

Head of School, The Common School
The Common School

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Downloaded On: Dec. 9, 2023 11:25pm

Posted Sep. 18, 2023, set to expire Jan. 17, 2024

Job Title Head of School, The Common School
Department Administration, Head of School
Institution The Common School
Amherst, Massachusetts

Date Posted Sep. 18, 2023

Application Deadline Open until filled

Position Start Date Available immediately

Job Categories Senior Executive Officer

Academic Field(s) Elementary Education
Education - General

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Job Description

Overview

[The Common School Amherst - Nursery Primary & Elementary](#)

Organization

[The Common School](#)'s mission is to engage students in a transformative, progressive education that cultivates a love of learning, critical thinking, compassion for others, and a deep commitment to social

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justice and the environment.

A progressive, independent elementary school for children ages 3 to 12, The Common School is known for its emphasis on social justice and creating globally aware citizens. Through its focus on social-emotional development, an encouragement of creative thinking, and experiential learning, The Common School instills a love of learning in children.

From its inception, the School has been dedicated to and motivated by a deep commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice, in its philosophy, professional development of staff, and in practice. Through in-depth studies, open discussion, and the introduction of guest speakers and place-based field experiences, these values are embedded in The Common School's mission and in its curriculum.

The Common School creates a safe and stimulating environment that encourages children to trust in themselves and others. They learn to honor differences, question, take risks, collaborate, assume responsibility, and discover individual areas of strength and interest. Classes are taught by teams of teachers who are guided by the philosophy that meaningful education must cultivate the imagination and instill an appreciation for learning as an engaging, joyful pursuit. The Common School's faculty members are committed to authenticity in the activities that shape children's learning.

Currently, The Common School employs 22 faculty members and 11 staff, serves 108 students, and has an operating budget of approximately \$2.4 million. A 13-member Board of Trustees includes current caregivers, alumni of The Common School, parents of alumni, and faculty members. The Board is intentionally diverse with regard to background, education, race, age, gender, and sexual orientation.

The Common School's families come from Amherst and more than a dozen communities across the Connecticut River Valley. Children of color represent about 46% of the student body.

The Common School is located in Amherst, in the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts, a culturally and educationally rich area, home to the Five Colleges and in close proximity to numerous museums; music, theater, and dance venues; and a range of sports, camping, and outdoor recreation sites.

Administrators, staff, and faculty at The Common School have forged fruitful, supportive relationships with the University of Massachusetts, local colleges, community leaders, the business community, and the area's nonprofit organizations. For students, meaningful connections with the local Survival Center have helped underscore The Common School's focus on social justice. The Common School has also partnered with Embrace Race to pilot lessons in P1, E1, and E2 based on Embrace Race Curriculum, Drawing Differences.

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The Common School's students are grouped in 6 mixed-age classes:

- Two Nurseries (age 3-5)
- Primary 1 (age 5-7)
- Primary 2 (age 6-8)
- Elementary 1 (age 8-10)
- Elementary 2 (age 10-12)

Students typically spend two years with the same team teachers in a class of 18 to 22 students.

An afterschool program and a summer program offer expanded learning and play opportunities for students and for the wider community.

Responsibilities

The Opportunity

This is a unique opportunity for a seasoned educator to lead a highly respected, much-loved independent school as it secures its position for the years ahead. The Common School is poised for a new leader to innovatively build upon its many assets to ensure its continued sustainability. The next Head of School will enjoy a culture with a strong sense of community and belonging among students, caregivers, alumni, faculty, and staff. They will pursue The Common School's priorities and goals with the strong support of a skilled, engaged board and a dedicated faculty and staff. The next Head of School will lead the Board of Trustees in envisioning The Common School's future, while continuing its traditions as it approaches its 60th year.

A recently conducted sustainability report identified three major priorities that the Head of School will pursue over the next three years:

- Diversify Revenue Streams to Create a Model for Financial Sustainability and Resilience
- Enhance and Expand The Common School's Visibility
- Employ Data Tracking to Support Focused Growth Initiatives

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Qualifications

The Ideal Candidate

The Common School seeks someone with well-developed leadership skills, a passion for education, a commitment to its deeply held values, and a background of relevant accomplishments. Classroom teaching experience is especially relevant to this position.

The position of Head of School embraces a multitude of responsibilities, and the successful candidate will have the requisite skills and experience to manage these simultaneously.

The ideal candidate will have excellent communication and relationship-building skills; proficiency in staff, faculty, operations, and finance management; the ability to understand and utilize data-driven decision-making strategies; experience working on or with a board; familiarity with fundraising and revenue generation; and skills in implementing a strategic plan.

Education and Leadership Experience

A bachelor's degree is required and a masters' degree in a related field is preferred. Five or more years of increasing leadership responsibility is preferred, ideally in an educational environment or a nonprofit organization with an educational mission. The ideal candidate will have classroom teaching and/or curriculum development experience.

Commitment to Social Justice Values; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

The new Head of School will demonstrate a strong understanding of and commitment to issues of social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, which are fundamental to The Common School's philosophy. The new Head of School will need to demonstrate a firm commitment to anti-racist practices which are critical in working with The Common School community.

Facility in Managing a Skilled Faculty and Staff

The next Head of School will be skilled at motivating and leading a complement of talented educators and staff, will value their work, and will respect their contributions at all levels.

Excellent Communication Skills

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The Common School's new leader will be a thoughtful and respectful listener, comfortable with the expression of diverse opinions. They will have skills in written and oral communications, public presentations, and community engagement.

Board Experience

The Common School seeks a new leader with experience working effectively in partnership with a board of directors or a board of trustees and its committees.

Strategic Thinking and Planning

The ideal candidate will be a strategic thinker, able to define, articulate and implement a compelling vision for The Common School's future, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees and faculty.

Resource Management

The ideal candidate will have knowledge of financial and operational management in a private educational institution, nonprofit agency, or program, and will be equipped to maintain sound financial practices.

Fundraising and Revenue Generation

The ideal candidate will be comfortable cultivating new donors and retaining established donors. They will be able to cultivate and maintain positive relationships with partners and funders.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

The next Head of School will bring an understanding of data-driven decision-making strategies to support the growth, development and sustainability of The Common School.

Submission of Candidacy

Transition Consultant Mimi Brunelle with TSNE has been exclusively retained for this search. Online applications are preferred.

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This is a full-time year-round position. Salary is commensurate with relevant experience, within the framework of The Common School's annual operating budget, and in the approximate range of \$100,000-120,000. The Common School offers a generous benefits package including health insurance, professional development, tuition remission, and a retirement plan with an employer contribution.

Candidates who do not meet all of the aforementioned qualifications but think they would be a great match for this opportunity are encouraged to apply, including first-generation educators or those with non-traditional paths into education.

Candidates should please include a resume and a cover letter that describes how their qualifications and experience match the needs of The Common School along with salary requirements, how they learned of the position and any other relevant information. All applications will be acknowledged. Applications will be accepted until the position has been filled, with priority given to those received by November 3, 2023.

The Common School does not discriminate against any qualified individuals on the basis of race, color, gender, gender identity and/or expression, age, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic origin, physical abilities, military or veteran status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state or local law in the administration of its admissions policies, employment practices, educational programs, financial aid, or other School administered programs.

The Common School is an equal-opportunity employer and actively seeks a diverse pool of candidates. People of color, particularly Black and Indigenous people, women, transgender, and non-binary people are encouraged to apply.

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Contact Information

Please reference Academickeys in your cover letter when applying for or inquiring about this job announcement.



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Contact Mimi Brunelle
Administration, Head of School
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