

POSITION STATEMENT

THE HARPETH HALL SCHOOL

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH
START DATE: JULY 1, 2027





OVERVIEW

The Harpeth Hall School, located in Nashville, Tennessee, is rightly considered to be among the preeminent girls' schools in the nation. Celebrating 160 years of commitment to the education of girls and young women, the School thrives.

The School's mission drives momentum and provides the anchor for making every decision: "To educate girls and young women to think critically, lead confidently, and live honorably." Intentionality and alignment with the mission are key factors in the success of Harpeth Hall. The School both honors the traditions that have long been in place and at the same time embraces the call for innovation that the School needs to move forward. One alumna put it succinctly: "The School evolves, but doesn't change." To know and act thoughtfully on this curated balance of tradition and innovation generates both confidence and pride in the School and exemplifies its unique character.

The strengths of Harpeth Hall are noteworthy. Students excel in multiple realms—in academics,

athletics, and the arts—but most of all as leaders and thoughtful participants in the program. Their voices are heard, and in many ways, the girls of Harpeth Hall are the "culture carriers" for the School. The faculty's laser focus on support for the girls provides the impetus for this dynamic. It is no wonder that every constituency lauds the quality of the high-performing faculty, citing both their ability to inspire academic challenge as well as to provide caring attention for the journey of each student.

Enrollment is strong; the School financial profile is equally strong. Governance is stable and supportive of the leadership of the School. The campus is stunning. Parents are enthusiastic, and the alumnae community is as engaged and dedicated to the School today as they were when they were students themselves. The School has benefited from outstanding leadership under the current Head of School, Jess Hill, who has led the community for the past eight years with warmth, wisdom, and a steady hand.

The path ahead has been wisely laid out and captured in an "evergreen" strategic design for the future. Challenges exist, of course.

Continuing to recruit and retain a stellar faculty is vitally important to the heart of the Harpeth Hall mission and program. Sustaining Harpeth Hall's commitment to being a diverse community that fosters inclusion and belonging is a priority. Cultivating philanthropic support is also critical for needed facilities and program development, as well as endowment. Skillfully continuing to nurture the deep community connections among all constituencies will be important work. Negotiating the changing landscape of Nashville will also be a challenge for the next chapter in the School's evolution.

The Board of Trustees at Harpeth Hall now seeks to identify the next head of school who will take on the leadership of a school that has a remarkable history, a track record of noteworthy success in educating girls, and an extraordinary capacity to embrace the future, bravely and thoughtfully. The tenure for the next head of school will begin in July 2027, and we welcome your interest in the position.

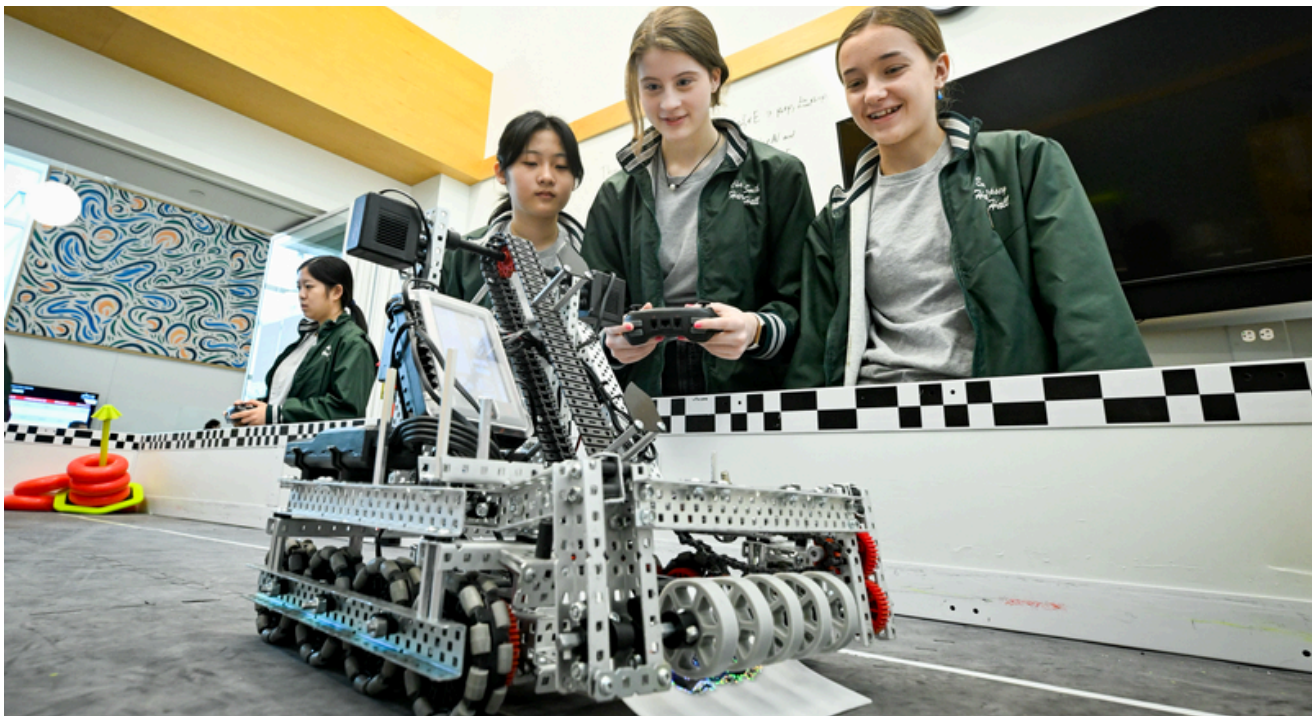
MISSION AND VALUES

Harpeth Hall's Mission is powerful—a clear calling to educate girls and young women to be thoughtful leaders who live lives of purpose: **Harpeth Hall educates girls and young women to think critically, lead confidently, and live honorably.**

Harpeth Hall's Values:

- We build resilience, empowering our girls to be confident in their beliefs and abilities.
- Integrity and honor guide every decision and action.
- We celebrate intellectual curiosity and creativity, encouraging a lifelong pursuit of knowledge and understanding.
- Kindness and respect enrich our interactions and strengthen the bonds within our community.

Together, we uphold these values, building a community where every individual feels supported and inspired by our educational mission.



HISTORY

"The Harpeth Hall School was founded on the bold idea that girls deserve an excellent education filled with possibilities and purpose."

The School traces its founding to 1865, six months after the end of the Civil War, with the founding of Ward Seminary, a school for young women that pre-dated the founding of Vanderbilt University. Eventually Ward Seminary merged with Belmont College for Young Women and formed a high school and junior college for women called Ward-Belmont. In September 1951, with the closing of Ward-Belmont, local community leaders organized to purchase property in the Green Hills area of Nashville to continue to offer college preparatory education to young women, and renamed the school Harpeth Hall, reflecting the School's location near the Harpeth River Valley.

From its 1951 opening with two school buildings and 161 students, Harpeth Hall now spans 44 acres with numerous buildings and currently enrolls 728 students, grades 5-12. Evidence of a distinguished history and graduates of note reside throughout campus where the accomplishments of generations of Harpeth Hall graduates are proudly displayed. Harpeth Hall and its predecessor schools share a history of excellence in educating young women that is both multigenerational and distinguished.

Learn more about the history of Harpeth Hall:

<https://www.harpethhall.org/about/history-and-archives>

FAST FACTS ABOUT HARPETH HALL TODAY

- 728 students, grades 5-12
- 108 faculty members, 81% of whom hold advanced degrees
- Students represent 34 distinct zip codes and 19% students of color
- Mascot: The Honeybear
- School colors: Magnolia Green and Silver Gray
- Motto: Let us lift up the mind and spirit



PROGRAM

True to form, the Harpeth Hall academic program is mission-driven and customized to serve the educational aspirations of high-achieving girls and young women. The most oft-repeated goal for equipping girls and young women for their futures is to ensure that all Harpeth Hall graduates “Speak well. Write well.” Current students and graduates recall the multiple opportunities for student presentations, with particular focus on speeches required in grades 8 and 12, as well as the rigorous expectations for clear, vibrant writing skills.

Focused on academic excellence, the program is described thoughtfully here:

<https://www.harpethhall.org/academics>

Support services for academics as well as required coursework in personal well-being are well established for the students. “High challenge and high support” is the model used to set the expectations for students. A signature program on Life Balance is built into the weekly curriculum for Grades 5-10, and the content of this program is so valued by the students that the current Junior Class is forming a club to continue learning and discussing the value of life balance for Harpeth Hall girls.

Arts and athletics figure prominently in the lives of Harpeth Hall students. Just a glimpse into the achievements of the School’s athletes: they report 71 state championships in 11 sports, and 37 alumnae are currently competing in 11 different sports in the NCAA. And on the international level, Harpeth Hall boasts 5 alumnae Olympians, including the Walsh sisters, who made Harpeth Hall history in the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris!

The arts are equally valued for student participation. The School typically produces 16 visual and performing arts events each year, including dance performances, musicals and talent shows among other opportunities for showcasing



the visual and performing arts talents and passions of Middle and Upper School girls. Graduates pursue their artistic talents at the collegiate level, including 29 alumnae currently pursuing degrees in the performing and visual arts.

Facilities follow function at Harpeth Hall. Currently, a brand-new 40,700 square foot Center for STEM classrooms and laboratories is being completed, and there is significant excitement over the final cornerstone of the current campaign for a new performing arts center in the near future.

Premier Programs

A centerpiece premier program at Harpeth Hall that bears special note is the Winterim program for Upper School students. Established in the 1970’s as an innovative experiential program, Winterim for grades 11-12 is comprised of three weeks of off-campus internships or far-ranging travel with faculty members to explore pathways for the future or to dig deep into academic areas of interest. At the same time, students in grades 9-10 delve into classes of special interest and experiences on campus, also taught by faculty members, for three weeks. Current and past students describe the transformative opportunities and lifelong impact of this signature program at the School.

And there are more programs that inspire and stretch students beyond the classroom:

<https://www.harpethhall.org/programs>



VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY

The community of students, faculty, families, and alumnae at Harpeth Hall are supportive and proud of Harpeth Hall's commitment to educating girls and young women—for today, for university, and for life. Their advice for identifying the next effective head of school is both touching and revelatory:

From Middle and Upper School students: “I really want a new head of school who is approachable to all students and will make every student feel seen. The new head of school should be able to manage their day-to-day responsibilities while also being a visible part of our community: attending sports games, walking around campus, connecting and having personal connections with girls every day.”

“Find someone who is wise, has wit and humor, is poised and carries the glow and elegance of Harpeth Hall, a purposeful story teller, someone who cares for improvement but maintains tradition, someone who makes the effort to know each and every student, and especially someone who makes the effort to learn the history and everything special that defines Harpeth Hall. The School is a very special place, and it was truly my dream to attend school here and whoever is filling the position of the head of school should also dream to be at Harpeth Hall.”

From the Faculty: “Harpeth Hall's current ‘mentor leadership’ model is motivating. High expectations and high support provide an empowering environment, even for the adults.”

“The greatest weight and burden that our students face are the unnecessarily high expectations that they (and others) put upon them at this early stage in their lives. The truth is that a culture of achievement is already part and parcel of our students' identities. We need an empathetic soul who understands that life's most important accomplishments are not likely to be measured by a set of numbers or a litany of accolades (as much as we treasure those outcomes, too). In other words, we need to continue to have a leader with HEART.”

From Families: “As the parent of a first-year student at HH, the experience thus far has surpassed my expectations. We have felt welcomed with open arms. This school is very special and has proven to be a perfect fit for our daughter. Our family considers ourselves very fortunate to be a part of Harpeth Hall. I would hope to see all of the things that make this place special (relationships, faculty, rigorous academic opportunity, thoughtful intention in every decision, confidence building, traditions, etc.) are maintained and are simply built upon moving forward.”

“There are so many things that HH does right and those should be championed and celebrated. The culture of HH is so thoughtfully curated: empowerment, academic rigor and positivity are all words I connect with my daughter's time here. I hope that these values are not only embodied by the new head of school, but even more so, I envision this person as the 'voice' of the school's mission.”

From Alumnae: “Generations of women have built, defended, and sustained this institution. The school should honor that legacy by being clear and confident about its mission.”

“I think the next head of school should have the experience and the ability to bring the school into the future while maintaining the traditions and excellence of the past.”

“I suspect that we will have a lot of highly qualified candidates, whose resumes are chock-full of impressive degrees, positions and accolades. I think it is imperative that we get the cultural fit right, aside from and beyond those important credentials. The leader needs to understand girls, needs to understand Nashville, and needs to understand Harpeth Hall specifically. This is a rigorous yet happy place. The girls have a lot of freedom, which they use well. The next leader should come in trusting the girls and trusting the faculty. To note: the faculty is the most important constituent!”

ADMISSIONS, FINANCES, FACILITIES, and FUNDRAISING

Admissions: The School has its largest enrollment to date with 728 girls enrolled, 318 in the Middle School, 410 in the Upper School. Reenrollment is significantly high at 97.4%. This year saw a 23% increase in applications, an enviable position for the School, with an 86% yield. Sixteen percent of students receive financial aid, and the School can support 94% of demonstrated need. Families identify as Christian, Hindi, Islamic, and Jewish; students also identify as interfaith, agnostic, and atheist.

The School runs several programs for new students: Honeybears 101 for Upper School and Get Your Bearings for Grade 7. The School also runs popular, eight-week summer programs for more than 900 girls from kindergarten age upwards and Summer Spark for Girls, a two-week program for rising Grade 6 girls from local under-resourced public schools.



Finances: Harpeth Hall boasts an enviable financial position. Tuition for the 2025-26 school year is \$38,600, which is in line with the top echelon of schools in Nashville. The \$84M endowment provides over 9% of overall operating revenues each year supporting financial aid, faculty salaries, and general operations. The School has created solid reserves for maintenance projects and various operational needs. Salaries and benefits make up the majority of expenses. The School strives to have faculty salaries above the 90th percentile of the southeast NAIS schools. The school continues to invest in its people with competitive benefits including an innovative health insurance plan, 10% contribution to retirement accounts, and 50% tuition remission.

Facilities: The Harpeth Hall campus covers nearly 44 acres and includes 12 buildings, including an athletic center, a performing arts theater, and multiple athletic fields. The School is currently completing a science and technology center with approximately 26,000 square feet of new science classrooms.

Fundraising: Annual giving has surpassed \$2M for the past several years, landing at \$2.8M last year. Capital fundraising continues to be successful, and the next capital priorities are a new performing arts center, which will also serve as an important community gathering space.

The Advancement Office at Harpeth Hall provides robust support for the Alumnae Association made up of 5,500 alumnae in 48 states and 29 countries around the world. Multiple committees support a variety of alumnae groups and an ambitious reunion calendar. Similarly, the Advancement Office partners with other school leaders to guide the Harpeth Hall Parent Association which encourages parent involvement in school life and supports its major fundraising event, "The Main Event."



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The new head of school at Harpeth Hall will need the leadership skills and experience to address the opportunities and challenges ahead. Among the most important are to:

- Demonstrate a deep commitment and understanding of the educational and developmental trajectory of girls and young women. Bring a passionate and whole-hearted commitment to the mission and strategic direction of this nationally recognized girls school and continue to build upon its distinguished reputation for excellence.
- Recruit and retain an extraordinary cadre of faculty who are dedicated to the intellectual and personal growth of all students. Bring inspired and experienced educational oversight and leadership to a dynamic program and champion forward-looking innovations in education wisely.

- Cultivate community enthusiastically and well. Connect with the students with kindness and care. Support the esprit de corps of an outstanding faculty. Dedicate time and resources to the parent community who appreciate its partnership with the School. Relish the incredible alumnae community that holds Harpeth Hall with such commitment and love. Additionally, make progress on attracting and supporting a more diverse student body and faculty in alignment with Harpeth Hall's commitment to fostering an inclusive community where all members feel they belong.
- Ensure organizational efficiency and program strength through assessing the administrative structure and alignment of the programmatic priorities of the School. Continue to support a high-functioning senior leadership team. Refine and evaluate the programming of the Middle and Upper School curriculum, as well as arts/athletics programs, to ensure consistency and clarity of goals and outcomes, grades 5-12.
- Continue to strengthen the culture of philanthropy to bring Harpeth Hall's aspirational priorities to fruition. Understand the transformative power of philanthropy—what has been done in the past by so many and what needs to be done for the School in the future. Continue the work on the identified priorities in the master plan for facilities. Dive into the exciting initiatives underway and to come. Embrace these challenges with confidence and gusto!
- Finally, bring a keen understanding of the significant cultural shifts and growth in greater Nashville and possess the capacity to guide Harpeth Hall in a rapidly changing context. Be a presence in Nashville and continue to build connections and partnerships with the extraordinary resources available. Embrace the opportunity to know and live in Nashville, as well as be the voice of Harpeth Hall in the larger community.



KEY LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

- A visionary and mission-aligned leader who wholeheartedly embraces the mission to educate girls and young women.
- An exceptional community builder who listens deeply, cultivates connections, and strengthens bonds across all constituencies.
- An inspired, compelling communicator, capable of speaking and writing about the Harpeth Hall story with clarity and resonance.
- A leader with the emotional intelligence to manage competing tensions and to listen across differences with equanimity and wisdom.
- An educator with deep understanding of teaching and learning, committed to academic excellence, thoughtful innovation, and the joyful privilege of educating girls and young women.
- A leader willing to bring heartfelt enthusiasm to building a transformative culture of philanthropy that will translate into exciting new developments for the School.
- A systems thinker who can assess the organizational structure of the School, delegate when warranted, and bring skilled management competency to the job.
- A leader who brings a calm, steady, and warm demeanor to build relationships and to manage change with skill and diplomacy.
- A leader who delights in creativity and curiosity, yet can be decisive, collaborative, and clear.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Harpeth Hall School has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next head of school. Interested candidates should prepare a cover letter, an updated resume, and a writing sample(s) to submit as part of their application materials. Five references are also a required component of the application process.

The application deadline is March 24, 2026, for a start date of July 1, 2027.

Candidates are encouraged to submit their materials in a timely manner (and well before the actual application deadline) at:

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

For any questions about this exciting leadership position and to register your interest, please contact the RG175 consultants directly:

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