



St. Elizabeth's School

Head of School Position Statement

St. Elizabeth's School

Denver, CO

July 1, 2020



ST. ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL: HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

THE SCHOOL

When you walk in the front door, you feel the warmth, the welcome, and the essence of St. Elizabeth's School. This is a school that holds a unique place in the world of private, independent and Episcopal schools. People choose to work at and to send their children to St. Elizabeth's School because it lives its values and it is a healthy place for children and their families. The academic program is balanced with a dedication to effectively serving a broad range of learners. There is unmistakable intentionality and purposefulness at SES, because the entire administration, faculty and staff are truly committed to being a world class educational institution where students, faculty, staff, and parents come together in a remarkably diverse, inclusive and close-knit community.



St. Elizabeth's School is an Episcopal, fully accredited, coeducational, independent day school for children kindergarten through grade 8. The School embraces its strong faith tradition and it is authentic in its commitment to equity, diversity, inclusiveness, and social justice. Not many schools challenge themselves the way St. Elizabeth's does. The School is characterized as an "intentionally inclusive K-8 Episcopal School" with a palpable commitment to diversity and inclusion as evidenced by an effective sliding scale tuition system that is equitable and welcoming to all families.

At St. Elizabeth's students can be themselves, as they tackle new challenges, learn from mistakes, and come to appreciate the importance of working collaboratively with others. It is a school that is poised for continued educational excellence. Its program is family-focused and deeply rooted in social-emotional wellness principles, including an extraordinarily well-articulated and practiced commitment to social justice, diversity, inclusion and equity.



THE POSITION

"The St. Elizabeth's Way" is based on intentional and utmost respect for children, honoring their individuality, and guiding them to be the best they can be. At SES, children are given time and space to grow and mature. A fundamental understanding of the developmental stages of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth informs the curriculum and pedagogy. Carefully designed and executed learning experiences, led by extraordinary teachers, are integrated across subjects, drawing on powerful, relevant content and student interests to support the development of internal motivation and strong voices. Learning at St. Elizabeth's is authentic; thinking is emphasized over rote learning, and students are expected to creatively utilize their knowledge and skills. High expectations are coupled with appropriate scaffolding throughout the Lower and Middle School programs, so students know what to aim for and how to get there. In this way, St. Elizabeth's prepares students to be innovators and achievers who have the flexibility, skills, and

inclinations to solve problems, new and old. The School now seeks an energetic and accomplished Head of School to partner with the Board, the school's leadership team, and the faculty and staff to continue SES's well-deserved reputation for excellence. The Head reports to the Board of Trustees and the Head is the primary administrator for the effective execution of the School's overall program, personnel, operations, fundraising and activities. The Head leads all faculty and staff to operationalize the school's mission and philosophy.

THE HISTORY OF ST. ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL

St. Elizabeth's was founded to address the issue of social justice, equity and inclusion in Denver. The founders sought to serve young children and their families in a diverse ethnic and socio-economic community. Their spirit of inclusion and equity were common threads in the School's founding, history and growth. Today, this promise of diversity is central to the excellence of a St. E's education and is a deeply held and lived value throughout the school community.

Over the years, the School has thrived and now serves approximately 154 children. The next Head of School must embrace the mission and history of St. Elizabeth's and must be able to lead the School in a new chapter of growth and financial sustainability. An important priority for their leadership will be to energetically propel the School forward with continuing focus on the development of each student's unique potential within a diverse community that emphasizes global awareness, social justice, service and responsibility.

ST. ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL: HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

THE PLACE

Very few schools can rival the premier location and ambience of the School's campus. It is a unique and transforming place – an oasis tucked in a residential enclave on the westside of City Park with neighboring small businesses and churches. The School combines the vibrancy of an aging school building in the midst of a diverse residential neighborhood with easy access to the Stapleton, City Park, Park Hill and Clayton neighborhoods of Denver.

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

There is palpable warmth, charm, and energy at SES. Whether in the classroom or on an outdoor field trip or a Mindfulness class or a community service project to benefit a city shelter, there is a distinctive agenda that both students and adults embrace with relevancy, vitality, trust and respect.

The School serves a student body of 154 students who follow a modest dress code. Many of them arrive at SES as curious Kindergarteners, and all leave ready to confidently tackle the next stage in their academic and personal growth. Each year, the School's graduates earn a wealth of options from which to choose, as they consider where they will progress for their high school education.

Strong intellectual engagement and academic growth are evident at all grade levels. Learning through inquiry finds students asking questions, investigating, gathering data, considering possible



ST. ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL: HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

outcomes, and testing viable conclusions. Small class sizes and flexible groupings encourage interaction, conversations, and collaboration that translate into respect for student individuality and differing paths to high levels of skill development. It is clear that the "St. Elizabeth's Way" places each child at the center of his and her own learning. There is a constant hum of exploration that envelops the entire school.

"Energetic, caring, and competent" consistently characterize the very dedicated faculty and staff at St. Elizabeth's who believe wholeheartedly in



the mission of the School and are dedicated to the notion that an active and collaborative learning environment can empower children to understand, participate, and succeed.

SES teachers possess certification for their respective age level teaching assignments and have varying degrees of longevity at the School. All teachers hold bachelor degrees; a majority of faculty members have earned advanced degrees. Lower classrooms are also supported by co-teachers who work closely and in partnership with the well-loved lead teachers. It is evident that the School's faculty and staff model the School's commitments for respect, social justice, and human rights in all they say and do.

An Educational Support Team composed of educational specialists, speech and language professionals, and counselors and tutors works closely with classroom teachers, administration and families to identify and support the learning styles and motivations of each and every student at the School.



ST. ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL: HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH



"Highly competent, dedicated and simply extraordinary" are familiar attributes of the members of the School's administrative team. The head of school is "the face" of the institution and not a day nor moment goes by without the active and present leadership of this stellar head. He is supported by program principals at the upper and lower schools, the business manager, the director of admissions, and the director of development. An administrative assistant and an efficient front office person work hand-in-hand with the head of school and his team to manage the day-to-day schedule, operations, activities and programming. All in all, it is an effective, lean, and very impressive leadership team.

The School's trustees are a dedicated and diverse group of parents, former parents and community advocates who love and appreciate the School, its program, and its people. Board members are committed to the implementation of best practices in independent school governance, while maintaining strong connections with the greater Denver residents and the school community. Trustees maintain a dynamic relationship with the Head of School, characterized by shared purpose and clear boundaries. Singularly apparent is trustee dedication to the School's mission. The commitment of trustees is remarkable and is matched by their generosity of time, talent, and resources.

ST. ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL: HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

THE FAMILIES

Families at SES are guided by the premise that "diversity, inclusion, warm engagement, active volunteering and uncompromised learning go hand in hand." Many parents make a personal sacrifice for private school education via their financial and voluntary commitments to the School. The evidence of successful outcomes for their children are clear: articulate, confident, and educated young people who know and appreciate their role in a larger, diverse, ever-changing global society and who easily transition to high school, college and beyond. Parents clearly understand that St. Elizabeth's is dedicated to making each child's experience, rich, diverse, personalized, and focused on outcomes that will serve them for a lifetime.

The Parent Association is an active organization that provides leadership in fund-raising and friend-raising activities and programs. In addition, members of the Episcopal Church support the School's mission and its efforts to provide educational excellence, without regard to religious affiliation and church membership. Kindergarten through grade 8 students attend regular and well-led Chapel services that prove to be an all community unifier and a valued and embraced tradition.

THE PROGRAM

The multi-age program is divided into two sections: The Lower School (Kindergarten through Grade 5); and the Middle School (Grade 6 through Grade 8).

SES's K-5 Program embraces a philosophy of valuing and addressing differing rates and styles of learning, while developing strong basic skills, critical thinking, self-awareness, and self-respect in all children. Lead teachers and co-teachers work collaboratively to create safe environments where each child is encouraged to take risks and to develop their unique voice. Active learning underscores each lesson. Students are given every opportunity to succeed and to garner confidence in their undertakings and in interdependent relationships. Mathematics, literacy, science, social studies, and Spanish are core subject areas that are explored through project-based modules designed for active learning. In addition, physical education, choir,



ST. ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL: HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

drama, performing and visual arts, library studies, technology, Mindfulness, and social-emotional learning activities are integrated throughout the grades providing students to express their knowledge, skills, and understandings.

St. Elizabeth's Middle School is characterized by friendships, creativity and a quest to establish independence, interpersonal skills, and identity. Students tackle increasingly sophisticated concepts and questions, while acquiring critical content-area knowledge and skills. Classroom, studio, and individual/group activities cultivate intellectual curiosity and inventiveness, foster empathy, encourage perseverance, and nurture self-confidence. Core studies in the Middle School include reading, creative writing, communications, language arts, mathematics, science, history, technology, civics, ethics, Mindfulness, and Spanish. Middle School students connect new information to what they already know, gain confidence in their abilities to reason, make sound decisions, solve problems, and communicate. By the time students are in the Middle School, they are ready to create and implement extended independent studies, embark on a weeklong outdoor education program, a field study adventure to Washington, DC, and participate in service learning opportunities and research.

St. Elizabeth's School has a strong commitment to serving students and families in a professional learning community all year long.



There are many options offered and the menu of offerings is impressive:

- SES's before and after school programs for all students (elementary and middle) throughout the year. Outdoor play, breakfast in the morning, homework time and healthy snacks in the afternoon are important components. In addition, the School offers a wide range of extra-curricular classes, workshops and sports activities in conjunction with after school care;
- SES students have the opportunity to join a choir;
- Parent education forums designed for young families and families in the community;
- An abundance of all school community events and activities, which are intentionally scheduled for fun, engagement and collaboration (eg. Fall Fest, Talent Show, Spring Sing, and Spring Auction); and
- Athletics are open to all who are interested and ready to play.

THE STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

The new Head of School will benefit from the many strengths of St. Elizabeth's including:

- A lauded Family Commitment Plan which is based on a sliding scale tuition system which allows welcome and true engagement of a well-balanced and economically diverse student body;
- Eager, motivated, active, and happy students who thrive academically, socially, physically, and emotionally and who exhibit a strong love for their school and their unequalled educational experiences;
- Caring, competent, and dedicated teachers who are skilled in education, who are student-focused, and who promote mutual respect and social responsibility in and out of school;
- A skilled administrative team comprised of individuals who work well together and who wear many hats, as they go the extra mile in making the School operate seamlessly;
- A dedicated parent community that strongly supports the school's commitments to Kindergarten through Grade 8 education, diversity, equity, empowerment and social justice;
- An effective parent association that strongly supports volunteerism and that maintains good connections with school personnel;
- A highly intentional and well-developed curriculum that translates to happy, educated, confident students who understand the value of critical thinking, collaboration, caring, and meaningful inquiry;
- A committed and dedicated Board of Trustees who understands independent school governance, thinks strategically, and acts as important stewards of the School; and
- A unified, safe and well-maintained campus that is clean and effectively supports the School's program.

CHALLENGES FOR THE YEARS AHEAD

In its commitment to sustaining excellence, St. Elizabeth's School also faces challenges.

Like many independent schools in America today, SES is faced with the need to grow its financial base to ensure its continuing ability to attract and retain outstanding teachers, to remain accessible and affordable for a broad range of families, to maintain an aging facility, and to sustain its stellar program and reputation. At the same time, demographics and the emergence of more public charter schools in the area have combined to impose increased competition for elementary and middle school-aged children in Denver.



ST. ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL: HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

THE JOB

While the new Head will be welcomed to the school with a plethora of strengths, it will be critical that the new leader:

- Continue to promote, lead and grow the School's strong and effective Kindergarten through Grade 8 program;
- Develop strategies to optimize enrollment and limit attrition;
- Boost awareness of SES and bolster its reputation within the city;
- Conduct regular and individual team meetings, faculty meetings, and classroom observations to support teachers, specialists and staff in instructional design, curricular adherence, professional development, classroom management, school and work schedules, differentiated instruction and adherence to school principles of collaboration, responsibility, respect, motivation, equity, communication and active service learning;
- Provide strong faculty, teacher intern, peer mentor oversight and guidance;
- Effectively work with the school's Student Support Team;
- Partner with the Chaplain in leading and sustaining the successful Chapel offerings;
- Coordinate parent meetings and lead discussions related to the school's curriculum, instruction, pedagogy, practices and expectations;
- Along with the administrative team, host admissions orientations and work closely with the Director of Admissions and faculty in elementary admissions decisions;
- Oversee all testing and testing/screenings for admissions;
- Review all resumes and interview all teachers, teacher interns and substitutes and make all hiring decisions;



ST. ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL: HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

- Complete all staff, teacher and all co-teacher evaluations;
- Interpret test scores and lead assessment forum to teachers, parents and administrators;
- Mediate teacher, teacher intern and staff conflicts;
- Oversee information regarding absences/tardies/performance of faculty and staff;
- Monitor student progress and assimilation to school and the students' individual, academic and personal growth;
- Oversee the work of the School's subcontractors, vendors and consultants (including, but not limited to the school counselor, the educational specialists, the consultants, family therapists, speech and languages consultants, testing consultants, etc.)
- Oversee continuing strong student matriculation at area high schools;
- Serve as a teacher substitute when unable to secure daily substitutes for faculty and staff absences;
- Manage teacher and staff requests for continuing professional development;
- Participate and lead all school activities (including, but not limited to Breakfasts, Donor Events, Fair, etc.)
- Be the School's chief communicator;
- Guide faculty in reconciling the School's dual commitments to differentiating instruction and to maintaining high standards of academic achievement;
- Manage school discipline, conflict resolution, counseling and referrals;
- Support teachers in classroom management; discipline and instruction;
- Write and edit instructional and curriculum communiques for school publications;
- Serve as primary instruction and curriculum expert and be fully apprised of current educational philosophy, thought and practice;
- Retain current information on educational research, brain research and successful teaching practices;
- Meet regularly with administrative team to solve/discuss admissions, attrition, retention, parent concerns/issues, accidents, legal issues, operations, space and facilities, personnel, assessments, etc.;
- Represent St. Elizabeth's School at local, regional and national meetings/conferences (e.g. NAES, NAIS, ACIS, etc.)
- Possess current and necessary educational field and management certifications and training relative to health and safety practices and requirements (e.g. CPR and Blood Borne Pathogens Training); and
- Inform and have oversight of all janitorial, plant, campus health, safety and maintenance needs.



QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES OF THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL



A successful candidate for the position will be able to demonstrate the following skills, values, and experiences:

- Proven commitment to elementary and middle school education and the capacity to lead and continue development of effective curriculum and training across grades K through 8;
- Ability to fundraise and generate enthusiasm and advocacy for the School's mission, annual operations, and long term financial viability;
- Wisdom, experience and grace to be a mentor to competent faculty and staff and a key resource to parents of children ranging from early childhood to early adolescence;
- Strong ability to strike the right balance between maintaining a warm, approachable presence and being a clear, decisive leader;
- Commitment to lead a diverse school with the ability to help others to learn from moments of misunderstanding or conflict;
- Compelling communication skills with the ability to captivate others with the School's story and the proficiency and eloquence to articulate the benefits of a strong elementary and middle school education;
- A proven track record of finding, attracting, motivating, evaluating, supporting, and retaining outstanding elementary faculty and staff;
- Ability to manage difficult conversations and to work through differences of opinion;
- A sense of humor and the energy and optimism necessary to take joy in the leadership of a dynamic school and its community; and
- Fully embrace the school's mission statement and culture.

ST. ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL: HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

THE SEARCH

St. Elizabeth's School has retained Doreen S. Oleson, Ed.D., from Resource Group 175 to lead this head of school search.

There are two ways for qualified candidates to apply.

You may either apply online at:

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

Or

Send an email to Doreen before **May 1, 2019** that includes--in ONE PDF document:

- A letter expressing interest in the position;
- A curriculum vitae; and
- 3 current references.

Applications should be sent to:
doreenoleson@gmail.com.

St. Elizabeth's School is a non-profit 501(c) 3 corporation. In accordance with federal law, the School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin, family configuration and sexual/gender orientation in its administration of its education and admissions policies, its scholarship and loan programs, its athletic programs, and all other school administered programs.

