

Bluestem Hall Nature School

Governance Structure

2023 | 2024

Employees

Abbie Frank, Founder and Executive Director oversees all Organization Operations.

Morgan Duerksen, Director and Lead Teacher oversees the developing of the curriculum and all teaching practices, mentors teaching staff, and serves as Lead Teacher.

Lauren Lee, Assistant Teacher

Sue Anderson, Substitute Director of Education, Substitute Lead Teacher, Operational Support

Karen Thimke, Substitute Assistant Teacher

Maddie Seper, Teacher Candidate (Student Teacher)

Job Descriptions

Bluestem Hall Nature School

Executive Director

School mission: Bluestem Hall Nature School fosters rich learning, place-based literacy, and a deep and lifelong sense of belonging to the natural world through slowness and freedom. In modeling healthy relationships that establish trust of self, trust of others, kindness, empowerment, and body autonomy, our students will have the support to be their authentic selves.

Position: The Executive Director is in charge of overseeing a business's strategic vision and leading business decisions to drive company growth. Their duties include collaborating with a company's leadership team, implementing strategic plans for the company's development and managing relationships with donors. The Executive Director will serve as the supervisor and close collaborator of the Director of Education as well as all teaching staff.

Responsibilities:

- Showcase an authentic drive to create a physically and emotionally safe learning environment for children.
- Collaborate with the board of Directors to identify, create, and implement strategic plans to actualize business objectives.
- Identify, recruit, train and develop a talented team of employees who can lead critical departments and manage strategic business functions.
- Monitor organization operations and ensure employees and business practices comply with regulatory and legal requirements.
- Develop the organizational culture and promote transparency and collaboration throughout.
- Hold private meetings, network, and develop partnerships with organization donors.
- Identify potential risks and opportunities within the organization and its environment to protect business interests.
- Identify potential sources of revenue and organize fundraising efforts.
- Represent the company at social and corporate events in ways that strengthen the brand and communicate the organization's message.

- Take pride in your position as an advocate of community outreach and play a role in school events such as fundraisers, donor meetings, festivals, and celebrations both public or private.
- Oversee and mentor the Director of Education and all teaching staff.
- Develop relationships with prospective and enrolled families
- Work with Director of Education to complete the admissions process which may include but not limited to open house for interested families, private tours, admissions meetings to meet potential families and students, one on one meeting with students, admitted student play dates, and admitted student home visits.
- Acknowledge and respect diversity and promote inclusion of all people regardless of ethnic, cultural, linguistic backgrounds, gender identity, sexual orientation, and physical and mental disabilities.

Qualifications: The ideal candidate must possess a strong entrepreneurial drive, outstanding communication skills, strong leadership qualities, and good planning and organizational skills. The Executive Director of Bluestem Hall Nature School must showcase a sincere kinship to the philosophies and guiding principles of the organization.

- Bachelor's Degree is required
- Master's Degree is preferred
- Prior business ownership and leadership experience is required
- Understanding of finance-related performance standards
- Proven ability to develop and execute operational strategies
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Demonstrated knowledge of Nonprofit best practices
- Organization and leadership skills
- Strategic thinking and conceptual long term planning
- An understanding of the ecology, geology, botany, and zoology of our native midwestern prairie landscape or a willingness to learn is preferred.
- An understanding of our regional history is preferred.
- Prior CPR and first aid certifications, or willingness to obtain.

The Executive Director exemplifies a genuine interest in the wellbeing of children. Working with a small, tight-knit team of both colleagues and supporting staff will be crucial. Cultivating parent relationships and representing the school and nonprofit organization well through written and verbally communication will be required. The best candidate must show leadership to work independently and effectively guide the organization while maintaining the flexibility to work as a cohesive team in our small nonprofit organization.

Job Type: Full time, year round position

Start Date: 7/1/21

Contact Person: Sue Talbott and Nina Carmichael Email: school@bluestemhall.com

Address: 1401 E Old Church Road Urbana, Illinois 61802

Director of Education / Lead teacher

School mission: Bluestem Hall Nature School fosters rich learning, place-based literacy, and a deep and lifelong sense of belonging to the natural world through slowness and freedom. In modeling healthy relationships that establish trust of self, trust of others, kindness, empowerment, and body autonomy, our students will have the support to be their authentic selves. Please refer to our philosophy + guiding

principles pages on our website to learn more about what drives our school!

www.bluestemhall.com/home

Position: The Director of Education will be a highly qualified and driven educator ready to fill a position of leadership, guide the education of children 3 - 5 as a lead teacher, and develop curriculum and teaching practices for the school. This position is 35 hours a week with roughly 25 hours a week teaching and 10 hours a week for administrative tasks to maintain position as a Director. A typical day for this position will include teaching at outdoor field stations on a 120-acre state protected prairie preserve as well as indoor classrooms in a restored 1963 machine shed. All staff must be prepared to spend the majority of the teaching day outside in a variety of seasons and weather conditions. The Executive Director will serve as the supervisor and close collaborator of the Director of Education.

Responsibilities

- Showcase an authentic drive to create a physically and emotionally safe learning environment for children.
- As Lead Teacher: lead the early education of preschool and kindergarten mixed age students with both emergent and planned curricula, recognize and follow child-led interests, and lesson plan with play-based philosophies in mind.
- As Director of Education: pioneer our school's curriculum with progressive philosophies in mind, oversee all education practices, and lead/mentor the growth of supporting teachers, parent volunteers, and student teachers.
- Maintain a thorough understanding of the native species (plant, mammal, bird, insect) present in the Barnhart Prairie Preserve, as well as a basic understanding of regional forest, river, and lake flora and fauna.
- Demonstrate the ability to establish healthy relationships with enrolled families including easy and clear communication in person, via email, and phone appointments. Understand the goal is to celebrate the small community and closeness our school has with all families but from a place of professional boundaries and good decision making.
- Schedule and lead any additional family conferences required to meet the social/emotional/physical/cognitive needs of all students.
- Establish individual relationships with all students to ensure you can recognize their unique form of learning and can foster custom opportunities for growth.
- Take initiative to research, read books/articles, take seminars/training in the Nature-Based Education industry
- Take pride in your position as an advocate of community outreach and play a role in school events such as fundraisers, donor meetings, festivals, and celebrations both public or private.
- Work with Executive Director to complete the admissions process which may include but not limited to: open house for interested families, private tours, admissions meetings to meet potential families and students, one on one meeting with students, admitted student play dates, and admitted student home visits.
- Acknowledge and respect diversity and promote inclusion of all people regardless of ethnic, cultural, linguistic backgrounds, gender identity, sexual orientation, and physical and mental disabilities.

Qualifications:

Bluestem Hall Nature School will be under the permit/licensure of DCFS as a Daycare Center and all staff must fulfill licensed position requirements. Because this is a dual position for Director of Education and Lead Teacher, the terms of both requirements with DCFS will have to be met.

- An Associate's Degree in Early Childhood or Elementary Education (0-6) is required, a Bachelor's Degree is preferred.
- A prior business course in administration, leadership, or management, or willingness to obtain by late summer 2021.
- At least two years' experience working in an early childhood education setting such as a school, preschool, or daycare is required.
- A familiarity with Illinois Early Childhood Standards
- Must have the knowledge of principles and techniques in early childhood education and the ability to implement this knowledge through developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Experience working in Environmental Education is preferred.
- An understanding of the ecology, geology, botany, and zoology of our native midwestern prairie landscape or a willingness to learn is required.
- An understanding of our regional history is preferred.
- Prior CPR and first aid certifications, or willingness to obtain.
- Ability to sit, stand, crawl, lift children, hold children, and walk on uneven terrain will be essential. Reasonable accommodations for these physical requirements can be made to enable the right candidate.

The Director of Education / Lead Teacher exemplifies a genuine interest in the wellbeing of children. The ability to listen, engage, teach, and communicate with children of all ages and developmental levels and with the adults in their lives is necessary. Working with a small, tight-knit team of both supervisors and supporting staff will be crucial. Cultivating parent relationships and representing our program well through written and verbally communication will be required as this is the first/pilot year of our program! The best candidate must show leadership to work independently and effectively guide your own students while always maintaining the flexibility to work as a cohesive team in our small nonprofit organization.

Job Type: 7 hours a day, 35 hours a week, 36 weeks a year

Contact Person: Abbie Frank, Executive Director

Email: school@bluestemhall.com

Address: 1401 E Old Church Road Urbana, Illinois 61802

Non-Discrimination Statement:

Bluestem Hall Nature School will not base assignment and promotion decisions on stereotypes and assumptions about a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information. Bluestem Hall Nature School is committed to being a site of equal opportunity for employment and education.

Assistant Teacher

Position: An Assistant Teacher will be an engaged, driven, and warm presence in the classroom helping guide the education of children 3 – 5. Helping facilitate custom teaching practices for the school, this position will work closely with our Director of Education and Lead Teacher. This position may be 2-5 days a week, in the classroom 830-130 and helping with administrative and facilities after school on requested days 130-230. A typical day for this position will include assistant teaching at outdoor field stations on a 120-acre state protected prairie preserve as well as indoor classrooms in a restored 1963 machine shed. All staff must be prepared to spend the majority of the teaching day outside in a variety of seasons and weather conditions.

Responsibilities:

- Showcase an authentic drive to create a physically and emotionally safe learning environment for children.
- Assistant in the early education of preschool and kindergarten mixed age students with both emergent and planned curricula, recognize and follow child-led interests, and lesson plan with play-based philosophies in mind.
- Maintain (or develop) a thorough understanding of the native species (plant, mammal, bird, insect) present in the Barnhart Prairie Preserve, as well as a basic understanding of regional forest, river, and lake flora and fauna.
- Demonstrate the ability to establish healthy relationships with enrolled families including easy and clear communication in person. Understand the goal is to celebrate the small community and closeness our school has with all families but from a place of professional boundaries and good decision making.
- Attend (as scheduled and requested by the Lead Teacher) any additional family conferences required to meet the social/emotional/physical/cognitive needs of all students.
- Establish individual relationships with all students to ensure you can recognize their unique form of learning and can foster custom opportunities for growth.
- Willingness to develop a sincere understanding of the Bluestem Hall Nature School Philosophies and Guiding Principles in order to fulfill our education goals.
- Assistant Teachers shall work under the direct supervision of the Lead Teacher and shall not assume full responsibility for a group of children except for no more than one hour while the children are on their cots.
- Show initiative in the maintenance of the indoor and outdoor classrooms
- The end of the work day will include assistance in requested cleaning duties to help restore all used spaces (classroom, library, hallways and transition spaces, bathrooms, kitchen, dressing cubbies and benches, porch, playground, field stations, entry way, chalkboard, sidewalks etc) to the condition they were in before school may include but not be limited to: sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, surface cleaning and sanitization, arranging toys and objects, dusting, and general upkeep to maintain a presentable and clean school environment.
- Acknowledge and respect diversity and promote inclusion of all people regardless of ethnic, cultural, linguistic backgrounds, gender identity, sexual orientation, and physical and mental

disabilities.

Qualifications:

Bluestem Hall Nature School will be under the permit/licensure of DCFS as a Daycare Center and all staff must fulfill licensed position requirements.

- A degree in Early Childhood or Elementary Education is preferred, but not required
- Experience working in an early childhood education setting such as a school, preschool, or daycare is preferred.
- Must have the knowledge of principles and techniques in early childhood education, or the sincere willingness to learn, and the ability to implement this knowledge through developmentally appropriate teaching.
- Experience working in Environmental Education is preferred.
- An understanding of the ecology, geology, botany, and zoology of our native midwestern prairie landscape or a willingness to learn is required.
- Prior CPR and first aid certifications, or willingness to obtain.
- Ability to sit, stand, crawl, lift children, hold children, and walk on uneven terrain will be essential. Reasonable accommodations for these physical requirements can be made to enable the right candidate.
- Complete all DCFS required paperwork, including trainings, registrations, background check, health + personal documentation etc. in a timely manner before your first day.

The Assistant Teacher exemplifies a genuine interest in the wellbeing of children. The ability to listen, engage, teach, and communicate with children of all ages and developmental levels and with the adults in their lives is necessary. Working with a small, tight-knit team of both supervisors and supporting staff will be crucial; this position will be under the supervision of the Director of Education and Lead Teacher. Cultivating parent relationships and representing our program well through verbal communication will be required. The best candidate must be able to showcase the flexibility to work as a cohesive team in our small nonprofit organization.

Job Type: 5 - 6 hours a day, 830 – 130/230

2 – 5 days a week through early June 2023 with the hope to rejoin for our Fall 2023 school year

* Number of days per week depends on applicant and current staff scheduling needs

Salary Range: \$15/hour

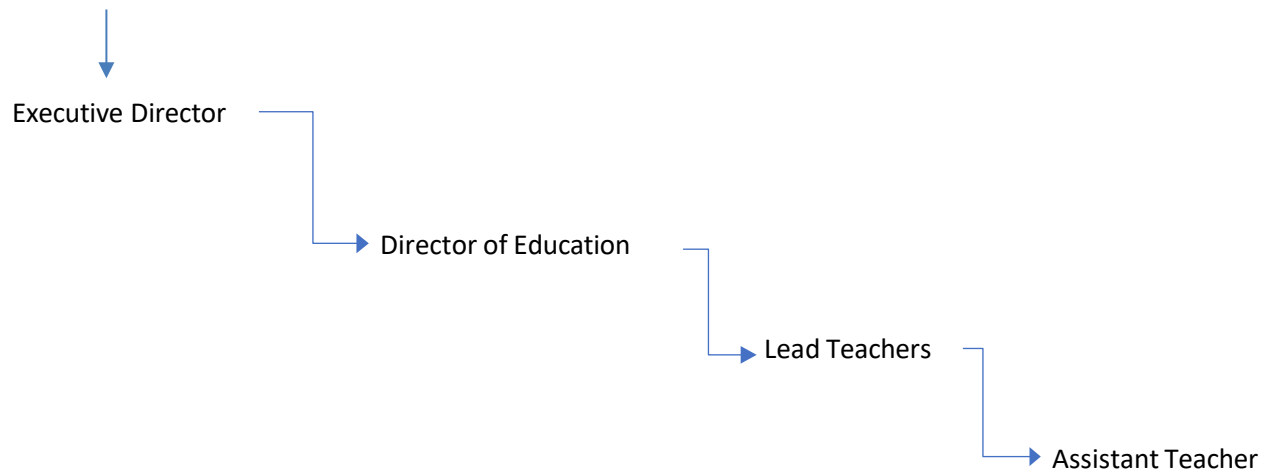
Contact Person: Abbie Frank, Executive Director

Email: school@bluestemhall.com

Address: 1401 E Old Church Road Urbana, Illinois 61802

Delegation of Authority

Bluestem Hall Nature School Board of Directors



Delegation of Authority

The Executive Director and Director of Education are all in leadership positions meaning they will be managing some aspects of their positions without immediate supervision. The Executive Director oversees the operation of the entire organization including the job performance of the Director of Education and all teaching staff.

The Director of Education will be responsible for the mentoring, training, and overseeing of all teaching staff, tracking hourly employee timesheets, and arranging teaching staff schedules with assistance from the Executive Director.

Staffing Schedule

Executive Director

tbd

Year Round

Director of Education

Full Time, 730-330

Monday – Friday

School Year

Assistant Teacher

5-6 hours a day, 830-130

Monday – Friday

School Year

After hours and weekend work will occasionally be required by all with advance notice.

Policy Making

Anyone in the organization, staff or directors may request that an issue is added to the next available board meeting agenda for consideration. If staff would like to add to the agenda, they may request this from the Executive Director who need to approve the agenda item. If Directors would like to add the agenda item they may request this from either the Board President or Board Secretary. Once on the agenda, the item will undergo formal review from the board. A vote will take place and the policy will be approved or denied.

The Executive Director also has the authority to create, update, and eliminate policies based on the needs of the organization, staff, and licensing agent. Examples: The Health Policy and Parent Handbooks