



DIRECTOR

July 1, 2018

THE PRESCHOOL AT PEACHTREE ROAD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Atlanta, GA

THE SCHOOL

The Preschool at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church is a coeducational 12-month through 6-year-old preschool located in the Buckhead district of Atlanta, an area rich in history and energized by a vibrant economy. During the 64 years of its existence, The Preschool has been recognized as a preeminent feeder school for the city's major independent schools, as well as area public and charter schools. From its beginnings to its current manifestation as a vibrant 350-student urban institution that serves families throughout the city, The Preschool

has steadfastly maintained an emphasis on strong academics, character development, and Christian education. The Preschool firmly believes in "nurturing the whole child, and our curriculum is carefully designed to cultivate children's cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual skills to equip them to thrive in the wider world."

As teachers, parents, and administrators describe what is so special about The Preschool, it is clear that the school community lives its philosophy and core values each day.

Members of the community typically describe the school as a "happy place." Having benefitted from many years of wise leadership under its current director, The Preschool seeks a new leader who will guide its students and the school community to its next level of success. The school is fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS/AdvancED). While the city of Atlanta continues to grow rapidly, the small and close-knit community of The Preschool warmly welcomes new families. A new director will find that both The Preschool, and Atlanta itself, are welcoming and hospitable places to be.



The school is rightfully proud of its warm and open atmosphere, where students and members of the faculty and staff know one another. Parents report that teachers are very experienced and understand that “education is a marathon, not a sprint.” In addition, parents appreciate the school’s emphasis on a balance between academics and play. The program is research-based and includes critical thinking through methods advocated by Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Many of the school’s teachers have been trained at Harvard to incorporate the teaching of these skills in their daily lessons. In addition, the Orton-Gillingham method of teaching reading is used at the school. All Pre-K and 5/6 teachers have been trained to use this methodology.

The parent body at The Preschool is involved and energetic. The Preschool has a Parents Council that consists of 22 parent-run committees, including fundraising committees, outreach committees, and student and parent enrichment committees.

HISTORY

The Preschool was founded in 1953 as an outreach ministry serving 30 church members’ children in one Kindergarten class with two teachers. During the ensuing years, the school’s enrollment has grown to 350 students with 56 teachers and 6 administrators and support staff, with student-teacher ratios ranging from 5:1 to 9:1.





GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

A 15-member Board of Directors, composed of present and past parents and church members and non-church members, governs The Preschool. The Senior Minister and the Chief Operating Officer of the church are *ex officio* members of the Board.

The by-laws allow directors to serve two-year terms and officers three-year terms. The board is self-perpetuating and led by a Chair who works closely with the Director. Board Committees include Executive, Personnel, Long Range Planning, Hospitality, Finance, Nominating, and Property/Technical. Typically, each director serves on two committees.

The Preschool is administered by the Director who is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the school and reports to the Chief Operations Officer of the church. In addition, there are two assistant directors, one who is responsible for coordinating the toddler program and for

personnel, while the other serves as Admissions Director. There is a Business Manager, an Office Manager, and an IT manager who also teaches STEM classes.

FACILITIES

The Preschool is located on Peachtree Road in the Buckhead neighborhood of Atlanta. The school includes 22 classrooms, an organized and well-stocked teacher resource room, a library, 3 age-appropriate playgrounds, 3 music/ movement rooms, 2 art exploration rooms, a kitchen, and administrative offices. All classrooms and other learning areas are bright, cheery, well equipped and well maintained. The school is also able to use church facilities such as meeting rooms, dining areas, a soccer field, and the gymnasium. The close sense of community is enhanced by facilities that are located in contiguous buildings that are easy to navigate. One parent described the facilities as "top of the line."

FACULTY AND STUDENTS

The staff includes 62 teachers and administrators, many of whom have been with the school for more than 20 years. In addition, there is a dedicated staff nurse on-site every school day and The Preschool contracts with an occupational therapist and a speech therapist to provide services on-site for students during the school day. Parents consistently praise their children's teachers as professionals who are well prepared and know what students need. They believe that teachers listen to them and respect their opinions. They also say that teachers share their values regarding behavior and discipline. All but two teachers hold undergraduate degrees, and many even have graduate degrees. As a group, the faculty is very experienced and parents fully appreciate the knowledge and steadiness that they bring to the classroom. Parents report that teachers know their children well, create an environment with a "happy vibe," and prepare their children for Kindergarten. The small classes encourage a family feeling in which teachers track how students are doing emotionally as well as intellectually. After completing their studies at The Preschool, about half of the graduates continue their education at area independent schools. Among these are Pace Academy, Holy Innocents' Episcopal School, Westminster Schools, Lovett School, and Trinity School. The other half of the class enrolls in area public and charter schools. Parents report that their children are well prepared for the next phase of their education.



SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM

In its design, development, and classroom implementation, The Preschool curriculum is firmly grounded in the school's philosophy and core values. The methods used include the following: Project Zero for critical thinking; Orton-Gillingham for reading; classroom "work jobs" that help develop pre-math and pre-reading skills as well as motor and cognitive skills; Handwriting Without Tears for writing readiness; learning centers for imaginative activities; and manipulative toys that help build skills for more complicated tasks. The Preschool has a STEM program led by a teacher who works directly with the Pre-K and 5/6 classes. The STEM teacher also works with younger classes to integrate STEM learning into their everyday activities. A typical day at The Preschool includes art, music, engaged story time, circle time, and independent play. The 3s-5/6 students attend a chapel program every Friday morning. From the first day of school, preliminary lessons are taught about empathy, sharing, curiosity, and cooperation to allow children to develop understanding and skills that will help them succeed beyond the classroom. The entire curriculum is research-based and time-tested.



will need to be enhanced. Upgrading learning and play space, adding technology, project-based learning, and further development of the STEM program will require increased fundraising.

The Preschool benefits from a very favorable relationship with the church. The next Director will need to continue to maintain this relationship in order to move the school forward. The Senior Minister is very supportive of The Preschool and is anxious to have this important part of the church's outreach continue to be highly regarded and successful.

INTO THE FUTURE

The Preschool offers the new director the opportunity to move a well-established school forward, enhance current resources, and plan for the future. All of the constituencies are eager to welcome a strong, decisive, engaged, and visionary leader that will take The Preschool to new heights. The commitment of an outstanding faculty and the enthusiasm of the parents, along with the support of the church, will provide a strong foundation for success.

Like many schools in large urban areas, The Preschool faces challenges because parents have many choices for their preschool children. In addition, several nearby public schools have recently added Pre-K classes. The Preschool must continue to show how it is differentiated from other schools and keep tuition competitive. In addition, there is a need to review the marketing plan both to maintain reenrollment of current students and to attract qualified new students. The school must continue to find ways to publicize its excellent programs in the community.

There is one major fundraising event every year, in addition to other smaller fundraisers, but no annual fund program. As the school considers making some capital improvements in the near future, fundraising

The school currently holds classes from 9 am–12:30 pm. Extended day opportunities include the Early Risers program from 8–9 am each day and the Lunch Bunch program from 12:30–2:15 pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The recreation center of the church also offers after-preschool classes from 12:30–1:45 each day, such as dance, tennis, soccer, and art. With an increase in dual-working families, there may be a need to increase extended day offerings.

A number of the senior teachers have served the school for more than 20 years. Some of them are approaching retirement age. The school will need to consider a plan for recruiting experienced and talented teachers to fill these openings.



QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE NEXT DIRECTOR

The Preschool seeks the following qualities and proven abilities in its next Director:

- Strong academic credentials with early childhood teaching experience.
- Forward-thinking, innovative leader who will respect the traditions and current strengths while developing a long-term vision for The Preschool.
- Ability to inspire and bring together faculty and families around The Preschool’s mission to be a loving, nurturing Christian environment for children to learn and grow.
- Commitment to collaborate with faculty to maintain a curriculum and proven teaching strategies that incorporate current research and best practices in early childhood education.
- Effective and accessible communicator who will develop and maintain strong relationships with and among parents, faculty, and church leadership.
- Ability to cultivate relationships with local independent schools and peer institutions.
- Ability to understand and oversee The Preschool’s budget and finances.



APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Candidates interested in the Director position should submit **ONE PDF DOCUMENT** that includes the following:

- Cover letter
- Resume
- Statement of Educational Philosophy

Please email the PDF document to **both**:

Eugene A. Bratek
gbratek@rg175.com
704-577-2209 (cell)

AND

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646-261-5761 (cell)
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For more information about The Preschool, please visit their website: www.thepreschool.org