

POSITION STATEMENT

THE MASTERS SCHOOL

DOBBS FERRY, NEW YORK



HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

START DATE: JULY 1, 2027



OVERVIEW

Dedicated to the power of a student-centered education, The Masters School is celebrated for its vibrant community and its passionate, articulate, and globally minded students. Located just 12 miles north of New York City, on a spectacularly picturesque 96-acre campus in Dobbs Ferry, New York, Masters serves 675 students in grades 5-12, including 160 boarding students in the Upper School. Following the exceptionally successful decade-plus tenure of its current Head of School Laura Danforth, the School seeks new leadership for July 2027 to build upon a legacy of academic excellence and ethical grounding. Founded in 1877 by Eliza Bailey Masters and committed to the education of young women before embracing coeducation in 1996, The Masters School has long championed a culture of curiosity and inclusivity in keeping with the original vision. While tradition is important to current students, faculty, and alumnae/i alike, Masters embodies a dynamic balance of time-honored values and innovative pedagogy, standing as a model of a modern, relationship-driven independent school that prepares students to “Do it with thy might,” as the School’s motto urges.

Masters is a reflective and inspiring community in which to work and learn. The academic program is energized by the School’s signature Harkness teaching method, which places students and faculty around a shared table as collaborative partners in inquiry, fostering critical thinking, confident communication, and deep intellectual engagement. Since 1996, this pedagogical cornerstone, present across disciplines, has created a culture of mutual respect and vibrant discourse.

Talented, dedicated faculty inspire students to learn and develop passions in and out of the classroom. Close relationships between students and their teachers are celebrated by all and often last well past graduation. The Masters School’s commitment to developing the whole person is further realized through its focus on ethical leadership, a robust performing and visual arts program, and competitive athletics across 25 varsity teams.

The Masters School prides itself on being a diverse, inclusive community that honors and understands the uniqueness of each individual, while fostering and valuing all perspectives and experiences. The Center for Inclusive Excellence provides a range of programming for students, both curricular and extracurricular, that explores the intersections of self, community, identity, leadership, purpose, service and wellness.

The campus, with its mix of historic and modern buildings overlooking the Hudson River, provides a stunning backdrop for a cohesive and integrated grade 5-12 experience. Students are drawn from the local Hudson Valley, the tri-state area, across the country, and around the globe, creating a multifaceted and dynamic student body united by a shared commitment to curiosity, community, and character.



MISSION AND HISTORY

Mission: The Masters School celebrates active participation, deep understanding, and meaningful connection. A community of diverse individuals, we gather to learn, to strive, to dare, to do — to be a power for good in the world.

The vibrancy of the Masters mission is often referred to as the guidepost for community ethics, behaviors and practices, and is especially evident in the culture of kindness that translates to a welcoming campus, as noted by alumnae from the 1950's as well as current students. Proudly displayed around the hallways and public spaces in the Middle and Upper School, Masters promotes its mission as a living testament to the expectations of all community members to subscribe to and embrace the School's values.

Extending naturally from the Mission are the Core Beliefs: To Learn; To Strive; To Dare; To Do; To Be a Power for Good in the World. That final culminating directive— “To Be a Power for Good in the World” — is built into the daily lexicon at Masters. Students describe that “from the top down”, they hear this message and see it modeled by faculty and administrators. And students feel it as the promise from the adults in the community to help them to become their fullest, most confident, self-actualized, independent-thinking selves. As one alumna shared, “My teachers believed in me way before I believed in myself.”

The alignment of today's mission and community practices with the founding vision of Eliza Masters is striking. She envisioned a school for girls that was distinct from the traditional finishing schools of the late nineteenth century, directing her students to be agents for good. Her constant refrain was described as, “Don't just try; do it!” Seeking to sustain their institutional leadership as



educating bright and engaging citizens, The Masters School became coeducational in 1996. This has engendered a period of substantial growth in enrollment, endowment, annual giving, and upgrades to the physical plant. Today's Masters continues to demonstrate the power of engagement with a culture for learning and growth described as the “intersection of joy and rigor.” The effect of this mission-driven environment is that Masters students internalize these deeply held values and identify themselves as impactful citizens capable of effecting positive change in their communities and the world at large.

MASTERS AT A GLANCE

- 100%: Acceptance To Four-year Colleges
- 72%: Faculty With Advanced Degrees
- 26%: Students Receive Some Form Of Financial Aid
- 96: Acres Overlooking The Hudson River
- 57: Sports Teams, 25 Varsity
- 56: Annual Performances
- 21: Countries Represented In The Student Body
- 12: Miles From New York City

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

A constant refrain from key community stakeholders is, “There is no one Masters student.” Rather, students at Masters are provided with extraordinary opportunities and encouraged to pursue their own paths – paths of rigor, impact, and purpose. The Masters School fosters an environment that emphasizes the development of independent thinkers through a rich curriculum centered around intellectual exploration. A challenging academic program is delivered in a culture of kindness and inclusivity, where diversity of thought is celebrated, and students are encouraged to take healthy risks and push boundaries. By encouraging students to speak candidly, listen actively, and question freely, the program helps students hone essential skills in critical, creative, and collaborative thinking. With a strong foundation in diverse perspectives, analytical reasoning, and the courage to engage deeply with challenging topics, Masters students are prepared not only for college and careers but for life.



Programmatic highlights include:

Harkness Table

Central to the teaching and learning experience is the Harkness method, a dynamic teaching approach that promotes discussion and collaboration among students around an oval table. The Masters School was among an elite group of leading independent schools, adopting the Harkness method in 1996. Around the Harkness table students engage in lively discussions where every voice matters. Harkness transforms the traditional classroom dynamic, empowering students to steer their learning, engage meaningfully with content, and share insights with confidence. Classroom discussions extend across disciplines — ranging from computer science to history — challenging students to think critically, embrace risks, and cultivate respect for differing viewpoints.

The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center (IEC)

Housed in the new Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center — a 21,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility equipped with cutting-edge technology — the IEC program empowers students from grades 5–12 to bring ideas to life through hands-on, project-based learning. Students explore design thinking, social entrepreneurship, engineering, and computer science. They tackle real-world challenges, nurture in-demand talents, and develop creativity, innovative thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset — skills necessary to succeed in an ever-evolving world.

The Journalism Collaborative

Masters School has a deep commitment to the teaching of writing as a distinct skill and as a means for students to tap into their curiosity by asking questions about and exploring the world around them, and, ultimately, crafting factual, balanced narratives. Equipped with industry-standard



tools such as Adobe InDesign and Final Cut Pro, student journalists produce work that regularly earns awards and accolades from prestigious organizations including the National Scholastic Press Association, Columbia Scholastic Press Association, and the New York Press Association.

Global Studies

The Global Studies program immerses students in transformative cultural experiences — both at home and abroad — to help them understand and navigate a complex, interconnected world with empathy and cultural fluency. Students participate in exchanges with and trips to multiple countries, including Italy, Japan, Senegal and the Dominican Republic. During trips abroad, students learn through cultural immersion and discover countries' rich histories, gaining perspective and confidently connecting across cultures.

WinterMission

For four days every winter, students take part in a hands-on and immersive mini-term during which they encounter new subjects, skills and ideas that challenge them to explore the School's mission in unexpected ways. A schoolwide interdisciplinary program, WinterMission ignites students' curiosity and expands their understanding of where and how they learn — and what it means to be a power for good in the world.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The next head of The Masters School should be prepared to collaborate effectively with a dedicated Board of Trustees and positively engaged community to lead the school confidently into the future. With mission-aligned clarity, the new head should embrace current challenges and seize new opportunities that include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Keep the lives and wellbeing of the students as the true north for every interaction and decision, particularly given the myriad (and even relentless) demands and competing priorities placed on today's school leaders.
- Model respect, a commitment to lifelong learning, and humanity, in order to attract and retain a strong, collaborative faculty and staff of excellent teachers and administrators.
- Collaborate with the Board of Trustees to identify and implement key strategic goals regarding school size, capital priorities, and deferred maintenance.



- Clarify and communicate the value proposition of the Masters experience to support enrollment and strengthen the brand in a competitive and dynamic marketplace. As a school that includes middle and upper divisions, 7- and 5-day boarding and day students, domestic and international markets, the Masters community is seeking to better capture and capitalize on its identity.
- Engage key stakeholders to define and differentiate academic rigor and excellence at Masters in order to attract, prepare, and retain mission-aligned students and effectively leverage their experiences in the college placement process.
- Promote and steward core institutional values in order to navigate the ongoing impact of the macro environment on the culture and programmatic experience at Masters. Sustaining the effective and mission-aligned communication of the current leadership and continuing to model and promote the need for engagement with a wide array of viewpoints and stakeholders will be an important skill and priority for the next head of school.
- Sustain high communication and engagement with a distinctly loyal and invested alumnae/i body. With a long and storied institutional history and clear mission, Masters' alumnae/i have supported the School and been effective stewards of its values.
- Demonstrate confidence in succeeding a successful, longstanding head and bring the school forward with joy, enthusiasm and a commitment to the purposefulness and full promise that Masters represents.



KEY QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate to be head of school at The Masters School will be a values-driven and mission-aligned leader who will embody and demonstrate most, if not all, of the following skills, qualities, characteristics and experiences:

- Demonstrated success as an inspirational, approachable, transparent, genuine, wise and collaborative leader and educator.
- Ability to serve as a visible, energetic, and engaged presence in the Masters community with a deep enthusiasm and capacity to forge natural and meaningful connections with students.
- Breadth of experience and mature perspective relevant to school leadership and familiarity with school life, academics and programming in a complex, grade 5-12 boarding and day school.
- Personal integrity, courage, high emotional intelligence and inspirational spirit, along with warmth, joy, and a sense of humor.
- Demonstrated experience as an ambitious strategic thinker and implementer of strategic vision.

- Capacity to serve as an ethical, brave, decisive and transparent role model for administrators, faculty, staff, and students, and ability to call on others to be their best selves in a community.
- Pragmatic financial acumen, fundraising experience, entrepreneurial ability, and a record of ambitious and data-driven change.
- Significant experience with building and supporting inclusive and broadly diverse communities.
- Talent in identifying, selecting, retaining, and leading outstanding teachers, staff, and administrators, as well as for supervising, motivating and developing them.
- Strength in forging authentic relationships and interconnections with a wide range of people both within the constituencies of the school and externally, including students, parents, alumnae/i, and wider community members.
- Superb written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills.
- Willingness to lead in alignment with the mission, core values, and strategic vision for the future of the school.

SALARY RANGE

The initial base salary range is \$500,000 to \$700,000 depending on qualifications and experience, plus a comprehensive benefits package. Residing in the on-campus head of school residence is a requirement of the position.

TO APPLY

The Masters School has retained Resource Group 175 to support its search for a new Head of School. If you wish to submit your application, you may do so at:

<https://rg175.com/candidates/signup>

An application includes:

- Letter of interest (cover letter)
- Resume or CV
- An educational or leadership philosophy statement
- A writing sample of choice (optional); and
- Names of five current references and contact information for each (the references will not be contacted until the finalist stage of the process.)

*This process is open to candidates interested in starting in the role in July of 2027. **The deadline for receipt of application materials is Thursday, February 12, 2026.** The Masters Search Committee intends to interview semi-finalist candidates off-campus in April. Finalists will be invited to campus for a two and a half day visit in May.*

For any questions or further information about the position, please contact any of the consultants below:

Tony Featherston

tfeatherston@rg175.com

646-753-1548

John Green

john.green@rg175.com

609-937-2565

Molly King

molly.king@rg175.com

774-286-0114

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