Biography

Image Credit: NASA

Ms. Laurie Grindle

Director, Aeronautics Division
NASA's Research and Technology Mission Directorate

Laurie A. Grindle serves as director of the Aeronautics Division within the Research and Technology Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters in Washington. She manages the agency's aeronautics research portfolio and guides its strategic direction to deliver breakthroughs that ensure American leadership in aerospace.

Prior to her current appointment, Grindle was deputy center director at NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center in Edwards, California. Appointed to the position in March 2023, she assisted the center director in the management of the NASA field center, focusing on strategy, business processes, and institutional management.

In December 2020, Grindle was named director for Programs and Projects at Armstrong, responsible for the advocacy, formulation, and implementation of the center's flight projects as well as policy and business management of the center's programs. She served as the deputy director for Programs and Projects from February 2017 until becoming acting director in April 2020.

Grindle began her career with NASA Armstrong during a 1992 internship in the center's Aerodynamics Branch, which she followed up in 1993 with a full-time position in the same branch. Grindle served as a principal investigator on the Advanced L-Probe Air Data Integration experiment flown on the F/A-18 Systems Research Aircraft, on which air pressure was used to determine angles of attack and sideslip and traditional air-data measurements. Grindle was an aerospace researcher on the F-16XL Ship 2 Supersonic Laminar Flow Control project and was involved in analysis of space shuttle maneuvers that resulted in expansion of the shuttle's aeronautical database.

Grindle became chief engineer for the X-43A Hypersonic Research Vehicle project in 2004 after serving as the X-43A deputy chief engineer starting in 2001. The X-43A was a 12-foot-long, autonomous aircraft that, when flying at test conditions, demonstrated an "air-breathing" engine called a scramjet. In 2005, Grindle became chief engineer of the Dryden Unmanned Air Vehicle Business Unit. While in that role, she monitored technical aspects of NASA uncrewed vehicle projects, including X-48B Blended Wing Body low-speed vehicle and Global Hawk projects, to ensure that objectives were met. From 2007 to 2011, Grindle was the NASA project manager for the Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle abort test booster project, during which she was responsible for management of NASA's interests in the project.

From 2011 to 2013, Grindle was the associate mission director for Aeronautics at NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center, later renamed Armstrong. She assisted the

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aeronautics mission director in the management and technical direction of the center's aeronautics activities to ensure effective and timely support of manned and unmanned flight research programs.

Prior to serving as deputy director for programs, Grindle was the project manager for the NASA Unmanned Aircraft System Integration in the National Airspace System project from 2013 to 2017. She was responsible for the execution of the $290 million project designed to conduct technology development to reduce technical barriers related to the safety and operational challenges associated with enabling routine Unmanned Aircraft System access to the National Airspace System.

Grindle earned Bachelor of Science degrees in aeronautical and mechanical engineering in 1993 from the University of California, Davis. She earned an Engineer-in-Training license in 1994. She received a Master of Science in mechanical engineering in 1998 from California State University, Fresno.

Grindle is the recipient of a 2026 NASA Administrator Experiential Award, a 2023 Emerging Technologies Award from the Women and Drones Hall, a 2018 NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, a 2013 NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal, and a 2005 NASA Exceptional Service Medal, among others. Also in 2013, Grindle was selected as a Women@NASA honoree.