



HEAD OF SCHOOL OPPORTUNITY PROFILE



Assisted by
Tim Bernstein, General Manager
tim@ardentsearchco.com

ARDENT
SEARCH COMPANY



OVERVIEW

Creekside is devoted to discovering the untapped potential of every student.

Founded by parents to meet the needs of their children, The Creekside School located in San Jose, California is a nonprofit 501(c)(3), year-around nonpublic and private school dedicated to serving students with autism from 1st grade to young adults.

Currently Creekside has twelve students, ages 8-17. Since its founding in 2006, Creekside has labored to provide the best education for the whole child to the Silicon Valley area. The waiting list and need to provide this type of program is extensive.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Anyone can learn once we learn how to teach them

Guided by this simple premise each student's unique set of interests, strengths and needs drive the development of their comprehensive program. Active collaboration between professionals and families allows Creekside to gain a greater understanding of the student.



ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The Creekside team conducts themselves with integrity, collegiality and a deep commitment to being “on mission” with a spirit of gratitude, anticipation and excitement based on the impact Creekside has in changing lives. The staff recognizes that Creekside is an entrepreneurial (requiring a level of independence), invigorating, inspiring and unique workplace that provides an environment of competence, passion and potential. The team recognizes this is a tough assignment but are committed to the hard-working, close-knit, and fervent group, who is highly motivated, and carries out their work with excellence.

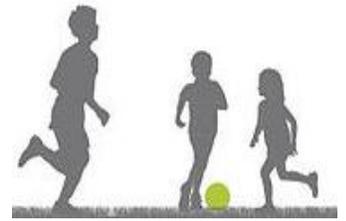
The team works towards a culture of being unified and integrated with the freedom to innovate and improve. People feel free to talk to each other about problems and areas for improvement. Challenging ideas are perceived as positive. The team is welcome to give input to decisions, and their input is sincerely considered. This is a culture of “all hands helping.” This is not a political environment. As a result, the group consistently works on being transparent, open, and creating a climate of trust.

THE FUTURE

Creekside envisions extending this philosophy to their proposed new campus in the Silicon Valley area which will offer the same proven, high quality, one-on-one instruction and therapies, thus allowing their students to gain confidence and become more independent as they broaden their communication skills.

With the support from the city and surrounding school districts, Creekside has plans and funding in place to purchase and build a state of the art facility to serve up to 60 students and their families. Further, under the leadership of the Head of School and Board, plans include programs for preschool and older students (those “aged out”) as well as occupational readiness programs.





CREEKSIDE POPULATION

The population served are those on the Autism spectrum who have the most profound learning and adaptive behavioral challenges, primarily due to their communicative and sensory regulation needs. Most of the students are Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device users and require a high level of support from educators and therapists to meet those needs.



PROGRAMS

The Creekside School, with an approximate 2:1* staff/student ratio, was founded by parents to meet the needs of their children while respecting their individuality. The Creekside School's primary philosophical foundation is based in the DIR®/Floortime™ which focuses on recognizing students' unique and special learning differences. Outside of utilizing this primary methodology, The Creekside School takes an eclectic approach using a variety of educational and progressive approaches.

*Some students require 1:1 support for specific activities or during difficult periods of time (across days or months), so are staffed to have 1:1 support to meet these needs.

[Read more](#)

Teaching to the Individual

Each student's team consists of a Special Education Teacher, a Speech-Language Pathologist, an Occupational Therapist and highly skilled Teaching Assistants. The Creekside School supports the individual needs of each student by utilizing a highly collaborative approach.





Academics

The Creekside School is a functional skills program leading to a certificate of high school completion.

Speech and Language Services

Speech and Language Pathologists address each student's receptive and expressive language skills.



Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapists address each student's ability to use their senses effectively to regulate their response to the environment around them.

Community Based Instruction

The Community Based Instruction (CBI) program is an essential part of the school curriculum, benefiting students by providing real experiences in the local community.



Physical Education

The Creekside School PE program focuses on the fundamentals of a variety of team based and individual sports and fitness activities.

Music Therapy

The Creekside School offers music therapy on Tuesday and Thursdays. A registered music therapist works with students individually and in small group music sessions.



Animal Assisted Happiness Program

The Creekside School partners with Animal Assisted Happiness and The Achiever Christian School to provide an inclusive experience for students on campus twice per month.





WHAT THE STAFF SAY ABOUT CREEKSIDE . . .

"...We are highly dedicated to our school community—we see firsthand and remarkable advances in our students—I like being a part of that..."

"...We have a generous budget and are limited only by our ideas and imagination..."

"...We serve as champions of our programs and champions for our students..."

"...This would be a dream job for someone who wants to build a school and run with it..."

"...We are 'whole-child' (and whole family) focused, and intentional about embracing the individual child..."

"...I love the focus on individualized programs—we have the luxury and encouragement to design a student's program to give the best opportunity to succeed..."

"...We are looking for someone with an innovative and energetic spirit whose best work is ahead of him or her..."

"...we are allowed an eclectic approach—room for innovation; our population greatly benefits from both in-classroom and out of classroom functional skill opportunity; we have solid community partners who welcome our students to be at their place of business..."

"...because of our vision (expanding to 60 students) we want someone who sees the future and can lead us there..."

"...We are deeply passionate about this population and the potential of our students—we are realistic as well..."





THE POSITION



Overview

The Head of School is responsible for creatively shaping a culture at Creekside that promotes academic excellence.

The Head of School will report to the Board of Directors and be responsible for all day-to-day business, academic, and co-curricular operations. Additionally, this executive will be the chief spokesperson for Creekside and the lead person with the various constituencies of the Creekside community: students, parents, staff and faculty, donors, community leaders and organizations, and the Board of Directors.

The Head of School is responsible for creatively shaping a culture at Creekside that promotes academic excellence in all things and at all levels—students, teachers, administrators, parents, Board members, etc. The environment must also promote progress and accountability to create the desired culture of distinction.

Creekside is seeking an experienced administrator to be its Head of School who will have demonstrated success as a leader, most likely in a Special Education environment and prior to that as a teacher, preferably at a school/district known for its Special Education success. The person may have been a High School Principal, Dean, Assistant Head, Head of School or Administrator, or possibly from another organizational leadership role. Having worked with involved parents with high expectations is quite valuable.

As a visionary leader, the Head of School advises the Board on policy, decision-making, and long-range planning, and then as a skilled administrator implements those policies, decisions and plans, deploying staff and the community of volunteers available, along with the required financial resources.

The Head of School motivates, encourages, challenges, holds accountable, and empowers the Principal to be effective. As a skilled communicator, the Head of School shares the school's vision and educational philosophy with the staff, faculty, parents, Board, the wider academic community, and the local community.



Responsibilities

- Model a service-oriented attitude and demonstrate sensitivity, compassion, patience, honesty and insight in all interactions with staff, students, parents, Board members, and other Creekside members.
 - Provide strategic high-level direction, recommend visionary goals to the Board, promote those approved goals and diligently oversee the implementation.
 - Work with the Board to ensure the delivery of a clearly articulated DIR/Floortime methodology throughout the curriculum, faculty and staff.
- Be an effective Creekside spokesperson in dialogue and communication with senior administrative staff at other agency boards.
 - Seek out and find synergies and continuing improvements in programs, processes and policies.
 - Ensure the active and robust involvement of parents and other volunteers in the life of the school, in all available capacities.
 - Serve as an advisor to the Board, and attend all Board meetings except "Executive Sessions."
 - Present a recommended Annual Budget to the Board at the start of the new budget year. Adhere to approved budgets, and present to the Board in advance any anticipated overruns for approval.
 - Oversee the development, implementation and review of policies as directed by the Board for all major school policies requiring Board approval, and likewise the procedures resulting from those policies.
 - Provide a leadership role in conjunction with the Board, in the development, implementation and review of long-range plans for the Board.
 - Seek Board affirmation before hiring any direct reports, and inform the Board of other staff appointments, promotions, demotions, terminations or other significant staffing issues.
 - Inform the Board of any major unplanned events occurring at a school campus or school event, which required significant and unusual administrative involvement.
 - Assist as requested by the Board to find potential Board members.
 - Provide team leadership, coaching, mentoring, challenge, review, while ensuring mutual accountability among the Principal and other staff, in order that they may be successful and effective in performing their jobs.
 - Be an effective team builder ensuring that meaningful dialogue, consultation and collaboration are part of the decision-making process.



- Oversee in conjunction with the Principal the hiring of all staff.
- Develop and maintain a program of professional development and staff succession.
- Ensure that the Principal and teachers have a sound understanding of teaching, learning, and implementing the DIR/Floortime curriculum.
- Oversee the development of staff compensation in conjunction with the administrative team and the Board approved budget and salary ranges.
- Oversee and ensure that regular employee evaluation and performance review programs are in place, and be involved in staff performance review issues requiring attention.
- Oversee communication to the school community of educational program highlights and accomplishments, curriculum developments, and new initiatives.
- Ensure regular and relevant financial reporting to the Board Finance Committee.
- Oversee the campus operation and business offices; information technology; accounting/finance; building maintenance; and transportation services.
- Develop the plans and budgets for major building or property renovation or expansion for presentation to the Board.
- Provide leadership and insight into long-term financial planning and stability.
- Oversee the Board's admission policy.
- Monitor enrollment trends, and seek to understand what is driving these trends.
- Foster good relations with external school and professional organizations, the public, and other educational agencies.
- Over time develop and oversee a comprehensive fundraising strategy to engage the Creekside "family" and the wider education community to provide financial resources for Creekside.
- Promote the school to the broader Silicon Valley community to create a "branding" (reputation) that will positively affect enrollment and fundraising.
- Be present on campus including special events to establish rapport and visibility with students, faculty, staff and parents.
- Oversee long-range planning, review annual calendar, and maintain a schedule of school events.
- Provide leadership in obtaining and maintaining accreditation.
- Assist the Principal in staff supervision, instruction improvement, curriculum selection and alignment, and administration of corrective action for students and staff.
- Consult with parents for problem resolution and provide leadership in parent education.
- Oversee special projects, such as building programs, special services, work trips and staff convention attendance.
- Provide leadership by keeping abreast of current educational trends and practices.
- Accept, after consultation, other job responsibilities as assigned by the Board.





Ideal Qualifications

- Committed, imaginative and creative individual with a passion for Special Education.
- Master's degree, preferably in Education, having a Ph.D. or Ed.D. is an advantage.
- Seven plus years as an administrator with strong knowledge of special needs populations, governance, with financial and administration understanding and change management, *ideally with DIR/Floortime experience.*
- Empowering, servant leadership management style, adept at building consensus, excitement and energizing staff and community.
- Mentor of leaders and his/her confidence is tempered by an ability to admit and learn from mistakes.
- Strong interpersonal and organizational skills.
- Knowledge and ability to respond effectively to the needs of a diverse staff, student and parent population with high expectations.
- Strong time management and problem-solving skills.
- Adept at resolving conflict, effective at coaching and can maintain confidentiality.
- Accessible, transparent, authentic, able to unite his/her team.
- Proven strategic visionary/big picture thinker.
- Committed to the school/programs and a track record of achieving excellence.
- Mature leader, with the ability to delegate and to see the macro while being mindful of the details.
- Confident and able to make strategic, sophisticated, reasoned and thoughtful decisions, often rapidly, with an ability to standby and explain those decisions.
- Networking—experience connecting with local, state, and federal agency personnel.
- Experience managing the complexity of contract compliance and staff, ideally in California—this is primarily an external relationship and contract/compliance-focused role versus a student-focused role.
- Desire to work toward program expansion, renewal, integration, and consolidation/efficiency where applicable.
- An understanding of PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) with direct experience fostering a PLC in a school/organization preferred.





TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Twelve Months with paid school closure time (approximately 19 days) and one week (5 days) of flex time to be taken during school closure days. Administrators also accrue two weeks (10 days) of vacation annually that carries over from year to year. (Accrual is capped at 240 hours). A generous compensation and benefits package is available commensurate with experience.

THE SEARCH AND SELECTION PROCESS

If you know someone who has an interest and meets most of the requirements described in this profile, please feel free to suggest that person for consideration and/or forward this information. **Please request they forward their resume to tim@ardentsearchco.com.**

Our client is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate based on race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, familial status, veteran status, or physical handicap.

fully respect the need for confidentiality of information supplied by interested parties and assure them that their backgrounds and interests will not be discussed with anyone, including our client, without their prior consent, nor will reference contacts be made until mutual interest has been established.



Ardent Search Company a retained executive search firm devoted exclusively to serving our clients in matters of executive selection. We are a generalist firm that has served business and non-profits worldwide since 2007.



To explore this position, please contact:

Tim Bernstein, General Manager
tim@ardentsearchco.com
Phone: (805) 778-1777 Ext. 14

ARDENT
SEARCH COMPANY