

Position Statement
Head of School Search
George School

Newtown, Pennsylvania

Start Date: July 1, 2024



With Quaker tradition as its touchstone and academic excellence at its core, George School seeks to develop citizen scholars cheerfully committed to openness in the pursuit of truth, to service and peace, and to the faithful stewardship of the earth. We want our students to treasure learning for its own sake and to use it to benefit a diverse world. Above all, we want them to “let their lives speak.”

OVERVIEW

George School, a 130-year-old boarding and day school in grades 9-12, is grounded in Quaker values. Those testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equity, and stewardship resonate as loudly today as they did in 1893, when George School was founded. Students, faculty, and staff engage in rigorous academic inquiry while building relationships with each other informed by the Quaker tenet of listening deeply to each person. The shared purpose of continuing revelation permeates every classroom discussion, each Meeting for Worship, and myriad co-curricular activities. The community encourages students to become themselves with kindness and conviction, working toward the Quaker ideal of a caring and just society.



“Students learn about the tension between individual and community, that fairness and justice are inherently tied to each other. They learn to express themselves without trampling others, asking for what they need rather than demanding what they want.”

George School is well positioned to welcome its next leader. A global school with local roots, George School is located on a picturesque 240-acre campus of open lawns and beautiful woods with impressive facilities. The school honors a diversity of identities, styles, languages, and backgrounds. Boarding students come from twenty states and forty-four countries; forty percent of George School students identify as students of color. With a \$220 million endowment, George School awards students \$12 million in financial aid; nearly fifty percent of the students receive financial assistance. The school cultivates a global mindset, while the campus ethos is down-to-earth and gracious.

The new Head of School will have profound opportunities for leadership. The school’s culture will require deep respect for listening and forthright, open collaboration. The Head of School should be present in the daily life of the school, walking with each member of the community while also employing long-arc strategic thinking. Comprehension of the fundamental principles of Quaker decision-making are as vital as clarity in communication and decision-making.

“We press [George School students] to look deep inside, to find and clarify their authentic selves, to blossom intellectually, personally, and spiritually.”



HISTORY

George School is named for John M. George, a farmer who willed the bulk of his estate to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends in 1887, putting action to his dream of creating a Quaker boarding school. George School opened its doors in 1893.

Gratitude for that dream and for the school animates the alumni. In 1993, George School paid tribute to John George by establishing the John M. George Society, which honors individuals who provide for the school in their wills or estate plans. Within five years of its establishment, it had more than three hundred members. In 2007, George School was astonished and delighted when Barbara Dodd Anderson '50 announced her intention to create a charitable lead trust, providing the school with \$128.5 million by 2027. It is the largest single gift to an independent school in the United States. With the benefit of her historic gift, George School has continued ambitious building projects including the Mollie Dodd Anderson Library and the Fitness and Athletics Center while maintaining its long and generous commitment to socio-economic diversity.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

At George School, teachers and students challenge each other to think deeply, process facts, and consider diverse perspectives. Dedicated educators rely on Quaker values as the foundation for all aspects of George School's educational program. There is a seven-to-one student-teacher ratio in keeping with the school's commitment to promoting authentic relationships between caring teachers and curious students. The school's thoughtfully developed program is a product of reflection, aimed to support the academic, physical, and social-emotional growth of all George School students. In small discussion-based classes, students debate and theorize, learning to make their voices heard while listening to others. This practice allows students to tackle difficult issues and develop reasoned, compassionate solutions.

George School's academic program, more specifically, encourages students to chart their own path—one that is as rigorous as it is customized. Students work in concert with their families, advisors, and college counselors to chart their own educational journey after achieving a solid college preparatory foundation. George School students are encouraged to go further than they thought possible. Students can opt for courses in the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Programs.

IB Program: For thirty-eight years, George School has been one of a few US boarding schools offering the IB Diploma Program, an extraordinary and challenging two-year curriculum that prepares students for college anywhere in the world. The school has a ninety-five percent IB Diploma completion rate, among the world's best. As a global boarding community, George School offers a "lived" IB experience, balancing rigorous academic work with requirements that push students outside the classroom into athletics, the arts, and community service. George School students can choose to take one or several IB classes, earn a subject-specific IB Certificate, or work through the full two-year program towards the IB Diploma.

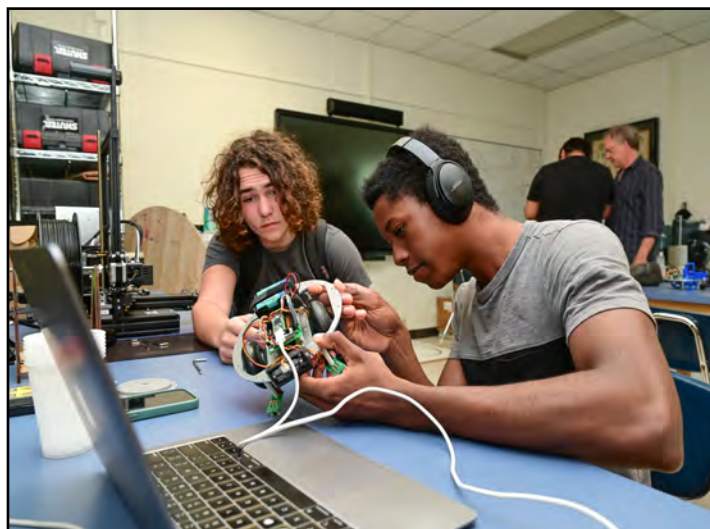
REIMAGINATION

A year ago, the George School faculty, staff, and academic administration engaged in a rigorous assessment of its overall academic program and launched a bold and distinctive curriculum and schedule while renewing its historical commitment to the IB Program. The vision for this assessment was inspired by a query: “How can the school facilitate deeper, more durable, more forward-looking, and more individualized learning and better help students let their lives speak?” The school’s answer to its own query required it not only to revise its curriculum and calendar, but to reimagine them.

George School’s reimagined curriculum, the Signature Academic Program, is rooted in ongoing research on how individuals learn. It reflects a vision for a curriculum characterized by informed creativity and engaged citizenship. The Program allows each student the agency to explore new subject areas—such as entrepreneurship, biotechnology, or robotics—or to delve more deeply into disciplines of interest by doubling up in languages, math, or the arts. The Signature Academic Program also supports the strong legacy of service learning at George School. Students integrate service learning with coursework through meaningful local and global experiences.

To support a reimagined curriculum, George School adjusted its calendar. The innovative calendar includes seven five-week terms instead of trimesters or semesters. Each term includes modules or “mods.” Students decide how to use their mods: for classes, co-curricular experiences, or for the occasional downtime necessary for their well-being.

For details on the five-week, seven-term calendar, its benefits, and the research and thinking behind its adoption, [visit the Academic Program FAQs](#) and check out [sample student schedules](#).



ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

George School's academic program is rigorous and its standards are high. The school intentionally supports diverse learners by providing students with learning, emotional, and social support on campus. In addition to unparalleled access to teachers on the residential campus, every student is assigned a faculty advisor who works closely with their small group of students to enhance their experience both inside and outside the classroom. The Learning Center is available to help students understand how they learn best, strengthen their academic skills, or provide them with support in a particular subject area. The Waghorne Academic Study Hub is home to Math Help, a Writing Center, and a free peer tutoring program during evening study hours. Private peer tutoring and adult tutoring are also available.

COLLEGE COUNSELING

College advising at George School is a student-centered process, grounded in reflection, and focused on helping students find the right fit, whether at one of the nation's leading liberal arts colleges, public flagship universities, or premier research universities. The school's knowledgeable and experienced college counselors have all worked in selective college admission offices and are dedicated to helping George School students and their families navigate the ever-changing world of higher education.



ATHLETICS

George School considers all of its students scholar-athletes and encourages them to compete, build skills, exercise, and seek a healthy balance in their lives. The school offers students sixteen sports and forty-four teams across four levels (varsity, junior varsity, thirds, and developmental), enough to challenge gifted athletes or newcomers. George School coaches emphasize self-discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanship. All are welcome to try a new skill, experiment with a new sport, and take a chance finding a new passion. The athletic facilities include a 100,000 sq. ft. fitness center with a pool, a strength and conditioning room, a wrestling room, gymnasiums, and a yoga studio. The school's grounds include ten playing fields, an all-weather track, turf field, tennis courts, and an equestrian center.



THE ARTS

George School has a proud tradition in the visual and performing arts. Art is displayed everywhere on campus. The school offers forty-four visual and performing arts classes in over a dozen disciplines. There are twelve faculty artists who teach students of all skill levels, providing them with opportunities to hone their talents and demonstrate commitment to Friends values. There are myriad outlets on campus for writers, performers, and artists to perform and exhibit their work. Beyond campus, students have appeared at Carnegie Hall and been honored at the Tribeca Film Festival. Student work routinely hangs in local exhibits and wins scholastic art prizes.

STUDENT LIFE

Beyond their experience in the classroom, George School students participate in a vibrant extracurricular life. They join clubs such as Model UN, Amnesty International, or an affinity group. They practice their leadership skills as international student mentors, peer counselors, prefects, members of the Student Council, or as part of the Discipline Committee. They engage in off-campus service-learning projects. They dive deeply into understanding structural issues in the world and think about how they might improve those issues. They learn each day about who they are and what they can contribute.

RESIDENTIAL LIFE

George School boarding students learn and live on a stunning campus with a robust residential life. Each dormitory on campus has its own culture, with faculty, staff, and friends from near and far. On weekends, students enjoy the beauty of campus and their local environment, explore historic Bucks County, and have access to cities such as New York and Philadelphia, as well as to Princeton University. They take advantage of planned or spontaneous weekend activities on campus. Boarders develop time-management skills, make decisions, and learn from their mistakes under the watchful eyes of student prefects and dorm parents. Most of all, they make friends—often friends for life.

“George School changed the trajectory of my life. My core friends are all from GS.”

FINANCES

George School is a healthy, financially stable institution. The annual budget for the school exceeds \$45 million. While primarily tuition-financed, meaning that robust annual enrollment and re-enrollment endeavors are essential, the budget is bolstered by successful fundraising endeavors and an endowment of over \$220 million. The annual fund for the 2022-23 year exceeded its goal and reached \$2 million, and annual capital fundraising will exceed \$1.2 million dollars. Maintaining financial health in the future in this highly competitive boarding school market will require focus on continual enhancement of the student experience at the school, as well as effective marketing and adept fundraising skill and investment of energy and resources. In 2007, George School was the recipient of the largest-ever independent school philanthropic gift of \$128.5 million dollars, substantially improving the long-term fiscal health of the school. Annual distribution of this gift will end in 2027.



ADMISSION

Admission is strong. George School enrolled 544 students this year, with forty-six percent boarding students and fifty-four percent day students. Forty percent of the students identify as students of color and nearly fifty percent of students receive need-based financial aid, with an average award of \$34,000. Tuition for boarding students is \$73,100 and day students \$47,900. George School is well known in the area and attracts families who are seeking a top-notch secondary program, but as there is fierce competition from other independent day and boarding schools, it is vital that the school’s messaging is clear, consistent, and compelling in order to attract and enroll mission appropriate students.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

“It’s always a delicate balance. You need the head to be a fantastic curricular and academic leader but also a really smart business person. They also need to be a people-oriented, humble leader.”

George School seeks a Head of School who is a lively and engaged presence in the halls, classrooms, labs, dormitories, studios, and playing fields of the school, connecting with students, teachers, and staff members as well as parents and alumni scattered across the country and around the world. The next Head of School should be prepared to collaborate with a devoted school community to fulfill the school’s mission and to lead the School into the future by embracing current challenges and seizing new opportunities. These challenges and opportunities include but are not limited to the following:

- Rely upon sturdy and timeless Quaker values, embrace the Friends’ testimonies, and assure that these nuanced ideals are clearly and consistently articulated as the touchstones of the George School community;
- Pursue a fifty-five/forty-five percent boarding/day ratio; continue to develop data-based strategies for targeted outreach to prospective international and domestic boarding applicants in order to maintain a robust residential community that effectively integrates day students;
- Engage in an ongoing assessment to determine if the new signature academic program and schedule are meeting their stated goals. Along with the faculty and staff, refine and improve the program and schedule as needed;
- Execute on the goals of the recently adopted financial sustainability plan;
- Establish the groundwork for a comprehensive fundraising campaign by



- building upon the school’s culture of gratitude and spirited practice of lifelong philanthropy;
- Increase clarity around the decision-making process and assure that the (relevant) voices of community members are heard and the decision-making process is clearly articulated;
- Sustain the beautiful 240-acre campus and update school facilities by building on the work of the recently completed master plan;
- Design an increasingly integrated and coordinated student and residential life program taking advantage of an impressive array of student services;
- Develop a focused strategy for the school’s increasingly competitive athletics program, making sure to integrate the program into the fabric and life of the community;
- Mentor a talented and eager administrative team; support and develop them and encourage their professional growth;
- Lead the community in sharing the story of George School by lifting up the myriad ways community members let their lives speak;
- Strengthen ties between those on campus and a devoted group of alumni and friends around the globe by increasing opportunities for authentic alumni engagement; and
- Develop partnerships in Newtown and strengthen the relationship between the school and the town to help support and welcome George School’s diverse student body.



KEY QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate to be Head of School at George School will be a mission and values-driven leader who will embody and demonstrate most, if not all, of the following skills, qualities, characteristics, and experiences. George School seeks a leader who will:

- Uphold the core Quaker values of the school and strive to build reflection, deep listening, meaningful community engagement and kindness into the daily lives of students, teachers and staff;
- Be an inspirational educator who will embody the mission of the school by letting their life speak;

- Engage fully in the daily life of the community and bring integrity, warmth, high emotional intelligence and spirit;
- Be a strategic thinker, exhibit financial acumen, fundraising experience, an entrepreneurial spirit, and have a record of successful change management;
- Appreciate the school’s storied history while having the vision and courage to move the school forward;
- Enjoy interacting with teenagers with approachability, energy, enthusiasm, and a sense of humor;
- Listen actively, engage collaboratively, and—when needed—act decisively;
- Forge authentic relationships within the school community and also beyond it, including trustees, parents, alumni, friends, and Newtown;
- Embrace and celebrate diversity, leading and supporting the ongoing diversity, inclusion and equity efforts throughout the school;
- Employ superb communication skills to engage all departments and constituencies and encourage effective communication across all departments and constituencies; and
- Demonstrate proven leadership skills to identify, select, develop and retain outstanding and diverse faculty and staff; build effective teams; encourage and model ambitious professional growth and lifelong learning.

“George School is ‘a school without pretensions, where caring for and learning from each other are as important as academic success’—we need the next leader to be someone that can see beyond just the strong fundamentals of a secondary education to the mindfulness and innovation required to preserve a place that fosters transformation and true community.”



TO APPLY

George School has retained the firm Resource Group 175 to support its search for a new Head of School. If you wish to submit your application, you may at: rg175.com/candidate/signup

Applications include:

- Letter of interest (cover letter)
- Resume or CV
- A Personal, Leadership, or Educational Philosophy Statement
- One additional writing sample of your choice
- Names of four current references and contact information (these references will not be contacted until the finalist stage of the process.)

The deadline for receipt of full application materials is **Friday, September 15, 2023**.

Please note that the George School Head of School Search Committee intends to interview semi-finalist candidates by Zoom on September 30 and October 1. Finalists will be invited to campus for a two-day visit as early as October 9. Please plan accordingly. For any questions or further information about the position, please contact any of the consultants below:

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