

LEADERSHIP PROFILE



Head of School Drew Charter School Atlanta, GA

“Drew is an exemplary, innovative education community that empowers all students to achieve their full potential.”
– Drew Charter School Mission Statement

THE OPPORTUNITY

An area prone to violence and abject poverty has transformed into a nationally recognized, mixed-income community, and at the heart of this revitalization is [Charles R. Drew Charter School](#). Drew is more than just a Pre-K-12 school, it is a “cradle to college” educational village, which continuously strives for excellence and maintains an impressive record of academic achievement, exceeding state and district averages. The school is an essential component of a community-wide initiative that helps families break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Established to serve the families of The Villages of East Lake, a mixed-income community which replaced a housing project, Drew is now a magnet for families across economic and social strata.



Drew has achieved laudable results in its 18 year history. Last year Drew students were awarded more than \$9M in college scholarships and boasted a graduation rate of 98.7%. The inaugural class of 2017 had a 100% graduation rate. [Click here to see a heartwarming video.](#)

Drew has an impressive array of partners which help drive innovative programs from teaching children to play the harp to building a tiny house. Integrated curriculum requires teachers to partner and plan together, and students to apply interdisciplinary skills. The Senior Academy was designed for collaboration with moveable classroom walls and flexible space for real-life learning opportunities. Drew strives for excellence and expects this not just of students, but also of faculty and staff.



The Head of School will inspire Drew to its next level of achievement, while preserving its pivotal role in helping eliminate intergenerational poverty. Innovation is a hallmark of Drew's success. The next Head of School will maintain a sense of urgency around student achievement and think creatively to innovate beyond traditional educational models. He or she will have a growth mindset and be open to evolving pedagogy to better meet students at their point of need.

Eliminating the opportunity gap between students of different races and socio-economic status will be especially important. It is imperative that focus continue on ensuring students whose families lack economic opportunity have access to Drew and fully participate in all of Drew's offerings. As the demographics of East Lake continue to shift toward more economically upwardly mobile residents, the next Head of School will work to ensure Drew stays true to its founding principles of serving those most in need and embracing a mixed-income school.

THE ORGANIZATION

Drew Charter School is Atlanta Public School's first charter school. It was formed by a pioneering partnership that included involved parents, community partners, representatives of the Atlanta Board of Education and the East Lake Foundation.

Drew has proven its innovative approach to education works. The school currently serves over 1,900 students in Pre-K through twelfth grade. Its enrollment has more than doubled in the last five years and its budget has grown from \$9M to \$26M. There is a waiting list of families eager to have their children educated at Drew, and a lottery to ensure equitable opportunity for enrollment.

A Drew education is one that supports strong intellectual, physical, social and emotional growth. The school has a rich and academically challenging curriculum. The academic program at Drew incorporates:

- An unequivocal commitment to project-based learning and STEAM
- A strong foundation in early literacy
- An extended school day and school year to provide more time for learning
- Rigorous student assessment and a commitment to continuous improvement
- High standards and expectations for student achievement and attendance
- A vast array of enrichment opportunities, including art, dance, drama, chorus, band, orchestra, robotics, engineering and Spanish
- A robust physical education program, including swimming classes at the adjacent YMCA and golf lessons at the neighborhood golf course
- Access to cutting-edge technology for educators and students
- Excellent teachers and administrators with a strong commitment to professional development
- Involved, concerned parents
- Before-school and after-school programs. The after-school program is particularly strong, offering both academic support and dozens of enrichment opportunities including etiquette, tennis and martial arts



The school benefits from the significant support of the East Lake Foundation, as well as an abundance of support from a diverse array of partners including:

- Atlanta Public Schools
- Center for Civic Engagement, Oglethorpe University
- Center for Teaching, The Westminster Schools
- East Lake YMCA
- Georgia State University School of Music
- Georgia Tech Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics and Computing
- Rollins Center for Language & Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School
- Sheltering Arms East Lake Center

THE EAST LAKE COMMUNITY

Drew is one of the cornerstones of the East Lake Foundation's comprehensive effort to revitalize the East Lake neighborhood. East Lake was once a destination for Atlanta's elite, but by the early 1990s had become one of the city's poorest and most dangerous neighborhoods, with 13% employment, a \$35M annual drug trade, a crime rate 18 times higher than the national average and a high school graduation rate of just 30%. Even the famed East Lake Golf Course, where the legendary Bobby Jones first learned to play golf, had fallen into disrepair.

The East Lake Foundation was formed to revitalize this inner city neighborhood and turn it into a vibrant neighborhood where all residents can thrive. Over the last two decades, the Foundation has proven that working with residents and public and private partners, while providing the right combination of comprehensive programs and services, is transformative for the community. Today 100% of residents in public housing units of The Villages of East Lake who are required to work are doing so, and the violent crime rate has dropped 90%.

The Foundation has been a vital partner to Drew, supporting a wide array of programs from early education to college and career readiness. Drew has become a magnet for families seeking strong public education for their children. The Foundation is committed to attracting more families with children to The Villages of East Lake, particularly those economically disadvantaged, an important factor in maintaining a mixed income school and serving those families most in need.

The successful work and partnership of the East Lake Foundation and Drew Charter School generates interest from across the country. Purpose Built Communities was formed to replicate this neighborhood revitalization. The East Lake Foundation is a national model for 19 neighborhoods across the country. Drew is now a national model for Purpose Built Schools in Atlanta and three other cities.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES

As the leader of Drew, the Head of School must be tireless, passionate and enthusiastic, not just for the school, but also for the future of the entire East Lake community. The Head of School is responsible for executing Drew's mission, for achieving the school's ambitious goals and for managing both the school's academic program and its finances. The Head of School will:

1. Lead instruction and continue the upward trajectory of academic achievement. He or she will maintain a focus on project-based learning and STEAM, while also enabling additional learning opportunities to develop the whole child. Focus on special needs students will continue, ensuring resources remain dedicated to their success and that teachers are both challenged and supported to meet the needs of these students.

2. Ensure prudent financial management and operational success of the school.

Financial discipline is strong at Drew and should continue. Policies and procedures will need to be institutionalized to manage the larger, more mature operations of the organization.



3. Steward, enhance and continue to develop the partnerships essential to Drew's success. Drew operates in a complex ecosystem with tremendous support from parents, funders, and education and community partners. The Head of School will foster an effective communication and collaboration strategy with these stakeholders, leveraging their considerable support to drive positive student outcomes and achievement.

4. Partner with and leverage the Board of Directors. Drew has an experienced, credentialed and fully engaged board. The Head of School reports to the Board of Directors and the Board sets school policy. The Head of School will work collaboratively with the Board to develop and drive policy for Drew and to achieve extraordinary results.

5. Develop strong relationships with the diverse community of East Lake. The Head of School will be a visible leader both internally and externally. He or she will authentically connect with parents and stakeholders, modeling the behavior of a leader of a community purposefully built to be integrated, respectful and aspirational.

6. Ensure Drew maintains its status as a top school of choice. In addition to sustaining and enhancing its academic achievement, the Head of School will ensure the culture of Drew remains a safe physical and emotional environment for all students and faculty with an expectation of respectful behavior and an open forum for addressing issues, should they arise. He or she will also work to build traditions which keep Drew top of mind and heart with alumni and the community.

7. Assist with and lead fundraising efforts. The Head of School will continue to build the financial strength of Drew for future generations.

8. Be a helpful advocate for neighborhood revitalization and Purpose Built Communities. The success of East Lake and Drew draws visitors from communities across the country, including other Purpose Built Schools. The Head of School will manage visitors to the school in a supportive and non-disruptive manner.

THE CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will have a proven track record of leadership. Personal and professional assets will include:

- Success in driving outcomes in an urban or low-income environment
- Unwavering belief in the ability of every child to succeed
- Commitment to community-revitalization and efforts similar to those of East Lake and Drew which help families break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and drive excellence in a mixed-income environment
- Instructional leadership experience in an educational environment, preferably a K-12 school
- Ease, experience and comfort in dealing with issues of race, social justice and economic security as well as diversity, equity and inclusion
- Experience leading a mixed-income school or institution through demographic shifts
- Strong communication and relationship building skills
- An entrepreneur's penchant for action, innovation, taking strategic risks, staying nimble and continuously improving
- Ability to build and support a strong, diverse team across all functions



- A management style that is empowering, respectful and open to ideas
- Collaborative with excellent listening and coaching skills.



THE LOCATION

The Drew Charter School is located in Atlanta, Georgia in the East Lake community, four miles from downtown Atlanta.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect please email
Drew@BoardWalkConsulting.com
or call **Crystal Stephens** or **Ayanna Grady-Hunt** at 404-262-7392
