



**POLY
PREP**
COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Head of Lower School Position Statement
Poly Prep Country Day School
Brooklyn, New York
July 1, 2019



THE SCHOOL

Founded in 1854, Poly had various campuses before arriving on Dyker Heights in south Brooklyn early in the 20th Century. No school in metropolitan New York can rival Poly's 26-acre, flat Middle and Upper School campus that features classroom buildings, athletic centers, playing fields, and a beautiful greensward that includes a pond in front of the school, where the honking of geese is a frequent accompaniment to the thud of tennis balls being struck on the nearby courts. Since 1995, the Lower School (N-4) has occupied a masterfully restored, award-winning former mansion in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn. Given the explosive popularity of Brooklyn over the last two decades, Poly Prep is



“hot.” With record numbers of applicants, record financial support, enviable diversity, stellar college placement, championship teams in sports and debate, the school is riding a wave of success that is visible and palpable.

Drawing its nearly 1,100 students from all five boroughs, Poly is the “now” school in New York. Led by a dynamic Head of School currently in his third year, Poly seeks Heads for its Lower and Upper divisions to complete the creation of a strong administrative team.





hires marvels that “people here are incredibly committed to the school.” While political orthodoxy of a decidedly liberal stripe stalks many independent school campuses these days, at Poly there is a refreshing acceptancy of diversity of thought. Students recently told a visitor that “we have Republicans here who speak up; you’d never find that at the other schools in Brooklyn.” Perhaps the school’s commitment to international awareness has something to do with the creation of such an accepting climate:

about 80 Poly students each year do some sort of “study away,” whether in Europe, South America, Asia, or the Navajo Nation.

THE PEOPLE

Many schools claim to be diverse and go through strange gyrations trying to inculcate and prove it, but at Poly Prep diversity is organic and visible. 22% of Poly’s students receive Financial Aid and 40% identify as people of color and it’s a fact, not a confection. If it were still fashionable to use the term “melting pot,” that’s how one would describe Poly today. It is a happy, robust place that lives its values of “Mind, Body, and Character” through its curriculum, service opportunities, outreach activities, and co-curricular offerings.

Walking the corridors of the school, one senses a positive vibe among teachers and students. They like each other. Mutual respect is the order of the day. Faculty are dedicated and accessible. Students are eager to tell a visitor that the faculty “are there for us. They care so much.” Not surprisingly, the faculty’s collective experience spans the decades. More than a few have been there for over 25 years, while the number of teachers new to Poly but having taught elsewhere is surprising, with more than 50 teachers hired across the three divisions during the last two years. One of the newer

In keeping with such a world view, there is a nascent Institute for Ethics and Leadership at Poly that will emphasize and amplify the school’s commitments to diversity, sustainability, service, and wellness. Here again is Poly putting its proverbial money where its mouth is. A school that is willing to tackle these issues head-on, address them and do something about them, is a school to be admired.



LOWER SCHOOL: UNIQUE IN MANY WAYS

The Poly Lower School is located in Park Slope, about 5 miles from the Dyker Heights Campus. Grades N-4 are beautifully accommodated in an historic 19th Century mansion that faces Prospect Park. Renovations and additions in 2005 created the first LEED-certified school building in New York City. The Lower School has all the welcoming feel of a "home", where the LS Head greets students on the sidewalk each morning and the adults know the name of every child.

Warm, friendly, diverse, and accessible, this gem of a Lower School has been discovered by the discerning professional class of brownstone Brooklyn. The demand for Poly's Lower School has climbed steadily in the past five years and virtually all students matriculate to the Middle School in Dyker Heights. Parents have found a school where partnership is welcomed and their young children are taught by a dedicated and seasoned faculty.

There are two sections in each grade with a teacher and associate teacher in each section, creating a very low and desirable student-teacher ratio. The program is age-appropriate, developmentally oriented in the youngest grades, and full of enriching opportunities including community service, field trips, and a wide variety of experiences in the arts and athletics. Poly Prep recently adopted a Singapore Math based program and has an eclectic approach to literacy, writing, and reading. There are student support services in reading and math, both for remediation and enrichment.

Most important of all, this is a division with very happy and energized students who love coming to school every morning.



THE POSITION

The Head of Lower School at Poly Prep is more than a principal, he or she is also a campus director and the curricular leader of a highly qualified group of teachers. The Head of Poly Prep is on the Lower School campus once a week and is engaged, visible, and involved. However the programmatic leadership of the Lower School is the responsibility of the LS Head. There is a great opportunity here to enhance an already strong program in a variety of ways. These include attention to integrating the early childhood program with the elementary grades, creating a more coherent scope and sequence in curriculum, and working closely with the Middle School Head to ensure a smooth transition to fifth grade and beyond.

Interested Candidates

should send—in a single PDF:

- A letter of Interest
- A current resume, and
- A writing sample (The writing sample need not be a statement of educational philosophy. It can be an article in a school publication, a letter to parents, remarks at graduation – just something that demonstrates how you express yourself.)

And email it to Clay Stites at: clay.stites@comcast.net

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 15, 2019

THE PERSON

The next Head of Poly Prep’s Lower School should have:

- A warm, welcoming and engaging personality
- A love of young children and an interest in their development
- An affinity for working with parents, especially those of young children
- The right combination of empathy and intelligence necessary to be an effective school leader
- Teaching and administrative experience in the elementary grades
- Knowledge of best practices for early childhood education and of 21st Century curricula and pedagogy
- An affinity for and appreciation of a community like Brooklyn
- A demonstrable commitment to diversity

