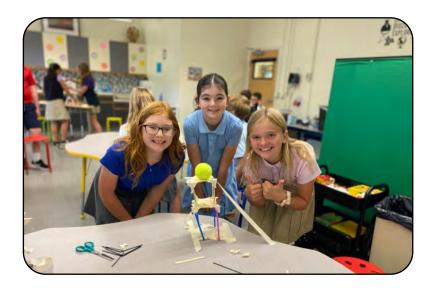


**Head of School Position Statement** 

Start Date: July 1, 2024







#### **OVERVIEW**

"Every day at The Country School begins with a handshake between the Head of school and each student, always including a brief conversation and the implicit understanding that "it's time to learn in a school that knows you and welcomes you." That morning connection epitomizes what makes The Country School a very special place: warmth, belonging, engagement, individual connection in a place where teaching and learning are shared and valued.

The Country School, in Easton Maryland, serves 300 students in grades pre-K to 8. The Lower School is for grades PK - 4, and the Upper School serves grades 5-8. Founded in 1934, The Country School provides students with a first-class education and a small-town community feel. From its very beginning as a school created by a small group of parents in a residential setting to the vibrant 300 student body school of today,

The Country School has always felt like "a second home" to all who know it. It has a stellar reputation, particularly on Maryland's Mid-Shore, and, throughout the years, it has been recognized as a pillar of the community.

Balancing rigor and nurture, teachers at The Country School support students in "doing their best, always," by helping students set and work to achieve developmentally appropriate goals. To meet the needs of students at all levels, first, second, and third graders are divided into three smaller groups for language arts and math; in the Upper School there is continued differentiation in instruction within each English/language arts class. There is considerable flexibility in math placement such that by 8th grade students, depending on their developmental readiness, complete grade level math, pre-algebra, algebra I or geometry as appropriate. Graduates attend local independent, public and parochial day schools and also gain admission to prestigious boarding schools, primarily in the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas. The Country School graduates are universally deemed well-prepared by their secondary schools.

The School believes in educating students academically, socially, emotionally, and morally. This commitment is bolstered by strong support for faculty professional development as well as by having school counselors, a learning specialist, and a secondary school counselor on staff. Over 50 percent of the faculty have advanced degrees. By fostering excellence, developing strong character, valuing diversity and instilling a lifelong love of learning, The Country School graduates confident and resilient learners and leaders, prepared for an ever-changing world. When you ask the students what makes TCS special, the answer is always, "the teachers."

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Beloved traditions, such as the morning greeting, Black and Gold Team competition, the holiday breakfast sponsored by the Parents' Association, robust outdoor education for grades 5-8, and the strong, enduring relationships forged between kindergartners and their eighth grade buddies, are balanced by ideas, projects, and programs that are as likely to originate with faculty or staff as with administrators. Tradition and innovation are interwoven. Recent initiatives include strengthening and more fully coordinating the science of reading program in the early grades where students "learn to read" and the Columbia Teachers College-based program in the upper elementary and middle school grades where students "read to learn," as they also hone their writing skills.

In addition to interscholastic soccer, field hockey, basketball, golf and lacrosse teams, the School has added a running club, intramural basketball, and, for 2023, a volleyball club. Art and music are taught at all grade levels, with designated space in both divisions for these subjects. Upper School students, interested in the performing arts, audition for the traditional Upper School musical, presented in late winter, on a new stage. Other Upper School students help with scenery, playbills and program design. A more recent option is the non-auditioned Upper School Chorus, established in the fall of 2021, that has been successfully adjudicated at the regional level, earning the opportunity to compete statewide. Robotics is offered for Lower and Upper School students; Upper School students may also participate in Latin, chess and/or RPG (role playing games) clubs.

Describing itself as a "family school," The Country School has considerable generational support while, at the same time, always seeking and welcoming new families into the fold. The School has purchased two 15 passenger vans to use for transportation to expand its admissions and geographic footprint.

The Country School recently completed a 10 million dollar campaign, "It's Our Time." This campaign expanded the School's footprint, providing spaces



designed to enable creative, innovative teaching and hands-on, experiential learning. The newly constructed Upper School building for grades 5-8 includes two adjoining, state of the art, well-equipped science labs, a commons area and a large multi-use room, utilized by both divisions.

Significant renovations in the Lower School building include a dedicated administration area, an expanded classroom for the Pre-K program, established in 2019, a Lower School science classroom and prep lab, connected to a courtyard with raised growing beds, all of which allow for project-based, firsthand observation and experience, a dedicated Maker Space for students of all ages that includes a 3D printer and enlarged classroom spaces for Upper and Lower School Spanish classes. Three new or significantly renovated courtyards are integral expansions to the teaching and learning that goes on in the classrooms.

Enrollment is strong, finances are solid, and the tenacre campus is stunning. The members of the Board of Trustees, composed of current and past parents, alums and community members, are strong stewards of the School. The current, interim Head of School, is an extraordinarily well-respected educator, serving her third year as interim.

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#### THE COUNTRY SCHOOL BY THE NUMBERS

Opening Year: 1934
Endowment: \$6.96 M
Operating Budget: \$6.7 M
Total Enrollment: 300
Number of Employees: 58
Campus Acreage: 10 acres
Recent Capital Campaign Total: 10 million

Students of Color: 17% Staff of Color: 15.5%

**Financial Aid:** 30% non-employee students: 40%

including tuition remission for employee

children

Student Ratio: 9:1 Average Class Size: 14-18

#### MISSION AND HISTORY

There is a reason that The Country School motto is "Do your best always." These four words infuse every corner of the school. While academic standards are high, the learning scaffolding is considerable, sound and wide in its application. There is a common understanding that effort and attitude reign paramount. Since its earliest years, the school has focused on character development and citizenry: scholarship and humanity hold value in equal measure at The Country School.

The mission of The Country School is to "offer a challenging, enriching program in a nurturing environment with individual attention and outstanding teachers as our hallmarks." The nine Core Values foster excellence, strong character, the value of diversity and a lifelong love of learning.

#### PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The Country School is an independent, coeducational, PK-8 school founded in 1934. We offer a challenging, enriching program in a nurturing environment with individual attention and outstanding teachers as our hallmarks. We believe in educating students academically, socially, emotionally, and morally. By fostering excellence, developing strong character, valuing diversity, and instilling a lifelong love of learning, we help develop confident students who strive to do their best always and realize their highest potential. As a family school serving a range of abilities, The Country School builds fundamental skills and encourages students to be resilient learners and leaders, prepared for an ever-changing world.

#### **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

The Country School believes that seeking and valuing diversity of ideas, experiences, and identities, developing meaningful connections, and fostering a sense of belonging are vital to each student's education and growth. A diverse, inclusive, and equitable school community is critical for preparing students for a role in a complex, pluralistic, and interconnected society. We actively see and value the differences of our school community, among them ability/disability, age, ethnicity, faith traditions, family composition, gender identity and expression, learning styles, race, sexuality, and socio-economic status.

We aspire for all -- students, parents, caregivers, faculty, staff, graduates, and Trustees -- to live our core values, especially to:

- Show respect for all, within our school community and beyond
- Demonstrate compassion with both words and actions
- Apply standards of fairness and equity
- Join hands in cooperation
- Strive to meet the challenges that call us to moral courage as we support our students to bring positive change in the world while at The Country School and in their lives beyond.

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#### **PROGRAM**

Just as there is remarkable clarity around the mission of The Country School, so is there a deep understanding and commitment to teaching and learning and the curriculum of the school. The School is graced with a multitude of seasoned and experienced teachers who are lifelong learners themselves. With a dedication to balance between breadth and depth, the program at The Country School maintains a focus on curricular refinement while building on its core foundation. The mantra is to "stretch and grow" intellectually, socially, and emotionally. With a solid foundation of everything from Language Arts to Performance Arts to Athletics, the School continues to explore and understand the range of learners within their fold and the neuroscience and differentiated instruction necessary to support and challenge the individual needs of all of their students (see opportunities).

#### STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

The Country School is a remarkable educational institution with a 90-year history of success. The loyalty and dedication to the School over these many years is extraordinary, and the moniker "family" truly marks this successful and strong school. Students, faculty and staff, alike, assume responsibility for the School community they hold so dear. While looking for their next leader, The Country School community is both committed and excited to meet its future. This school is positioned for dynamic growth while honoring its past and enduring mission. It is a gem of a school.

#### **NINE CORE VALUES**

Honesty
Respect
Responsibility
Compassion
Generosity
Commitment
Cooperation
Fairness
Moral Courage







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#### HIGHLIGHTS OF STRENGTHS

- The nine Core Values which capture the long-held mission of the School: these values, visible throughout the school, clearly articulate the mission and purpose of the daily life within the halls and classrooms.
- Amazing campus complete with a new Upper School (grades 5-8) building, age-appropriate play areas and gardens, spacious classrooms and gathering spaces.
- Joy and positive energy from the start of the day until its end: there is an atmosphere of support and engagement throughout the school.
- Commitment to DEIB growth and learning: the position of Diversity Coordinator has been in place since 2008 and speaks to the on-going education and integration of ensuring alignment of the mission with belonging and membership for all members of the community.
- Love of School: the commitment of the employees, the students, the Board, the alums and the parents to The Country School is palpable and very real.
- Reputation: The Country School has a wonderful reputation within Easton, Talbot County, the Mid-Shore community and beyond. Students come from several neighboring counties, with a radius as far as 45 miles. It is respected for its long-standing commitment to providing an extraordinary education, one imbued with strong scholarship and deep character development.
- Leadership: The Country School has a rich history of inspired leadership and stewardship from the Board of Trustees and Head of School, providing both stability and institutional growth throughout the years.
- Strong fiscal and budgetary management and oversight by the Board of Trustees and Head of School.

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# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The next Head of School of The Country School should be a dedicated educator familiar with and a supporter of the strong values that shape this school. The School will need to be led wisely and confidently into the future by embracing the School's current challenges and opportunities to take the School to the next level. There will be opportunity for the next Head of School to:

- Establish stability in leadership and further community. This is especially important following a three-year Interim Head of School. The School seeks a leader who desires a longterm commitment to The Country School.
- Lead the School in the development, communication and execution of visionary strategy, all in collaboration and engagement with the school's stakeholders.
- Continue to provide the appropriate support and professional development necessary to meet the needs of diverse learners within the school, furthering the mission of "meeting students where they are" in a challenging academic environment.
- Further DEIB understanding and learning, school and community wide.
- Communicate with a focus on "telling The Country School story" far and near: explaining "who we are and who we want to be."
- Expand partnerships "out, into the community," deepening the school's commitment to be part of Maryland's vibrant Mid-Shore.

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#### **ABOUT EASTON, MARYLAND**

Easton, the county seat of Talbot County, has a population of approximately 17,000 and is known for its historic, small-town beauty and community. Recently voted "the 8th Best Small Town in America," Easton is a star among the towns dotted along the Chesapeake Bay. (link to https://eastonmd.org)

The historic towns of St. Michaels and Oxford are in close proximity to Easton. There are numerous arts and cultural centers, including the Academy Art Museum, the historic Avalon Theater, the Ebenezer Theater/Prager Family Center for the Arts, and The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. The Horn Point Laboratory, a national leader in environmental research and discovery, is nearby. With renowned restaurants, excellent health care, and wonderful waterways, as well as easy access to Baltimore, Annapolis and Washington D.C., Talbot County has increasingly become a go-to area in which to live.



#### **KEY QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The successful candidate for the headship of The Country School will have the required skills to be the School's chief executive officer, responsible for implementing the vision, the mission and the strategic objectives of the School. Candidates should have significant educational leadership experience, with a track record of success. Advanced degree preferred. Additional qualities include:

- Leading with certain warmth, strength, compassion and "a backbone."
- Holding and keeping high standards.
- Being fully present and engaged throughout the school.
- Providing strong, clear communication for all the varied constituencies.
- Balancing faculty and programmatic investments, enrollments and budgeted expenses to ensure continued fiscal strength.
- Designing and maintaining strategies for forward thinking, team building and growth opportunities throughout with a focus on generative outcomes.
- Demonstrating trust and valuing input from faculty and staff.

#### **TO APPLY**

The Country School has retained the firm Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support its search for a new Head of School. If you wish to submit your application, please do so at: website: <a href="https://rg175.com/candidate/signup">https://rg175.com/candidate/signup</a>

Application includes:

- Letter of interest (cover letter)
- Resume or CV
- A Personal, Leadership or Educational Philosophy Statement
- Names of four current references and contact information

The deadline for receipt of full application materials is:

#### July 1, 2023.

For any questions or further information about the position, please contact: Bodie Brizendine (bodie.brizendine@rg175.com) and Arlyce Seibert (arlyceseibert14@icloud.com).