attic, every student feels known, seen, and loved.
- Deeply embedded core values center childhood and community, fostering a learning environment where children and adults can take risks, navigate challenges, and celebrate success.
- A community with rich traditions and events that both enrich relationships and give learners an opportunity to showcase their work.
- The absence of grades and external rewards fosters a child's intrinsic motivation to learn and thrive. As a result, Attic learners develop the skills, confidence, and sense of self needed to prepare them for future educational and professional success.
- A collaborative team culture nurtures professional growth and innovation in faculty and staff. Adults model the creativity, flexibility, and enthusiasm for learning that The Attic seeks to inspire in children.
- The multi-age learning environment provides unique opportunities for relationships across grades and social/emotional development. Children can be leaders and learners in and out of the classroom with peers of all ages.





*Our program is a laboratory for constructivist, progressive, and developmentally appropriate education.*



*“Instead of just drilling you on what you know, the teachers help you learn what you don’t know. They help you find what something means and why it matters.”*



## *Opportunities and Challenges for the Next Leader*

- In light of the pandemic, changing demographics, and evolving programmatic needs, the community looks to the next leader to restore and strengthen strong community relationships including establishing clear channels of communication, respectful professional boundaries, and an inspiring work environment.
- Fluctuating enrollment coupled with a flexible program model provides an opportunity to craft a realistic financial model that supports long term sustainability for The Attic Learning Community based on a careful analysis of projected enrollment, tuition revenue, staffing needs, competitive compensation, and fundraising.
- The Executive Director should continue to examine and reimagine how The Attic can best meet the needs of families and children, while grounding the educational experience in the community’s enduring core values and progressive, constructivist approach to learning.
- Developing sustainable roles and systems that support the operational and programmatic priorities of the community will be a goal. The Board looks to the new Executive Director to identify the best use of resources, inspire and motivate their team, and delegate effectively.
- Investing in faculty recruitment and retention given the unique program model and constructivist, child-driven pedagogical approach will be critical to the future success of The Attic.
- In support of The Attic’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, clarifying the profile of learners that will thrive in its unique program will be beneficial. This will lead to establishing a staffing model and professional development resources that ensure effective program delivery and learning outcomes.

## **Desired Skills and Attributes of the Next Executive Director**

- Experience working and leading in an educational setting and passion for the unique constructivist approach rooted in The Attic Learning Community
- A strong, charismatic leadership presence that fosters a culture of respect, professionalism, and kindness
- The capacity to speak with passion and authenticity about the mission of The Attic, develop strong relationships, and cultivate support within and beyond The Attic community



- The ability to listen deeply, facilitate inclusive dialogue, make difficult decisions, have courageous conversations, and build trust
- Willingness to work in partnership with a growing board, including developing committees, engaging in strategic planning, and integrating best practices in governance
- A proficient understanding of strategic financial sustainability, budget development, student and faculty recruitment and retention, and enrollment management
- The visionary skills to think strategically, capably develop and execute plans, and manage community expectations around the impact of change
- A high degree of emotional intelligence with a penchant for innovative, open-minded, out-of-the box thinking

*“I’m grateful for a place that sees my children completely and accepts and loves them every day. That acceptance helps me see education and growth as a process and trust that my kids will be supported no matter what, as they develop and learn.”*



## *To Apply*

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials to Tracy Bennett and Evan Hundley by September 30 :

- Educators Collaborative Summary Sheet and Disclosure Statement (Contact Tracy for these documents)
- Letter of Interest addressed to the Search Committee
- Current Resume
- Statement of Educational Leadership Philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information (name, relationship to candidate, phone and email addresses)

Candidates are encouraged to reach out to Tracy or Evan for more information. Send application materials via email to:

Tracy Bennett, Partner, Educators Collaborative  
Email: [tbennett@educatorscollaborative.com](mailto:tbennett@educatorscollaborative.com)  
Phone: 425-466-4748

Evan Hundley, Partner, Educators Collaborative  
Email: [ehundley@educatorscollaborative.com](mailto:ehundley@educatorscollaborative.com)  
Phone: 206-930-9774

*Annual Salary Range: \$125,000 to \$135,000 per year commensurate with education and experience. The Attic offers a comprehensive benefits package to benefits-eligible employees.*



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