

POSITION STATEMENT

Brooks School

North Andover, Massachusetts



LEADERSHIP SEARCH

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Start Date: July 1, 2028



A Leadership Search conducted by **RG175 Search Consultants**
John Green, Bob Henderson & Marcia Prewitt Spiller

Overview

Set along the shores of Lake Cochichewick in North Andover, Massachusetts, Brooks School offers something increasingly rare in secondary education: the breadth and ambition of a rich academic and co-curricular program within a genuinely small, close-knit community where students are known, challenged, and encouraged to discover who they can become. Brooks is a coeducational boarding and day school for students in grades 9–12, with 340 students on a beautiful 270-acre campus. Its small scale is not a matter of numbers; it is central to the student experience, creating opportunities for authentic relationships, individual attention, broad participation, and a deep sense of belonging.

"What makes Brooks distinct is the way it brings together intellectual ambition, close relationships, and a strong sense of purpose. Brooks is not simply a school that prepares students for college; it seeks to provide the most meaningful educational experience of their lives."

As articulated by current Head of School John Packard, "Brooks seeks to provide the most meaningful educational experience our students will have in their lives." This objective reflects an educational philosophy that places academic excellence and intellectual curiosity alongside empathy, engagement, integrity, passion, confidence, and creativity. Students are encouraged to think critically, develop their individual talents, take intellectual and personal risks, and grow in character, independence, and responsibility. Brooks aspires to balance high standards with care, helping students pursue excellence while enjoying the discovery and relationships that make adolescence such a formative period.

"At its best, a boarding school community engages students and faculty, encourages young people to discover the things they love, and gives them the confidence and support to pursue those passions."



The Brooks experience extends well beyond the classroom. Students learn through participation in athletics, the arts, residential life, advising, coaching, shared meals, Chapel, and the traditions that bring the community together. Signature opportunities such as Winter Term, Students on the Forefront, and the Exchange Program invite students to explore interests, engage with the world beyond campus, and connect learning to lived experience. Whether in the classroom, on the playing fields, in the arts, or through the daily rhythms of boarding school, students are encouraged to try new things and discover interests and capacities they may not have known they possessed.

"Brooks students work hard but also have fun. They don't so much compete with one another as openly cheer for one another. They benefit greatly from an age-appropriate experience."



At the heart of Brooks is the conviction that relationships are essential to meaningful learning and personal growth. Faculty and staff play many roles in students' lives—as teachers, advisors, coaches, mentors, and members of the residential community. The resulting connections help create an environment in which students can feel supported while being encouraged to stretch beyond their comfort zones. Brooks' Episcopal heritage, Chapel program, and longstanding traditions contribute to its institutional identity, while its commitment to empathy and engagement encourages students to learn from people whose experiences and perspectives differ from their own. The school seeks to graduate students who are thoughtful, compassionate, and capable contributors to their communities.

"When students feel like they belong because the people around them care about them, they succeed in the classroom, on the field and on the stage. Nothing happens without community."

The strength of this experience is reflected in the lasting affection many alumni, families, and employees express for Brooks. In a recent survey, respondents most frequently identified close faculty-student relationships, academic excellence, community and belonging, and the commitment of faculty and staff among the qualities they value most. Their responses describe a school that is ambitious without being impersonal, supportive without diminishing expectations, and rich in opportunity without requiring students to specialize too early or define themselves by a single accomplishment.

As Brooks celebrates its centennial and prepares for a new chapter of leadership, it brings to the transition a distinctive educational philosophy, a deeply relational culture, and a community invested in the school's future. The opportunity is to build on these strengths in ways that remain faithful to Brooks' mission and character, ensuring that the school continues to offer generations of students an education that is intellectually challenging, personally meaningful, and transformative.

History

Brooks School was founded by the Rev. Endicott Peabody, headmaster of Groton School. Peabody believed there was a need for another small boarding school built on the Groton model. The school was to be named after Phillips Brooks, rector of Boston's Trinity Church, and the teaching was to be of the Episcopal faith.

Frank D. Ashburn, a graduate of Groton and Yale, was appointed the school's first headmaster. Brooks School opened on September 29, 1927, with 14 boys in the first and second forms. Thereafter, one form was added each year. The first class graduated in 1932. The school became coeducational in 1979. After 46 years as headmaster, Frank D. Ashburn retired in 1973. H. Peter Aitken, who served as headmaster from 1973 to 1986, succeeded Mr. Ashburn. Lawrence W. Becker was the school's third headmaster from 1986 until his retirement in 2008. [John R. Packard](#) was appointed head of school in 2008, making him the fourth leader in the school's history.



Mission

"The mission of Brooks School is to provide the most meaningful educational experience our students will have in their lives."

Within an environment of academic excellence, Brooks strives to promote and focus intellectual growth and curiosity. The school encourages students to develop analytic and creative capacities; to read critically; to think, speak and write with cogency and precision; to broaden aesthetic sensibility; to make effective use of technology in the learning process; and to be aware of the larger world beyond the school community.

Core Values:

- Empathy
- Engagement
- Integrity
- Passion
- Confidence
- Creativity



The Brooks Program

To learn more about the Brooks School program, we encourage you to explore the Brooks School website at <https://www.brooksschool.org/>. Below is a summary of key components.

Academics

With 161 credit courses, Brooks offers students the opportunity to craft an academic experience appropriate for their ability. Honors, advanced and AP designations provide a rich set of options across the curriculum. As they progress through their time at Brooks, students have inspiring choices, with electives that dive deeply into specific areas and to explore passion in a subject.

AP classes are offered throughout Brooks' curriculum from music to mathematics. Students may enroll in APs as early as their second year.

Competency-based education (CBE)

is at the core of Brooks School's academic vision. CBE supports the mission and core values by focusing on student practices towards gaining knowledge and understanding, and application in discipline-specific skill areas. The six competencies are:

1. Collaboration
2. Communication
3. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Analysis
4. Creativity & Innovation
5. Learning Agency
6. Social Justice Responsibility

Through this framework, Brooks strives to ensure educational equity for all students. Brooks embraces and supports competency-based education in the academic program by:

- Designing expectations for learning that are explicit, transparent, measurable, and transferable.
- Creating meaningful, positive, and empowering assessments and learning experiences for all students.
- Allowing students to make decisions and practice managing their learning in specific areas of meaningful engagement, preparation and self-advocacy and assignment completion according to an all-school rubric.

The Arts

In the studio or on the stage, the arts are at the center of Brooks students' experience, providing them with the opportunity to follow their curiosity, discover a new passion and acquire skills. The expansive arts programs in performing and visual arts are designed to promote and develop confidence and creativity. In the classroom, students choose from a wide range of courses, including advanced placement options. The power of the arts at Brooks lies in its balance of individual attention and ample opportunity.

Attached to Brooks' library is a 2,300-square-foot gallery in the Robert Lehman Art Center, where Brooks hosts exhibits and allows students to work side by side with internationally recognized artists several times a year. The stunning Center For The Arts brings together the visual, musical and performing arts at the center of campus, featuring a nearly 400-seat theater as well as ensemble spaces, studios, music practice rooms, and a digital media lab and recording studio.



Athletics

The Brooks athletics program is rooted in the belief that true education extends beyond academics. Through interscholastic competition and team dynamics, students learn to navigate adversity, practice resilience and develop vital leadership skills. Whether a student aspires to play a sport at the next level or is trying a sport for the very first time, Brooks challenges athletes to step outside their comfort zones and give everything they have, believing the playing field is an extension of the classroom. In alignment with a commitment to providing the most meaningful educational experience of their students' lives, the Brooks athletic program is designed to challenge the mind, body and spirit, providing a dynamic arena where students can pursue their passions and courageously discover new ones. Utilizing excellent facilities and competing in the Independent School League, Brooks Athletics empowers students to discover balance, embrace collaboration and build the lifelong character skills necessary to thrive long after the game is over.

Signature Programs

At Brooks School, signature programs extend learning beyond traditional classroom boundaries. These immersive initiatives focus on experiential education, cultural immersion, and specialized skill development:

Winter Term

Winter Term is a three-week intensive academic session that offers 25-32 unique classes each year, with 25-35% including domestic or global overnight travel. During this term, regular classes are paused, and students enroll in a single immersive course focused on intensive inquiry, hands-on discovery, or service learning. Courses feature cross-disciplinary topics, daily field trips, specialized workshops, or off-campus travel (ranging from marine biology in the Florida Keys to cultural explorations in New Orleans, Ireland, or Spain). The term culminates in the annual Winter Term Symposium, where students showcase their projects and findings to the school community.

Exchange Program

Founded in 1986, the Brooks School Exchange Program fosters global citizenship through reciprocal student exchanges with partner schools worldwide. Students have the opportunity to study abroad and host international exchange students, immersing themselves in new cultures, daily campus life, and family traditions. Partner destinations have included Peru, Botswana, Scotland, and Hungary.

In addition to short-term exchanges, Brooks participates in School Year Abroad (SYA), allowing fourth- and fifth-form students to spend a term studying in France, Italy, or Spain while earning credit toward their diploma. Since 1986, Brooks' Exchange Program has partnered with 10 international schools, with 4 currently active. One additional school relationship is being rekindled and 2 more are in an exploration phase. Each four-to-six-week exchange sends roughly 12 Brooks students abroad and hosts an equal number on campus



each year. More than 500 Brooksians have participated in Exchange to date.

Students on the Forefront Internships

Students on the Forefront, founded in 2004, currently places 15-20 students annually in hands-on internships; most recently 20 students held 13 distinct internships. Alumni, current parents, and friends of the school are integral to the program, sponsoring 100% of internships and adding essential expertise. Originally developed by the Science Department, the program was expanded to include humanities, finance, and the arts in the summer of 2024. The program aims to provide rising seniors with innovative experiences that will expose them to research, technology, and advanced studies in the sciences, humanities, finances, and arts. Students must be willing to commit to the programs for their entire length and recognize the serious obligations involved in such an undertaking. Students receive one academic minor credit, on a pass/fail capacity, for their internship.

The Campus

Although North Andover is only 40 minutes from downtown Boston, Brooks occupies 270 acres of forests and fields along the shores of Lake Cochichewick. More than a pastoral setting, the campus was intentionally designed to foster connection throughout the school day—between students and faculty, among colleagues, and among students themselves. At the heart of this design is Main Street, the bustling walkway that serves as the hub of the community. Along Main Street, students attend Chapel and classes, see musicals and art exhibits, share meals, and often spend time with the Head of School at his home.

Throughout the day, students from across the United States and around the world come together along Main Street, reinforcing a shared sense of belonging. The campus layout encourages faculty, staff, and students to see and know one another, creating opportunities for everyone to be seen, heard, and valued. Building that sense of connection is a shared responsibility, one in which everyone plays a part. At the beginning of each school year, Head of School John Packard reminds the community that Brooks is a place where people say “hello” to one another. He reinforces the tradition with a simple gesture: he gives a nickel to any student whose name he cannot recall.

At the center of Main Street stands the Head of School's home, a residence that for nearly a century has symbolized the centrality of human connection and the importance of community life at Brooks. More than a physical landmark, the home reflects the Head's integral place in the daily life of the school. Faculty and students gather there not only to work together but also to relax, share conversation, and enjoy one another's company. The residence embodies an important dimension of the Head's role: to be a visible, accessible, and engaged presence in the life of the community.

Completed in fall 2026, Brooks' [\\$6.7 million Luce Library renovation and Academic Commons project](#) offers spaces designed to foster collaborative learning and provide accessible areas for students and faculty to connect, whether for academic guidance or informal meetings. It has reimaged the library as a hub for teaching, learning and academic support, including:

- Five modern classrooms with flexible layouts for collaborative and interdisciplinary learning.
- Study and technology support areas, including centers focused on writing and quantitative strategies.
- Enhanced spaces for individual study, group projects and educational technology support.

Facts & Figures

- **Founded:** 1926
- **Heads of School since founding:** 4
- **Budgeted Enrollment:** 340
- **Boarding:** 70 percent; Day: 30 percent
- **Students of Color (U.S):** 30 percent
- **Applications (3-year average):** 1,017
- **Financial Aid assigned:** \$6,458,000; Average award: \$53,000
- **Students on Financial Aid:** 35 percent
- **Endowment:** ~\$140,000,000
- **Total Teaching Faculty:** 67
- **Faculty with advanced degree:** 80 percent
- **Faculty/Student ratio:** 1 to 5
- **Average Class Size:** 11
- **Advanced Placement courses:** 21
- **Interscholastic sports:** 15
- **Interscholastic teams:** 45



Challenges and Opportunities

The next head of school at Brooks School should be prepared to collaborate effectively with a dedicated board of trustees and a devoted school community to fulfill the school's mission and to lead the school 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:

- Brooks' school culture, philosophy, curriculum and overall program are distinguished by what most in the community describe as "challenge and high expectations balanced with joy, passion, and mutual support and connection." The head of school must model this ethos with their own behavior, accessibility, presence and engagement in all aspects of life on the campus.
- Strategic leadership that honors tradition while guiding the school forward in rapidly changing times will be critical. The next head of school must be a unifying presence across the extended Brooks community and serve as a visionary leader capable of addressing competing priorities and perspectives with integrity and empathy, all while strengthening Brooks' identity as a unique, community-centered school constructed around a dynamic boarding program.
- Brooks is fully enrolled with students well-matched to benefit from and sustain the curriculum, program and culture. Yet the pressures on enrollment at independent schools, and especially for boarding schools, are well documented and mounting. The next head of school will need to make enrollment management a priority in their strategic thinking, systems development, planning, and allocation of time and resources. The value proposition and identity of the school will require both ongoing attention and effective communication.
- In recent years, Brooks has done stunning work in the development of its infrastructure and physical facilities. The campus is both beautiful and highly functional. There will be ongoing challenges with the facilities, however, due both to ongoing wear and tear and the demands of preparing students for a changing world. The next head of school will need to be a thoughtful leader and planner collaborating effectively with others regarding upgrades for the facilities.





- Brooks School has a sound financial model and strong budgeting practices. Yet it is well understood that in an age of inflationary pressures, rising tuition, and pressured enrollment, the head of school, in close collaboration with the board of trustees, must make future financial planning a high priority. In pursuit of a financially stable future, philanthropic support will need to grow, both for annual and capital purposes. The head of school will need to make fundraising a priority.
- Faculty, and indeed all employees, work hard at Brooks and “wear many hats” to support students and the institution. This is part of the joy and invigorating spirit of being part of this wonderful community. As the general culture in the United States shifts, and as the needs and pressures on faculty adjust with those trends, the head of school must keep a close eye on balanced and fair, yet necessarily high, expectations for faculty and all employees.
- Brooks School is an intentionally diverse community, consisting of both boarding and day students, as well as students from a very wide array of backgrounds, including from outside the region and the United States. The next head of school must be committed to advancing the deep school commitment to inclusivity and belonging for everyone.

Qualities and Qualifications

The successful candidate to be head of school at Brooks 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:

- Demonstrated success as an inspirational, visionary, caring, wise and collaborative leader and educator.
- Ability to serve as a visible, energetic, active and engaged presence in the extended Brooks School community.
- Breadth of experience and perspective relevant to school leadership, and familiarity with school life, academics and programming in a small yet complex boarding and day school.
- Understanding and commitment to life and leadership in a close-knit residential school community.
- Personal integrity, high emotional intelligence and inspirational spirit, along with warmth, enthusiasm, and a sense of humor.

- Demonstrated experience as a strategic thinker and implementer of strategic vision.
- Capacity to serve as an ethical, decisive and transparent role model for administrators, faculty, staff and students, and capacity to call on others to be their best selves in a community.
- Financial acumen and a record of ambitious and data-driven innovation and progress.
- Fundraising insight, talent and skill.
- Demonstrated success as a systems thinker, while demonstrating genuine concern for the welfare of a community.
- Significant experience with building and supporting inclusive, equitable and broadly diverse communities.
- Talent and success in identifying, selecting, retaining, developing and inspiring outstanding teachers, staff and administrators.
- Approachability and ability to forge authentic relationships with a wide range of people both within the constituencies of the school and externally, including students, parents, alumni, and wider community members.
- Sophisticated understanding of independent school enrollment management, marketing, and effective communications.
- Superb written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills.
- An advanced degree.
- Willingness to lead in alignment with the mission, values, and strategic vision for the future of the school.





How To Apply

To be considered, a candidate must submit the following:

- A cover letter detailing your interest and the qualifications that make you a compelling candidate
- A resume or c.v.
- A statement of educational or leadership philosophy
- An additional writing sample, submitted in a single pdf with the philosophy statement (optional)
- At least three confidential references with contact information as specified on the RG175 website

Candidates should upload their application materials on the RG175 website:

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

The **deadline** for receipt of full application materials is **January 29, 2027**. Candidates are encouraged to submit their materials as soon as possible. The school anticipates making a final decision in the spring of 2027.

For more information, please contact RG175 consultants:

John Green
john.green@rg175.com

Bob Henderson
rhenderson@rg175.com

Marcia Prewitt Spiller
marcia.spiller@rg175.com

Brooks School Non-Discrimination Policy

Brooks School is a coeducational boarding and day school, grades 9 through 12, located in North Andover, Massachusetts. The school admits students of any race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational and admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletics and other school-administered programs and activities.