



# GORDON SCHOOL

*The Gordon School is a racially diverse nursery through eighth grade, all-gender, independent school in East Providence, Rhode Island. Child by child, the Gordon School community cultivates successful students by inspiring joyful learning, encouraging intellectual leadership, fostering an empathic spirit and stimulating a drive for positive societal impact.*

## **JOB OPENING**

### **Third to Fifth Grade Learning Specialist and Support Coordinator**

**Start date: August 28, 2023**

#### **Overview**

Founded in 1910 as the Open Air School by pediatrician Dr. Helen West Cooke, Gordon was Rhode Island's first non-public all-gender school. In 1963, the school moved to its current twelve-acre site in East Providence and remains true to its progressive roots, instilling "the true spirit of joyous work" and holding fast to the belief that "mind and heart should be educated with equal care."

Today, Gordon is a racially and socio-economically diverse nursery through eighth grade independent school with an enrollment of 365 students, renowned nationally for a multicultural curriculum and a commitment to equity, inclusion and social justice. The mission is embraced by all members of the community and is championed in all aspects of school life, inspiring and informing daily decisions as well as long-term strategy.

Gordon's nursery to eighth grade model best serves the educational, social and emotional needs of children by allowing students to connect across grade levels, promoting a school-wide sense of community, cultivating leadership in children of all ages and making key social skills like courage and compassion essential elements of the day-to-day experience.

Gordon's curriculum focuses on developing intellectual leadership by leveraging a child's natural imagination, creativity and inquisitive nature. Students are challenged and inspired to be active participants in their own education, and faculty and staff strive to develop deep and meaningful relationships with each child and family.

## **The opportunity**

At Gordon School, a key component of our commitment to anti bias, multicultural and social justice education is honoring neurodiversity and all the strengths that all of our learners bring to school each day. We aim to build a school culture that celebrates our varied learning profiles, strengths and needs, and see the work of our learning support services as central to a student's sense of self and belonging at school. The Third to Fifth Grade Learning Specialist and Support Coordinator will be an important member of our student support services team at Gordon School.

The Third to Fifth Grade Learning Specialist and Support Coordinator's primary responsibility is to support students, teachers, and families in third to fifth grade, with a particular focus on students whose learning needs require accommodations and/or interventions. Working alongside families, teachers, and the academic leadership team, the Grades 3-5 Learning Support Coordinator ensures that students have access to the resources they need to thrive at Gordon. This position reports to the Lower School Director and works in close partnership with the Middle School Director and other members of the learning support team at Gordon.

The Third to Fifth Grade Learning Specialist and Support Coordinator is also is the lead instructor for our third and fourth grade Pathways Program. The Pathways Program provides targeted, small group instruction and offers students opportunities for individual guidance and focused, explicit instruction and practice in foundational skills. Instruction is based on the needs of the group and may include literacy, writing, or math remediation and executive functioning skills instruction and coaching.

## **A Day in the Life of the Third to Fifth Grade Learning Specialist and Support Coordinator at Gordon School:**

- Meet with the Lower School student support team to plan upcoming assessment cycle
- Co-teach a reading or math lesson with a third grade teacher
- Co-facilitate a Parents of Students with Learning Differences meeting
- Teach a fifth grade academic support class balancing individual intervention and instruction, as well as executive functioning skills such as study skills and notebook organization
- Lead small group instruction for third, fourth and fifth grade students who have been identified as needing more direct reading instruction

- Attend a fourth grade team meeting to share strategies to support a student who is in need of additional academic support
- Lead a professional development workshop for the Lower School faculty on best practices for differentiated instruction
- Facilitate a parent meeting for a student who has just received a neuropsychological evaluation to share interventions and goals with the family
- Read admissions files or serve on an admissions committee to offer counsel on a prospective student's learning profile

### **Teaching Responsibilities**

- Teach and coordinate third and fourth grade Pathways instructional group
- Small group literacy, writing and math remediation, as needed in third and fourth grade
- Small group reading instruction for fifth graders
- Academic support course for fifth graders focused on executive functioning, study skills, and coursework remediation

### **Assessments**

- Conduct regular progress monitoring assessments (four to six weeks) with Pathways students
- Use benchmark assessments and progress monitoring data to determine and adjust the composition of Pathways groups
- Use neuropsychological evaluations to construct learning plans for students and ensure that teachers have the resources and information they need to utilize those plans in their instruction
- Collect, document, and analyze assessment data for students in third, fourth and fifth grades and share findings with division directors, the Assistant Head of School for Teaching and Learning, and the learning support team

### **Communication with Families and Documentation**

- Manage caseload of students who participate in the third and fourth grade Pathways program or have been identified as in need of a learning support plan at Gordon, offering timely and consistent communication with families and appropriately managing documentation and record-keeping
- Write notes for conferences or attend parent conferences for Pathways students
- Write progress reports for Pathways students

## **Professional Development Support for Teachers and Families**

- Offer professional development to teachers through observation, co-teaching and presentations
- Along with the Assistant Head of School for Teaching and Learning and other learning support team members, oversee Parents of Students with Learning Differences and lead presentations for families around reading and student support in partnership with Early Childhood and Lower School Directors and Assistant Head of School for Teaching and Learning
- Plan, coordinate, and present parent information workshops on tools and curriculum (Lexia, iReady, presentations at Open House, Visiting Days, Overview Nights, Ages and Stages)
- Lead our coordination of Lower School reading and social studies curricula

## **Coordination with Teachers and External Providers**

### *Teachers*

- Schedule and facilitate meetings with families, teachers and evaluators once neuropsychological evaluations are completed and shared with the school
- Work with classroom teachers to find opportunities to provide push-in support for differentiation

### *External Providers*

- Create and maintain a system to organize, document, archive, and appropriately share assessments, evaluations, and notes on Google Drive and using our Blackbaud LMS
- Coordinate services with outside consultants with Gordon students
- Schedule and facilitate meetings with families, teachers and evaluators once neuropsychological evaluations are completed and shared with the school
- Oversee tutors-maintain a curated list of tutors and regularly communicate with tutors that work with our students and/or connect Gordon teachers with tutors that are working with their students
  - Ensure that tutors understand Gordon's culture when working with students, teachers, and families

## **Admissions**

- Assist the admissions team with assessments for candidates
- Communicate with prospective families who may have questions about our third to fifth grade learning support program
- Serve on or consult with admissions committees as needed

- Participate in various admissions events, ie. Open Houses, middle school student assessments, etc

**Personal qualities for the successful Third to Fifth Grade Learning Specialist and Support Coordinator:**

- An enthusiastic commitment to Gordon's multicultural curriculum and progressive pedagogical approach.
- High cultural competency and racial literacy, and a demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.
- A genuine appreciation of and respect for children and an energy and enthusiasm for all aspects of school life.
- The ability to effectively collaborate with colleagues and the academic leadership team, while advocating for the needs of students and their families.
- Warmth and a good sense of humor; patience and persistence; sense of curiosity and a love of learning.
- The desire and ability to work collaboratively, to innovate, and to be part of a team.
- Deep appreciation for and the ability to speak passionately and knowledgeably about neurodiversity.

**Professional qualifications**

- Master's degree or higher in Special Education or relevant field
- Ability to lead small group instruction and offer targeted interventions for reading and math
- Prior teaching experience and comfort with mathematics interventions, preferred.
- Familiarity with neuropsychological examinations,
- A deep understanding of progressive and antiracist pedagogy, multicultural curriculum, and the developmental needs of children.
- Significant experience with evaluation and assessment measures in identifying academic, social-emotional and behavioral needs.
- Experience working with teachers, administrators, families, and students to identify and support students in the Lower and Middle Schools in need of behavioral, academic and/or emotional health services. This includes observing students, conferring with classroom teachers, and providing support interventions.

**Compensation and benefits**

The salary for this position will be commensurate with experience. Gordon employees enjoy a competitive employee benefits program including medical, dental and vision coverage, life insurance, long-term disability insurance, flexible spending accounts, retirement plan contribution, and voluntary supplemental life insurance and long-term care coverage.

As an equal opportunity employer, Gordon School is committed to providing employment opportunities to all qualified individuals and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, marital status, veteran status, pregnancy, parental status, genetic information or characteristics, or any other basis prohibited by applicable law.

Gordon strongly encourages people from backgrounds historically underrepresented in independent schools to apply, particularly people of color and LGBTQIA+ educators.

### **How to apply**

Interested and qualified candidates should submit the following materials:

- A cover letter describing why you are interested in working at Gordon and how your talents and experience are a fit for this position. *Your cover letter should clearly outline your understanding of Gordon's mission, its educational philosophy and how it aligns with your own educational philosophy.*
- A current résumé.

Please send your materials electronically in one email and as separate PDF documents to: Minna Ham, Lower School Director at [mham@gordonschool.org](mailto:mham@gordonschool.org)

No phone calls, please.