



Board of Directors Search

Full Announcement

The Literacy Lab (TLL) was founded in 2009 and provides students—in communities experiencing racial and/or economic inequities—with evidence-based, culturally responsive literacy instruction as preparation for academic, professional, and personal success. The Literacy Lab serves children from age three through grade three. We partner with school districts to help close the literacy gap largely by embedding full-time, rigorously-trained tutors in early childhood centers and elementary schools. We believe literacy is a human right. When we achieve our mission, we will have created a more just society where all students have the literacy services needed to unlock educational opportunities and success in life.

Our board members champion the importance of exceptional board leadership and believe that each and every organization needs a strong and effective board to fully realize its potential for good. In addition to the standard roles and responsibilities of a board member, our board members are active advocates and ambassadors for the organization and are fully engaged in identifying and securing the financial resources and partnerships necessary for The Literacy Lab to advance its mission.

TLL currently has an eleven-member Board of Directors, most who were invited on the board at the invitation of the CEO, Heather Jenkins, PhD, who was hired three years ago.

Our New Vision

At The Literacy Lab, we believe that literacy is a human right and the pathway to liberation. As the foundation for all learning, engaging in literary acts has the power to uplift people and redress the education debt. Leveraging the Historically Responsive Literacy (HRL) Framework, we will harness the power of students' identities, histories, languages, and cultures to provide equitable access to education, while cultivating the genius that lives within our students and their communities (Muhammad, G. 2020). Within this framework, we seek to evolve our tutorial model into one that leverages the innate expertise and lived experiences of our students and their communities, thus expanding the power of the science of reading, which has been at the core of our work for the past decade. By definition this evolution will be explicitly intersectional

to ensure accessibility for all BIPOC students, namely those who are disabled and for whom English is not their home language. Importantly, an integral component of this new approach requires deep, authentic partnerships with communities, from ideation to and through implementation. To do otherwise would perpetuate current inequities and marginalization.

In addition to academic research and research in the intersecting fields that hold our work, we have several years of internal data that have prompted us to ask questions about the ways in which we would like to improve what we do and how we do it. To best support the work happening in schools, we will offer professional development for classroom teachers and teaching assistants to maximize the impact of the model. In addition to offering literacy services to students inside their schools, we will also offer a multi-generational family model to bring back an emphasis on communal education and redress the education debt for the adults who surround and care for the students. As with poverty and all other societally created inequities, illiteracy, in the broadest sense of the term, is systemic and generational.

The Literacy Lab believes that this intentional shift from a tactical solution for an adaptive challenge, to a transformative solution rooted in history and data, aligned with the science of reading, will support our students' growth and development holistically. In addition to a focus on core literacy skills, we will focus on literary endeavors that cross content lines and support students' identity development and criticality skills. Further, as this work is multi-generational, families and communities will have the opportunity to engage in literary and academic pursuits designed by them and for them, thus increasing their skills and competencies.

Our ultimate hope is that someday The Literacy Lab is no longer needed to provide educational access and opportunity. We hope that this work, done in deep partnership with communities, allows them to reimagine their own path to liberation, with access to everything they need to make that a lived reality.

In addition to the strength of the research-based literacy curriculum for students age 3-3rd grade, TLL has a one-of-a-kind Leading Men Fellowship program. Launched first in the District of Columbia Public Schools in 2016, Leading Men places young men of color, age 18-24 without a college degree, in preschool classrooms and early childcare centers, where they help equip students with fundamental kindergarten-readiness skills. The fellows are recruited through local high schools, colleges, community organizations, and personal networks. They receive rigorous training and coaching in early literacy intervention and social-emotional development. The Fellows commit to working in a pre-K classroom for 25 hours per week (part-time) and are paid a competitive hourly wage. The Fellows receive monthly professional development training across the Fellowship, a monthly transportation and communication stipend and a \$2,500 college scholarship. TLL is actively working to build our career pathways for the Fellows to support their entrance into the teaching profession, through innovative programming and powerful strategic partnerships.

Position

Job Title: Board of Director's Member

Job Description

The Literacy Lab seeks a board member with experience in corporate, foundation, fundraising & grant writing, marketing and media expertise, instructional design and programming, technical industry, startups, & venture capitalists' knowledge, as well as those connected politically and with government entities and a personal commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI).

The Board of The Literacy Lab is a volunteer board. Members are not paid and dedicate their time and expertise to support TLL's organization, its mission and collective purpose.

Expectations of Individual Board Members:

We expect each board member to:

- Know the organization's mission, policies, programs, and needs.
- Diligently read and understand the organization's financial statements and board materials in advance of meetings.
- Serve as active advocates and ambassadors for the organization and fully engage in identifying and securing the financial resources and partnerships necessary for TLL to advance its mission and collective purpose.
- Leverage connections, networks, and resources to develop collective action to achieve TLL's mission.
- Give a meaningful personal financial donation.
- Help identify personal connections that can benefit the organization's fundraising and reputational standing and influence public policy.
- Prepare for, attend, and conscientiously participate in board meetings.
- Participate fully in one or more sub-committees.
- Engage in learning opportunities to better understand the communities & stakeholders the organization serves.
- Respect the experiences of all who bring their voices and lived experiences on to the board and the organization.

- Honor our values.

We are looking for mission-aligned individuals with strong fundraising and financial resources and networks/connections, collaboration, communication, implementation, and strategic skills, a commitment to JEDI, and expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Fundraising, Personal Financial Capacity, and willing to actively solicit from personal networks and with a high comfort level for soliciting gifts in a substantial range
- Corporate and Community Connections
- Government & Political Connections
- Belief in Educational Equity & Literacy as a Human Right

Our Commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

We know that to achieve our goals, fulfill our mission, and realize our vision, we need to include individuals with perspectives drawn from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, skill sets, areas of expertise, and lived experiences to help us avoid decision-making that could diminish the impact of our work.

We are publicly recruiting for board positions to ensure that we move beyond our immediate networks and honor our ongoing commitment to creating a board that is diverse in its composition, inclusive in its culture, and equity-focused in its approach to how it views its mission, its work, and the communities it serves.

The Nominating Committee is accepting applications until June 7, 2024, and those interested in board service can complete an application by contacting Gigi Washington at gigi@graciebanks.com or 423-444-4195.

For full consideration, a completed application, resume/CV and bio must be submitted.

This search is being conducted by Gracie Banks LLC, Human Capital Management & Search Consultants. Gigi Washington, President & Chief Human Capital Strategists.