



January 13, 2020

Dear Members of The Little School Community,

We are delighted to announce that after an extensive, nationwide search that brought over a dozen qualified applicants to The Little School for consideration, Kaile Thomas has been selected as the next Executive Director of The Little School. Following a unanimous recommendation from the Search Committee, the Board of Trustees enthusiastically and unanimously approved Kaile's appointment. We look forward to welcoming Kaile when she assumes her new role on May 1, 2020. There will be a six-week overlap between Kaile and our current Interim Executive Director, Molly Huffman, to support a seamless transition.

The Search Committee's objectives were guided by The Little School's stated philosophy, the essence of which is as follows: *The Little School is a pre-school sustained by the values of excellent Early Childhood Education (ECE), Diversity, and Inclusion. The tripod of these values has its underpinning in a relationship-based approach that is anchored on intense and extreme empathy.*

Accordingly, the Search Committee sought to identify a leader with a deep understanding of and experience with the three pillars that define our program (Quality ECE, Diversity, and Inclusion). The job of any preschool director, especially one at a school with such an ambitious mission, requires an extensive array of skills. The Search Committee bracketed the various skills and characteristics in the shorthand of "Head" and "Heart". The Little School's ED is responsible for managing the administrative office, running admissions to the school and exmissions into kindergarten, fundraising, promoting staff professional development, and upholding and furthering the school's vision (the Head). The ED must also embody the ethos of the school in their communication style, approach to teaching and learning, and disposition to listen deeply (the Heart). We believe that Kaile Thomas is that very special person who embodies both the Head and the Heart of The Little School.

Kaile brings an incredible depth of training in theoretical areas that relate to The Little School's current program, in addition to bringing expertise in areas that will support the growth and increased quality of its delivery. She holds a BA in Child & Adolescent Development and an MA in Early Childhood Education from San Francisco State University. Kaile has also completed a fellowship in Infant-Parent Mental Health from the University of California, Davis. Her continued dedication to the field is demonstrated through a variety of certifications, from Family & Child support, Trauma and Neurobiology in Children, among others. We are excited to see how Kaile's knowledge and training will support and inspire our teachers' continued growth and development.

Increasing and strengthening diversity at The Little School is a school priority. Kaile brings knowledge of the agencies and organizations that can expand our reach into a more diverse demographic. Her work at Safe and Sound, Felton Institute, and board seats at Early Educators of SF and Families of Children with Disabilities not only inform her understanding of the landscape but has also provided first-hand experience in the public realm where ECE research happens, a key to maintaining the cutting edge quality of our program.

The combination of Kaile's in-depth practical and theoretical underpinning in The Little School's three pillars, experience creating onboarding and professional development programs for

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educators and staff, and background delivering parent training programs, will ensure that the work of The Little School will be supported responsibly and with high degrees of professionalism.

One of our founding teachers expressed it best:

“[Kaile] is so grounded in, and focused on Early Childhood Development, with a strong academic background. She has so much expertise to add to The Little School. She would ensure we continue to sustain the depth and quality of teaching children and supporting families! She is someone I could learn from.”

Born and raised in San Francisco and having attended Live Oak School and Lowell High School, Kaile is familiar with the San Francisco independent and public school landscape. Her passionate advocacy for children and families and relational approach will enable her to support the right match involved in the kindergarten process.

Kaile has held a variety of leadership roles. She was promoted from within to Assistant Director at Laurel Hill School, where she started as a teacher while concurrently obtaining her BA and MA degrees from San Francisco State. At Safe and Sound, she started as Community Education Manager and was hired back as Director of Network Training. Kaile was the Director of Education at Felton Institute, supervising four ECE programs providing services to 350 children. Described by her colleagues and ECE professors as a highly organized leader with strong written and oral communication skills, possessing a reflective communication style led by empathy, a sequenced problem solver, a dependable and supportive colleague and supervisor, possessing a strong work ethic and high integrity - all attributes that we seek in our next leader.

Kaile is enthusiastic about and committed to overseeing the continued success of The Little School. In her acceptance letter, she shared the following: "I am thrilled to be stepping into the role of Executive Director and joining such a wonderful and vibrant community. Since my early days as a teacher, The Little School has been a source of inspiration and admiration. I am moved by the dedicated staff and families and deeply value and embody The Little School pillars in my work and life. It is truly an honor to step into this leadership role, and I can't wait to meet each of you and begin our work together."

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the search process. Your time and thoughtfulness through feedback was an important contribution. We would like to acknowledge the incredible investment of time and energy that each member of the Search Committee brought to this process - thank you. Finally, we want to recognize our incredible good fortune in working with search consultant Janet McGarvey to conduct this extensive process. Janet's work began last December when she led the search for an Interim ED.

Please join us in welcoming Kaile, her partner, Adaya, and ten-month old son, Akhiel, to our Little School community!

With a lot of excitement and deep gratitude for your support throughout this process,

Adriana Lopez Vermut
Chair, Search Committee

Julie Meyer
Chair, Board of Trustees

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Search Committee Members:

Omar Alam
Abby Anderson
Sarah Blake
Brittany Cunningham
Sarita Escobar

Rachel Garlin
Julie Meyer
Cathryn Schember
Lisa Treadway
Adriana Lopez Vermut, Chair Search
Committee