



The
Cathedral
School

Kindergarten through 8th Grade
Independent | Coeducational | All Faiths

Head of School Position Statement

The Cathedral School

New York, New York
July 1, 2021

RG 175

Change as Opportunity

THE CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

Head of School Search for July 1, 2021

OVERVIEW

“Nestled alongside the great Cathedral of St. John the Divine lies another haven of light and quiet, The Cathedral School.” – NYSAIS Visiting Team (2019)

The Cathedral School holds a very special place among New York City independent schools. Located on a remarkable 13-acre campus in Morningside Heights, Cathedral is a K-8 school with heart, where one can instantly feel the excitement and joy of highly engaged children and adults working together with humility and purpose. Parents choose to send their children to Cathedral for the same reasons faculty and staff commit to working there: it delivers on its commitment to academic excellence and lives its values as a remarkably caring and diverse school community.

Cathedral seeks a new Head of School who will inspire the school community, balance tradition and innovation, and ensure continuing program excellence. The next Head of School will build upon a strong foundation. The ideal candidate will possess the expertise, empathy, and energy to lean into the challenging questions of 21st century education, to lead an outstanding faculty, and to move The Cathedral School forward with confidence.



MISSION AND CORE VALUES

The Cathedral School of St. John the Divine – an independent K-8 school rooted in the Episcopal tradition – educates students to become articulate, confident, and responsible citizens of the world through rigorous academics, innovative approaches to learning, and the nurturing of their aspirations in a diverse community of all faiths.

This mission is brought to life through its core values: Cooperation, Courage, Integrity, Kindness, Passion for Learning, Respect, and Responsibility. Emphasis on these values and evidence of their practice is apparent in classrooms, in corridors, on walls, and in the conduct of both adults and children throughout the School.

The Cathedral School is committed to academic excellence in a curriculum that integrates critical thinking, the arts, athletics, and leadership development. The School believes that the recognition and appreciation of differences in race, socioeconomic status, cultural or religious tradition, age, gender, ability, or sexual orientation enhance an individual's sense of identity and broadens respect for others. Through both the curriculum and informal school experiences, students at The Cathedral School come to understand the inherent value of all people and the importance of working towards equity in all that they do.

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HISTORY

Founded in 1901 by the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, cathedral for the Episcopal Diocese of New York, The Cathedral School is a place where century-old traditions live on in vibrant, modern ways. As a school, Cathedral celebrates and honors its history, while integrating the technology and innovation that have redefined education and our world.

The Cathedral School has always charged to the forefront of equity, justice, and social change. Originally founded as a boarding school for boys in the Cathedral's choir, The Cathedral School grew

into an independent, coeducational, Episcopal K-8 day school for children of all faiths during the 20th century.

At a time when school integration was being challenged, The Cathedral School became one of the most substantially integrated independent schools in the country. Ten years later, in the fall of 1974, Cathedral admitted its first female students.

Throughout the whirlwind societal changes of the 20th century and the technological changes of the 21st, The Cathedral School has remained tied to its core traditions. Students

still use the 13-acre Cathedral Close as an outdoor classroom; family-style meals still nourish students' bodies and souls; eighth graders still receive personalized "bookplates" from teachers prior to Commencement; and, of course, some Cathedral students continue to take part in the children's choir for the largest Gothic cathedral in the world.

What has remained constant since 1901 is Cathedral School's passionate commitment to academic excellence combined with the development of articulate, confident, responsible citizens of the world.



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By the Numbers

33

Upper School Electives, Clubs and Affinity Groups

2

on-campus playgrounds

13

acres of academic buildings, gardens, and green space



75%

of our faculty members have advanced degrees

6:1

student to teacher ratio

50

annual NYC field trips

1

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the world's largest Gothic cathedral

2

on-campus gyms

12,000

square foot expansion includes a Media and Innovation Center and STEAM Makerspace

19

Interscholastic sports teams

7

Core Values

3

peacocks (Harry, Jim, and Phil)



GOVERNANCE

The governance structure of the School is directly linked to The Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The School acquired its own 501(c)(3) status in March 2017, which was a significant change, and the support of the Cathedral's leadership was instrumental in facilitating this transition. With a proviso for decision-making in line with the Cathedral's mission and values, an independent Board of Trustees is empowered to lead the School, to hire its Head of School, and to oversee its finances, fundraising, and facilities. The Dean of the Cathedral is an active member of the School's Board, and there is close cooperation between the Cathedral and the School.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

"I always tell families, "If you want your child to be known, send them to Cathedral." – Head of Lower School

Cathedral is proud to be a K-8 school, and its faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, and parents are united in their belief that skill development, character development, and leadership development are nurtured by this structure. The School is divided into two divisions, the Lower School (K-4), and the Upper School (5-8). The Lower School is primarily homeroom-based, and the Upper School is a blend of a homeroom and an advisory model. An important transition occurs between Grades 4 and 5 with the introduction of

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departmentalization, additional courses, increased autonomy, and opportunities for all students to participate in outstanding programs in interscholastic athletics, arts, and drama.

The curriculum at The Cathedral School is designed with an expectation of excellence. It cultivates critical thinking, thoughtful questions, demonstrated knowledge, and a respect for others. Cathedral students have the intellectual rigor, extraordinary academic foundation, communication skills, and personal confidence to thrive as individuals, bold and purposeful leaders, and empowered citizens.

The School's century-old campus offers playgrounds, trees, lawns, and unparalleled opportunities for large-scale STEAM projects and outdoor learning. Innovative art, music, technology, and language programs are offered within the framework of a traditional foundation. Cathedral's graduates, who go on to matriculate to the area's top high schools and the nation's top universities, are leaders with confidence in their own voices, demonstrated academic achievement, a willingness to create and invent, and a profound joy in learning.

Leadership development is a core part of the School's character education program, and Upper School students enjoy special opportunities to build upon their learning. As a result, graduates of The Cathedral School are known as being not only academically well-prepared, but also for their disproportionate leadership in their next schools.

"The Cathedral School environment develops leadership skills by encouraging students to embrace themselves and giving them the confidence to share their ideas." – Former Student



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SPIRITUALITY

The mission statement of The Cathedral School highlights its Episcopal identity as a community that welcomes children and families of all faiths. In the School's approach to the study of religion and emphasis on character education, the diverse voices and experiences of the community are welcomed into the conversation. Through chapel, all-school evensongs, and classroom inquiry, The Cathedral School is a place where students can begin to explore important questions of purpose and meaning.



EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inclusion is at the core of the mission of The Cathedral School, and it is significant to note that this commitment grew out of – and is strongly reinforced by – the School's relationship with The Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The opportunity for children to grow and learn together in a diverse community of individuals is an invaluable aspect of the education that the Church values and that the School provides.

At Cathedral, the Church and the School share a belief that all children benefit from growing up in a racially and economically

diverse school community. During 2019-20, 42% of Cathedral students were identified by their parents as children of color and 40% of students received need-based financial aid. Furthermore, Cathedral offers a wide variety of programming to support its commitment to diversity. Students have the opportunity to participate in affinity, identity, or ally groups at every grade level; parents have an array of support and affinity groups in which they can play an active role; and teachers regularly attend diversity-related workshop and professional development seminars.

A defining aspect of Cathedral's academic experience is the

School's Identity Curriculum, which is nationally recognized as being at the forefront of diversity, equity, and justice work in independent schools. Over their years at Cathedral, children are challenged to examine their own lives, to question assumptions, and to develop the values and skills needed to connect with others in addressing the challenges of a complex and interconnected world.

"My wife and I truly value the diversity that The Cathedral School offers. It is so much a part of students becoming citizens of the world, one of the school's primary goals." – Current Parent

A REMARKABLE CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY

Located in Morningside Heights on Manhattan's Upper West Side, The Cathedral School is set in the heart of a 13-acre campus unlike any other in Manhattan. Cathedral's campus is an oasis of calm that facilitates learning, playing, and reflection and that is home to three beloved peacocks!

In 2019, in service of its program, the School opened 12,000 square feet of new and newly renovated space, featuring a state-of-the-art Library, Media and Innovation Center, two dedicated Learning Specialist Centers, and a STEAM Makerspace.

While benefitting from its wonderful indoor and outdoor teaching and learning spaces, the real spirit of The Cathedral School is

embodied in its caring and supportive community. There are consistent themes of connectedness and purpose that are expressed by faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, and parents:

- *"Cathedral School is a beautiful place to raise a child and a wonderful place to grow up."*
- *"At Cathedral School, it's cool to be smart and cool to be nice."*
- *"At Cathedral School, everyone is looking in one direction, but it also is a place that can hold multiple ideas at once."*



POST COVID-19: STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Cathedral School has moved through the initial phase of the COVID-19 crisis with compassion, conviction, and courage. Faculty are widely praised for their extraordinary efforts to maintain both instruction and relationships with students. There is good reason for confidence that The School will move through this crisis with strength as an institution. Beyond the dedication of its employees and community, the School will benefit from its reputation for academic excellence, its enduring values, its remarkable location and facilities, and its well-managed financial resources.

Nonetheless, there certainly will be challenges, as well as opportunities, facing Cathedral's next Head of School. Many of the School's strategic dilemmas are shared by independent schools throughout the country. All of the School's challenges precede the current pandemic, although they certainly will be impacted by the "new normal" of the years ahead.

- **Stabilizing Future Enrollment:** As of May 1, 2020, Cathedral's enrollment for the 2020-21 academic year stands at a solid 290 students. Kindergarten enrollment is up from previous years, and attrition is down. While this is an enviable position to be in, maintaining enrollment at Cathedral will require ongoing attention. The next Head of School will need to be prepared to address questions about the value proposition of an independent school that charges over \$50,000 per year, in a time of both demographic and economic downturn in New York City.
- **Meeting the Needs of a Changing Student Population:** Like many other excellent independent schools, Cathedral finds that it is serving students with increasing differences in their styles, rates, and interests as learners. The next Head of School will need to work to ensure that the faculty continues to have the training, support, and access to additional resources required to serve an increasingly complex population of learners.
- **Pursuing Both Economic Diversity and Financial Sustainability:** Like many other excellent independent schools, Cathedral also has offered increasing financial aid in recent years. A key difference at Cathedral is that this increase has been driven by the School's values, rather than simply being a tool to manage enrollment. The next Head of School will need to lean into difficult conversations about how the commitment to economic diversity impacts financial sustainability at the School.
- **Attracting and Retaining Outstanding Faculty and Staff:** Cathedral's dedicated and talented employees are the lifeblood of the School. The next Head of School will need to stay focused on ensuring that Cathedral can sustain the compensation and culture needed to attract and retain exceptional faculty, staff, and administrators who resonate with its mission and values.
- **Deepening the Commitment to Equity and Inclusion:** The work of being a welcoming and inclusive community is both complex and ongoing. It will be essential for the next Head of School to embrace this critical component of Cathedral's mission and to have the skills needed to lead the School forward in both words and actions.
- **Balancing Traditions With Innovation:** Cathedral is built on a strong foundation of beloved traditions, reassuring structures, and sound principles. The next Head of School will need to guide the faculty, staff, and community in maintaining the School's unique identity while embracing the change and innovation needed to sustain excellence in education throughout the years ahead.

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THE POSITION

The Search Committee encourages both current heads of school and aspiring school leaders to consider this opportunity.

The Cathedral School is committed to providing highly competitive compensation, including the availability of housing for the next head of school and their family.

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

- Significant prior experience in a leadership role in elementary/middle school education.
- Capacity to be a strong partner in enrollment management and fundraising.
- A leadership style characterized by open, honest communication and strong communication skills – written, verbal, and listening.
- Seeks input from others; willing to delegate, but able to make hard decisions.
- Ability to manage difficult conversations with sensitivity and conviction.
- Smart, reflective, and demonstrates strong emotional intelligence, resilience and a sense of humor.
- Highly effective in a crisis – calm, clear, courageous, and caring.
- Appreciation and respect for teachers, children, and families. Wisdom to be a mentor to faculty and a resource to parents.
- Ability to sustain a culture characterized by both high expectations and high support.
- Firm believer in the value of diversity and skilled in leading an inclusive community. Embraces Cathedral's mission as an Episcopal school for children of all faiths.



APPLICATION PROCESS

The Cathedral School has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next Head of School. To apply, interested candidates should prepare a cover letter, a current resume, and a statement of educational philosophy. Candidates are requested to submit these materials online at:

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

For an initial inquiry or to nominate a potential candidate for this exciting leadership position, please contact RG175 consultants:

Jerrold I. Katz
jkatz@rg175.com

and

Robert P. Henderson, Jr.
rhenderson@rg175.com

Application Deadline: **SEPTEMBER 15, 2020**

Start Date: **JULY 1, 2021**