



THE SCHENCK SCHOOL

Atlanta, Georgia

HEAD OF SCHOOL
Start Date: July 2023
schenck.org



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES



MISSION

Build a solid educational foundation for students with dyslexia and develop their rich potential.

OVERVIEW

The Schenck School is widely regarded as one of the top schools for dyslexic students in the United States. With 250 full-time students in kindergarten through sixth grade, The Schenck School believes that students with dyslexia have great potential in school and in life. Highly trained faculty members understand dyslexia, believe in their students, and are trained to meet every student's educational needs. At the core of the School's strategy is use of the Orton-Gillingham Approach to provide focused, accelerated dyslexia remediation. The results are nothing short of life changing.

While reading and writing are central to the curriculum, The Schenck School offers a comprehensive educational program that helps students develop intellectually and prepares them to reenter mainstream schools successfully. Small class size, low student-teacher ratios, and multi-sensory instruction create the optimal educational setting. Students are enrolled for an average of two to four years before returning to a traditional academic program setting.

In addition to its day program, The Schenck School is also the home of The Dyslexia Resource, the School's public facing outreach arm. The Dyslexia Resource exists to bring the life-changing work of The Schenck School to families and students who would otherwise not have access to it. The Dyslexia Resource empowers communities to serve dyslexic learners and struggling readers primarily through teacher-training, tutoring, school partnerships, and thought leadership. While not involved in its day-to-day operations, the next Head of School will serve as the strategic leader and public face of The Dyslexia Resource.

FAST FACTS

- Founded: 1959
- Total students: 250
- Students of color: 7%
- Total faculty: 59
- Faculty with advanced degrees: 50%
- Student/teacher ratio: 5:1
- Financial aid awarded this year: \$1.26M
- Students receiving financial aid: 27%
- Endowment: \$30M



The Schenck School seeks its next Head of School with the position beginning in July 2023. The ideal candidate will be an experienced educational leader devoted to the School's mission and programs. The Head of School is responsible for the overall vision, leadership, and management of the School and The Dyslexia Resource and reports to the Board of Trustees. The Head has primary responsibility for being the academic leader and for fostering a climate of growth and community engagement among students, faculty, and staff. This is an exceptional opportunity to lead one of the finest schools of its kind in the country.

SCHOOL HISTORY

David T. Schenck, a World War II veteran, found his true calling in education after a quick stint working in business. He spent time working at Camp Ways-Awi in Rangeley, ME, one of the first U.S. camps to teach students with dyslexia using the Orton-Gillingham Approach. A dyslexic himself, though never officially diagnosed, David was inspired to focus his efforts on working with dyslexic learners.

In 1959, after obtaining a master's degree in education from Emory University, David worked in a reading lab at an Atlanta school, tutoring students who were at risk of failing because of their difficulties in reading. There he realized that tutoring was not enough to give most of the students the support they needed to be successful. What they needed was a more specialized and intensive educational environment.



David and his wife Dee founded The Reading School, a predecessor of The Schenck School, in 1959. In 1965, the name changed to The Schenck School, and in 1966, David and Dee purchased the current site on Mt. Paran Road. The School took a new approach in teaching students with dyslexia, utilizing small class sizes and one-on-one instruction for those students who needed an even more specialized environment. David also had the innovative idea of enrolling students for a limited period of approximately three years. His intention was to focus on remedial programming and then to guide families in selecting the next school the student would attend.

In 1999, David, who understood the impact of dyslexia on adults as well as children, started evening classes for adults. The Adult Dyslexia Program began at the Cathedral of St. Philip and later moved to St. Anne's Episcopal Church, where it is still operates today. Schenck School faculty and staff volunteer as instructors.

The Schenck School was one of the first schools to receive accreditations from the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators both as a school and a teacher training site.

THE SCHOOL

The Schenck School continues David Schenck's mission of teaching children with dyslexia-related learning differences that cause difficulty with reading and specific language skills.



The Orton-Gillingham Approach is used in the classroom, in small group instruction, and in one-on-one tutoring. This approach is also incorporated into the math, science, and social studies curricula. Taught by well-trained and experienced faculty, it is a highly effective tool.

Students usually attend The Schenck School for two to four years before outplacing to public or private schools. The School's student/teacher ratio is five-to-one. Classes are generally eight to 11 students with two teachers. Since no two students are exactly alike, each child's learning program is tailored to his or her particular needs. Individual instruction is key in helping students overcome their difficulties. The School is committed to admitting qualified students regardless of the family's ability to pay the full cost of tuition. A limited amount of financial aid is made available for Day School, Study Lab, and academic camp tuition.

The School's Parent Education Program is another integral piece in helping parents become their child's best advocate. A series of distinguished speakers are hosted during the school year to present information on pertinent learning and parenting issues. Each year, the active Parent Education Program includes between seven and ten events.

The Schenck School is accredited by the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators (AOGPE), the Georgia Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children (GAPSEC), the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).



ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

The Orton-Gillingham Approach to phonetic instruction is at the very heart of every aspect of The Schenck School. Research shows that the most successful intervention for dyslexia is intensive instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness and use of the Orton-Gillingham Approach provides this intervention daily.

While reading and writing are central to the curriculum, the School offers a comprehensive educational program to help students develop intellectually and to prepare them to reenter mainstream schools successfully. In addition to instruction in reading and spelling, reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and written expression and grammar, the curriculum includes math, social studies, science, handwriting, and keyboarding. Throughout the curriculum, students learn strategies for success in school including organization and time management. Students also use resource materials and technology to support this effort.

Beyond the core curriculum, The Schenck School offers art, library, music, technology instruction, and physical education classes. These special courses enrich the educational experience of students on a weekly basis and their design compliments the goals and objectives of the primary curriculum.



To support what takes place in the classroom, the School offers both Occupational Therapy and a Speech-Language Program. Occupational Therapists address difficulties with “foundational skills” that directly impact a student’s classroom performance, such as fine motor/gross motor, visual perceptual/motor, and sensory processing. The Speech-Language Program is responsible for evaluating and serving students in the areas of articulation, language, fluency, and voice.

The School is committed to assisting parents as they make informed decisions regarding their child’s next step in their educational career. Teachers, principals, and the Director of Outplacement advise, inform, and support parents as they explore educational options for their child. Each year students are accepted into a wide range of private and public schools.

PROGRAMS

Beyond the classroom, The Schenck School offers a variety of programs that facilitate learning and build community.

One such program is Study Lab that provides students in grades two through six structured guidance to complete homework assignments. The Study Lab enables work completion through a supportive environment. Study Lab is staffed by Schenck School faculty and staff who aid students by clarifying homework assignments, interpreting directions, drilling decks, and assisting with other homework needs.



Summer Adventures, open to Schenck School students as well as those outside the school, is a day camp that offers a variety of programs for students rising to first through eighth grade. Options include Reading Adventures, Literature & Creative Writing Adventures, Math Blast, Middle School Learning Adventures, and more.

Other programs include Phoenix Fun, a variety of after-school activities taught by School employees and outside instructors; a summer reading program with age-appropriate selections by grade; a tutoring program; and resources for educators and parents through The Dyslexia Resource and Parent Education Program.

SCHOOL LIFE

While the primary focus at The Schenck School is on academics, students have many opportunities to have fun, welcome guests, serve others, build community spirit and camaraderie, and celebrate the School's history.

The house system brings together students, faculty, and staff from all grade levels to develop leadership and teamwork and to cultivate a strong sense of community. Inspired by the legacy of the School's founder and the myth of the School's mascot, the phoenix, all students, faculty, and staff are sorted into one of four houses. Points are awarded to students who display good character, citizenship, and resilience. The house system encourages effort and perseverance, creates lasting memories, and fosters camaraderie, friendship, school spirit, and good-natured competition.



The school community gathers to celebrate a variety of special events and traditions during the year. These include Grandparents and Special Friends' Day; Dyslexia Dash – a 5K run/walk to raise money for important dyslexia resources; Founder's Day – a day honoring founder David Schenck; Day of Giving – an annual opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to give back to the community through working together on grade-level service projects; BAMfest – a celebration of books, art, music, and technology; and Field Day – when students participate in a variety of relay races, team games, and water activities.

THE DYSLLEXIA RESOURCE

The Dyslexia Resource extends the work of The Schenck School to help many more children overcome reading challenges and transform their lives through improved literacy. [The Dyslexia Resource](https://www.carneysandoe.com/dyslexia-resource), a nonprofit organization founded by the Schenck School Board of Trustees in 2014, is a community resource that helps students overcome reading deficiencies through research, partnerships, education, and outreach programs. The Dyslexia Resource offers Orton-Gillingham training programs for parents, individuals, and educators.



Recent accomplishments of The Dyslexia Resource include a partnership with Purpose Built Schools Atlanta (PBSA). PBSA works with Atlanta Public Schools to transform a network of schools in south Atlanta into successful, sustainable, neighborhood schools. The Dyslexia Resource provides expertly trained remediation specialists who work with 300 struggling readers twice a week on two of their elementary school campuses. In addition, over the last three years, The Dyslexia Resource has trained the vast majority of Atlanta Public School elementary school teachers in the OG Approach in addition to other local and regional municipalities and independent schools.

In 2018 The Schenck School and The Dyslexia Resource were selected by [Made By Dyslexia](#) to provide content experts for digital resources intended to reach dyslexic students, their parents, and educators around the world. Made by Dyslexia, a global nonprofit supported by Sir Richard Branson, partnered with technology giant Microsoft to create a series of videos and training aids informing audiences about dyslexia. To date, over 300,000 users from around the globe have completed the training.

S.H.I.N.E. (Schenck Helping Individuals in Need Excel) provides one-on-one tutoring at no charge to metro children ages five through 15 who have documented reading difficulties and demonstrated financial need. The goal is to develop strong readers through effective intensive tutoring. All tutors in this program are Schenck School volunteers.

Launched in 1999 by school founder David Schenck, the Adult Dyslexia Program utilizes phonics-based and multi-sensory instruction for adults who have difficulty reading, writing, and spelling. The program helps adults overcome these difficulties and reach their full potential.



ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Atlanta—the capital of Georgia and its most populous city with just over 500,000 residents (5.8 million in the metro area)—is a beloved gem of the Southeast and has been one of the fastest-growing cities in the country. In recent decades, the city has attracted business from both domestic and international corporations, hosted the Summer Olympics, greatly expanded its civic and cultural venues and activities, and is home to the nation’s busiest airport. As a major business center, Atlanta has the country’s third-largest concentration of Fortune 500 companies. Delta Air Lines is the city’s largest employer and operates one of the world’s largest airline hubs. Media powerhouses based in Atlanta include Turner Broadcasting Company, which began in the city, and CNN. Cox Communications is the nation’s third-largest cable service provider and publishes over a dozen newspapers, including The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. The city is a healthcare hub with Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta and Emory Healthcare, the largest hospital system in the area. Atlanta is also home to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), as well as Coca-Cola, UPS, and Home Depot.

With more than 30 colleges and universities located in the city, Atlanta is a center for higher education. Georgia Institute of Technology, Emory University, and Georgia State University are some of the city’s most prominent institutions. Atlanta also has the largest consortium of historically black colleges, comprised of Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and the Interdenominational Theological Center.



Atlanta's cultural offerings are rich. Highlights include the High Museum of Art, Atlanta History Center, The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, the Fernbank Museum of Natural History, and The Center for Civil and Human Rights. The Carter Center was founded by Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter to advance human rights worldwide and alleviate human suffering. Atlanta's classical music scene includes the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Opera, and Atlanta Ballet. Parks—like Piedmont Park in Midtown, Downtown's Centennial Olympic Park, and the Beltline that surrounds the city—are prevalent throughout Atlanta, and it is common to see people taking advantage of these urban oases with a game of Frisbee or a family picnic. The parks also provide the perfect locations for Atlanta's numerous festivals that bring people out in droves.

Atlanta residents are also avid sports fans, flocking to Truist Park to cheer on the MLB's Braves, to State Farm Arena to support the NBA's Hawks or to Mercedes-Benz Stadium to root for the NFL's Falcons or the MLS' Atlanta United. Meanwhile, families have access to a number of attractions including the Georgia Aquarium, World of Coca-Cola and the Chick-Fil-A College Football Hall of Fame.

OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The Schenck School looks forward to an exciting future, where there are significant opportunities awaiting the next Head of School. The Schenck School's reputation as one of the premier schools for students with dyslexia is well earned due to the strength of the program, the talented faculty and staff, and the dedication of a high-functioning board of trustees. The next Head of School has the opportunity to build upon this strong foundation and mission-driven community.



Specifically, the new Head will have the opportunity to:

- Bring a caring, thoughtful, collaborative, communicative, enthusiastic, and strategic mindset, while fostering a balanced sense of mission to enrich and further define The School and The Dyslexia Resource.
- Build on the Schenck School's growth and momentum to further strengthen the School's strong and unique position as one of the nation's premier schools for children with dyslexia. Cherished for its dedication to the Orton-Gillingham Approach, comprehensive language retraining program, and committed faculty and staff, the school is poised to enter the next exciting chapter.
- Bring a high level of support to a gifted and dedicated faculty and staff.
- Drive growth initiatives and innovation outside of the classroom for students with dyslexia as a strategic leader of The Dyslexia Resource.
- Lead fundraising initiatives for the School and The Dyslexia Resource.
- Work closely with a committed, engaged, and mission-centered Board of Trustees to ensure the School's continued growth and prosperity.

DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The next Head of School will have the privilege of leading an outstanding educational institution and partnering with a highly dedicated and talented faculty and staff. The community is eager to appoint a Head of School who enjoys working with children, who relishes the opportunity to lead a school, and who can execute the vision.

The next Head of School will:

- Value being part of a kindergarten through sixth grade community and be a vibrant, approachable, compassionate, empathetic, joyful, and visible presence in the School's life.
- Be a visionary and strategic thinker who will encourage innovation and creativity in programs and pedagogy and help carefully chart a plan for the School's future.
- Demonstrate an ability to connect and communicate authentically and skillfully with faculty, administration, parents, students, alumni, community members, and trustees.
- Understand important trends in education for dyslexic students and combine that understanding with an appreciation for the School's history, traditions, values, culture, and aspirations to communicate a mission-centered, compelling vision for the School.
- Be a team builder and attract, develop, and retain an outstanding faculty and staff.
- Be a careful listener and exhibit genuine empathy, compassion, and humility.
- Have a consistent track record of successful educational leadership, knowledge of Orton-Gillingham Approach, and an appreciation of learning differences in children.
- Enjoy collaborating with a mission-centered and highly dedicated Board of Trustees.

TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing interest in this leadership position;
- A current résumé;
- A statement of leadership philosophy and practice;
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

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