



MICDS

MARY INSTITUTE AND SAINT LOUIS COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Head of Lower School Position Statement
**Mary Institute and Saint Louis
Country Day School**

St. Louis, Missouri

July 1, 2019

RG 175
Change as Opportunity

In the center of the 100-acre, majestic MICDS campus stands the Beasley Lower School, appropriately for this is where from JK through Grade Four it all begins. Beasley is its own self-contained world, part of the greater universe, but possessing its own undivided, dedicated spaces. It is doubtful that any elementary school in America that is a division of a larger school can rival Beasley for its spacious homerooms and specialists' rooms for science, Spanish, music, drama, art, computer, outdoor play space, climbing wall, and, most unusual of all, its own gymnasium and library – all free from older students, all uniquely dedicated to the children just beginning their educational journey. It is a campus filled with warmth, happiness, high energy, and magical student art on every wall.

Not surprisingly, the self-contained nature of Beasley inspires a multitude of comments about its sense of community. A new teacher says, "I have felt so welcomed by everybody, top to bottom." A



more senior teacher comments that, "We feel so supported. The administration really values our work/life balance." And this from a new parent: "It's been such a wonderful experience. The teachers and staff provide a safe feeling for their students and really engage the students to explore and find their passion. It's amazing: in just a few short months at the School, we already feel like part of the community."

In addition to the remarkable facilities at their disposal, faculty find their small classes a dream. Starting with 12 to 14 students in Junior Kindergarten and 18 thereafter, each classroom through Grade 2 has both a lead teacher and a credentialed associate. In Grades 3 and 4, there is one associate per grade who floats between the two homerooms. The curriculum is constructivist in its design: Singapore Math, Lucy Calkin's Readers and Writers Workshop, the





take a visitor by surprise. Major employers in the area – Bayer (Monsanto) and Anheuser-Busch Inbev, and Ralston-Purina, for example – along with higher ed institutions like Washington University and St. Louis University, bring a high-end, well educated, international, multicultural work force to the area, many members of which want their children to attend Beasley and interact with children from diverse backgrounds.

The success of the current Lower School Director suggests that her

successor will do well to continue her equanimity, balance, kindness, and open-door approach to leading the division. That person will likely have a broad base of experience in early childhood and elementary education, solid classroom experience at that level, and, ideally, administrative experience as well. There is a strong desire among Beasley’s faculty for a leader who has a profound understanding of child development – both intellectual and social – and who is knowledgeable of best practices in teaching at the elementary level. When asked about the division’s needs in the next

Responsive Classroom – these highly regarded programs are the backbone of the instructional body, augmented by a homegrown approach to social studies that emphasizes projects and integrated learning. Noting the intentionality of the curriculum, one teacher comments that, “We build better readers and writers by reading and writing!”

Beasley’s teachers are beneficiaries of the MICDS commitment to professional development. There are discrete funds available for workshops, travel, and course work. As one associate teacher says, “They bend over backwards to help you be a successful teacher.” Working to align their curricula from grade to grade, teachers find they have developed a common vocabulary, especially notable in math where a JK-12 specialist has successfully led the transition to Singapore math. In all the core content areas, great attention is paid to vertical integration and curricular congruence to assure a robust and rigorous academic program throughout the School.

Reflecting the changing demographics of greater metropolitan St. Louis, 37% of MICDS students identify as students of color, and 25% of students receive financial aid. These data are nearly identical for Beasley, and the corridors and classrooms show a mixture of cultures that can



few years, Beasley's current leader cites the importance of continuing integrative work in social studies, greater thematic integration across the grades, increased Project-based Learning (now primarily in Grade Two), and culturally responsive teaching. These efforts will sensibly form a portion of the ongoing agenda for the next Director. Additionally, that person will want to learn Beasley's traditions, which include the Fourth Grade Play and Graduation, Art Gallery Night, Skate Week, Swim Week, and numbers of others that reflect the rich history of a school founded in 1859.

Another task for the new Director will be to learn about the other elementary schools in the area with an eye toward helping to clarify Beasley's differentiation from the crowd. A current parent has written that, "We need to communicate not only to current families, staff and faculty, but also to students, what makes us different and unique and why MICDS should be the choice of a four-year-old thinking about going to the School through the senior year." There are undeniable benefits to being part of an outstanding pre-K through Grade 12 school that must be part of Beasley's marketing efforts, led by the Director, whose involvement in Admissions and outreach is vital.

It is worth noting that because it has its own facilities and faculty, Beasley is very much like its own school and the Director very much like a Head of School. The difference between the two positions is that the leader of Beasley can focus on child development, curriculum, and pedagogy without having to work with a Board, fund-raise, be involved in the broader community, attend alumni functions, or have multiple evening events. Being Beasley's leader is much closer to why most people went into education in the first place, and someone who wants teaching and learning to be the focus of a career will be the right person for this amazing school.



THE OFFICIAL JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATION

REPORTS TO: HEAD OF SCHOOL
FLSA: EXEMPT

JOB SUMMARY

The Head of the Lower School has full responsibility for the oversight and daily operation of the Lower School, which provides a coeducational learning environment for 200 children in Junior Kindergarten through 4th grade. Contributes to the work of the Administrative Team in its efforts to align the culture of the School with the School's mission.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Leadership

- Direct the Lower School in all matters relating to students, faculty, parents, and curriculum in accordance with the MICDS Mission, Philosophy and Goals.
- Provide leadership in developing the vital partnership between parents and the School.
- Oversee day-to-day operation of the Lower School, establishing and maintaining an atmosphere that fosters learning and social well-being.
- Provide leadership, encouragement and support to faculty, using a participatory model.
- Mentor and collaborate with the Early Childhood and Elementary Grades Coordinators on curriculum development and pedagogy.
- Evaluate all Lower School faculty.
- Oversee student referral process (in consultation with Lower School Learning Specialist/Counselor).
- Chair Lower School Faculty Hiring Recommendation Committees.
- Oversee and mentor the work of the Director of Extended Day (extended day and holiday camp programs).
- In consultation with the Director of Finance and appropriate Lower School leadership, plan for and allocate the Lower School budget as designated the Head of School and Director of Finance.
- Serve as member of the Administrative Team.

Communication and Collaboration

- Ensure clear and open communication among all constituents of the School.
- Communicate regularly with auxiliary groups and support offices of the School (e.g., Parents Association, Operations, Business, Development, Admission and Technology).
- Serve as member of all Lower School Admission Committees and participate in admission events.



Teaching and Learning

- Take responsibility for the design and implementation of the Lower School curriculum and programs, while remaining informed of implications and connections of the Lower School curriculum to the Middle and Upper Schools.

- Maintain high standards of developmentally appropriate practice and quality classroom teaching and teamwork through faculty evaluation and professional development.
- Keep current with research about early childhood and elementary education by attending conferences and maintaining memberships in professional organizations.
- Serve as member of the Academic Leadership Committee



Coordinates other projects and responsibilities that may be added at the School's discretion.

JOB REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Graduate degree and extensive experience as an educator.
- A strong commitment to innovative, non-sectarian, co-ed day independent school education.
- Strong leadership skills.
- Excellent communication skills, both oral and written and demonstrated success as an advisor to senior leadership.
- Strong proficiency in a variety of computer software applications, including Google G Suite and Microsoft Office 365.
- A high level of integrity, curiosity and warmth, an optimistic orientation to life, a strong work ethic and a good sense of humor.

OTHER INFORMATION

- A criminal history and background check is required and must be successfully completed.
- Generally works in standard office conditions and climate.
- May work at a desk and computer for extended periods of time.
- May work in varied outside weather conditions during special activities and events.
- Must be available to work evening and weekend special events.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for the position, please send a:

- Letter of interest
- Current resume, and a
- Writing sample

In a single PDF to **both** Debbie Reed **and** Tom Hudnut as follows:

dereed2014@gmail.com and tom@tomhudnut.com

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 1, 2019