POSITION STATEMENT

THE BRIARWOOD SCHOOL

HOUSTON, TEXAS



HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH
START DATE: JULY 1, 2027

THE BRIARWOOD SCHOOL
EST. 1967

RG 175
Change as Opportunity



OVERVIEW: THE BRIARWOOD SCHOOL

The Briarwood School is a traditional school for non-traditional learners. Briarwood has been designed to start the journey by identifying how a child learns best. Through intensive instruction, the school strives to remediate weaknesses while teaching to each child's strengths. This approach leads to stronger academic skills and increased self-esteem.

Briarwood School has spent nearly sixty years cultivating an environment where students are understood, celebrated, and empowered. Since the founding in 1967, every child who walks through their doors is met with a learning experience designed specifically for them—one that fosters confidence, curiosity, and a sense of belonging. What makes Briarwood so special is their commitment to understanding each student as an individual. Their mission, core values, and supportive community create a learning environment where students feel seen, valued, and capable of success, both in and out of the classroom. This truly is a joyful school.

Briarwood's approach is rooted in the belief that every student deserves an education tailored to their needs. In small classes, Briarwood students thrive with individualized attention, structured support, and an atmosphere that encourages both academic growth and self-discovery. Every aspect of the school reflects a commitment to creating an environment where students feel prepared, ready to take risks, and empowered to reach their potential. Briarwood is often one of the first places where students truly feel understood. In a world that often defines students by their challenges, Briarwood sees their strengths, their creativity, and their capacity for transformation. Briarwood uses a diagnostic-prescriptive approach that ensures that each student's journey is uniquely tailored to their needs, allowing them to build social skills, confidence, and independence that will carry with them for life.

Briarwood emboldens students with learning differences to reach their full potential through diagnostic and prescriptive instruction in a structured, compassionate environment. Rooted in brain science and evidence-based practices, the curriculum is designed around each learner's unique needs and offers multiple ways for students to grow and succeed. Briarwood students typically have average to above average cognitive abilities and have not yet reached their academic potential in traditional school environments. Briarwood students typically have a primary diagnosis of dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia.

OVERVIEW: THE TUTTLE SCHOOL

Located under the same roof as Briarwood School is Tuttle School, serving students ages 5-25 with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Tuttle is designed to teach functional skills and age-appropriate academics in school and community settings. Tuttle strives to teach students to lead successful and personally fulfilling lives at their individual ability level. The unique needs of Tuttle students are met through individualized instruction, skills for life, social skills, physical education, sensory integration, and technology and vocational training.

The Tuttle School has adopted the Unique Learning System, an online standards-based curriculum that gives students meaningful access to the general education curriculum. This personalized system engages students by providing differentiated lessons and materials, allowing them to make the most of their learning time. It uses evidence-based teaching strategies that are driven by data and produce tangible results. Classes are blended at Tuttle. Classes are also custom-made to meet the needs of each student, placing them in the most appropriate class based on their skills. The goal is to provide skills and knowledge for each student to become as independent as possible. Each classroom is staffed with a teacher and an assistant. Classes have a low teacher to student ratio. Students typically spend two or three years in one academic homeroom before transitioning to the next level. Matriculation occurs individually and is determined by various factors, including age, social maturation, and class groupings. Students do receive a certificate of completion upon graduation.



Students are taught age-appropriate daily living skills and self-help activities. Tuttle has a wide network of professionals and resources to help families stay informed about the best choices regarding their child's path beyond Tuttle. Through interest inventories, and student questionnaires, students can determine their preferences and guide themselves into a job that is unique to them. These tools allow students to be involved in activities that they enjoy and build necessary skills that will help them succeed in real work experiences.

Tuttle offers a Pathway to Transition program that builds upon students' abilities and interests by providing opportunities to work in various community environments under the supervision of a faculty member and/or on campus in a structured work environment. The program partners with companies to bring jobs on campus, including an on-campus café. This is a great opportunity for students to practice social, self-advocacy, and job skills.

MISSION

Briarwood's mission is to empower students with diagnosed learning differences to reach their maximum potential through diagnostic-prescriptive instruction in a structured academic environment. Tuttle's goal is to empower children with intellectual and developmental disabilities to reach their full potential.

PROGRAM

Briarwood's academic program is divided across three age groups in two divisions and provides students with an array of instructional strategies and multiple avenues to demonstrate growth and understanding.

The Lower School focuses on rekindling the flame for children who have lost their love of learning because of negative school experiences. Briarwood uses the Wilson Language Programs as a foundation for reading and uses evidence-based programs as part of the curriculum while tailoring lessons according to the unique learning profiles of each student. The goal is for Lower-School students to become independent and confident learners. A class called Teaching Opportunities in Pragmatic Skills (TOPS) is a unique program offering direct instruction and opportunities for students to practice developmentally appropriate social and pragmatic skills. Lower-School faculty reinforce positive character traits by giving students "Right Choice" awards based upon the growth-mindset and grit research by Dr. Carol Dweck and Dr. Angela Duckworth.

The Middle School has recently been absorbed into the Upper School as one division, but the focus of the program is on middle-school age learning. It nurtures the spark ignited by the Lower-School Program, providing ongoing assistance for students to continue their learning journey with the same enthusiasm and



love of learning. Increased levels of independence provide opportunities for students to have their voices heard. At this age level techniques are designed to directly teach grade-level concepts while addressing the learning differences of the student. Small classes, consisting of no more than 10 students provide opportunities for the faculty and students to begin building trusting relationships and pushing the students to move forward at their own pace. Briarwood offers a robust set of elective classes to choose from, along with over 30 student-initiated and student-led clubs.

The Upper School provides a full secondary experience through rigorous academics, robust extracurricular experiences, and college preparatory skills while continuing to accommodate the individual needs of all learners. One of the primary goals of the Upper School is to cultivate independent and confident learners with self-awareness and the ability to self-advocate. After graduation, Briarwood students pursue college and career opportunities with the confidence and intellectual, social, and emotional toolkit necessary to be successful. The Upper-School curriculum aligns with state standards while also utilizing evidence-based curricular programs, tailored to the unique learning profiles of each student.

Strengths of both schools:

- Rich history
- Strong connection to the mission
- Small classes
- 1:1 instruction
- Life-changing environment
- Strong sense of belonging
- An environment that puts kids first
- Customized approaches throughout all program initiatives
- Teacher passion for making sure the kids succeed
- A wonderful and supportive community culture
- Very close student-teacher relationships
- An emotionally safe environment
- Individualized instruction throughout the entire program

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The next head of Briarwood and Tuttle Schools must be prepared to collaborate effectively with a highly strategic and devoted school community to fulfill the schools' missions and lead the schools wisely and confidently into the future by embracing current challenges and seizing new opportunities. These challenges and opportunities include, but are not limited to, the following (not in an order of priority):

- Briarwood and Tuttle Schools are a highly relationship-driven community and organization. The next head will need to focus on building positive, genuine relationships across the breadth of this extended community, and notably, with faculty, establishing trust, authenticity, and commitment to the schools.

- Hiring and retaining faculty with attention and care to salaries, workload, and job expectations.

- Managing enrollment and attrition will be a major focus for the next head of school.

- Building and installing operating systems that will improve communications, promote clarity and create accountability among faculty, staff, administration and parents.

- Embracing the need to be the schools' chief fundraiser and a visible community presence.

- Demonstrating the executive skills that will both promote clear decision making and allow decisions to be known. Authenticity and transparency will be critical.

- Creating a shared vision. Work with the outstanding team of Board members, administrators and faculty to create an exciting vision for Briarwood and Tuttle Schools.

- The next head of school must actively support and understand both Briarwood and Tuttle populations.

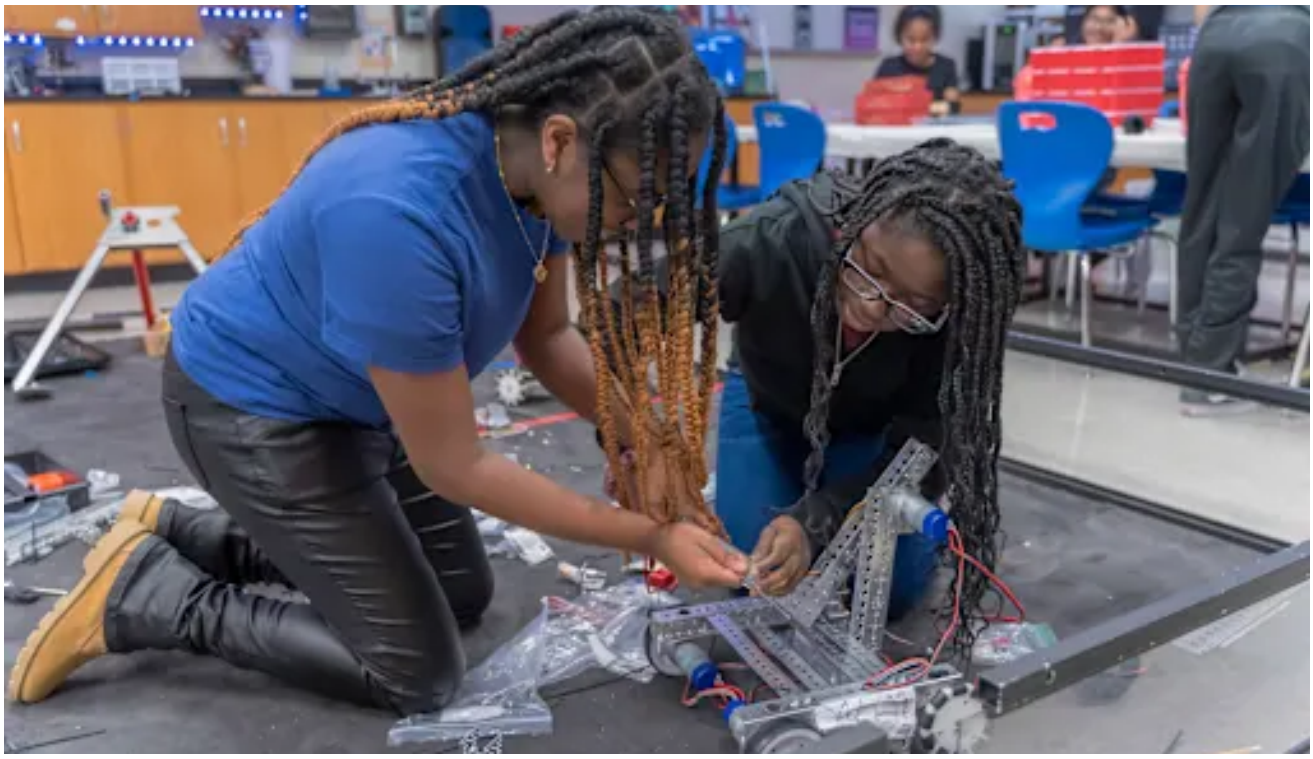


QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES

The successful candidate to be the next head of school for Briarwood and Tuttle Schools will be a mission and values-driven leader who will embody and demonstrate the following skills, qualities, and characteristics:

- Possess excellent listening skills, along with the capacity to make decisions and motivate others to support those decisions.
- Ability to forge authentic relationships with a wide range of people, both with the constituencies of the schools and externally, including parents, and the wider Houston community members.
- Demonstrate experience with Neurodiverse students within various types of special education programs and a strong passion for working with these students and their families.
- Capacity to serve as a highly ethical, firm, and transparent role model, high levels of emotional intelligence, warmth, integrity, trustworthiness, and community building abilities.
- Capable financial acumen, understanding of marketing, ability to perceive of and lead the schools as a business.
- Talent in identifying, selecting, retaining and inspiring outstanding teachers, staff, and administrators, as well as for supervising, motivating, and developing them.
- Enjoy being a visible presence in the life of the two schools.
- Demonstrate excellent communication skills, both in writing and speaking.
- Understand, enjoy, effectively engage with, and listen to neurodiverse students.
- Demonstrate leadership, integrity, compassion, empathy, humor, joy, and delight.





TO APPLY

Candidates interested in applying to be the next head of school at Briarwood and Tuttle Schools may apply online at **https://rg175.com/login**

The application includes:

- Letter of interest
- Résumé
- Personal statement
- List of five references (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission.)

Deadline to apply: **Monday, September 14, 2026**

Thank you for your interest in Briarwood and Tuttle Schools. I look forward to hearing more about your interest in the opportunity. If you have any questions about the search, please reach out to the consultant overseeing the search: John Farber jfarber@rg175.com.