



**Search for the Associate Head of School
The Peddie School
Hightstown, New Jersey**

THE SEARCH

The Peddie School (Peddie), a storied institution that prides itself on delivering a transformational and accessible education, seeks a creative, collaborative, and community-minded leader to serve as its next Associate Head of School. This leader will serve as second-in-command for Jim Hamilton, Head of School, who began his tenure on July 1, 2025. They will succeed Catherine Rodrigue, a long-serving and highly respected member of the Peddie community, as she retires. This is a rare opportunity to honor the great work of a well-regarded and stable institution, while also driving current and future academic innovation.

In 1993, a historic \$100 million gift from Walter H. Annenberg '27 changed the trajectory of Peddie, and the impact of Annenberg's generosity continues to resonate through the physical footprint of campus and the broad racial, ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic representation among the student population. The school has built on Ambassador Annenberg's gift with the recent closing of the *One Peddie* capital campaign, the largest in the school's history, raising over \$100 million for financial aid, faculty, athletics, and the arts. Today, Peddie's preeminent faculty (just over 90 in total) serves approximately 540 students in a co-ed boarding and day environment, with 60 percent of students living on campus and 40 percent attending as day students. The student body, comprising grades 9-12, plus a small number of post-graduates, hails from 19 U.S. states and 21 countries. 52 percent identify as students of color, and 18 percent hold citizenship outside of the United States.

The Associate Head is primarily responsible for academic life and partners on a variety of cross-functional, strategic initiatives to ensure an integrated educational experience for students and a rewarding professional path for members of the faculty. The successful candidate will complement the Head of School by providing a deep understanding of academic programming and pedagogy, building on the momentum of a creative and flexible academic program. Peddie has benefited from strong and stable leadership in recent history, with an average tenure of 12 years for its last three Heads of School, and nearly 25 years under the current Associate Head. This consistency has allowed Peddie to make innovative

financial and programmatic decisions that have enhanced its academic program. The new Associate Head must capitalize on the exciting momentum of a new Head while inspiring trust and confidence in the face of cultural change. While Peddie has evolved over the course of its 160-year existence, its warmth and culture of care have remained steadfast and must continue to do so under this leader.

The successful candidate will be comfortable setting strategy as well as operationalizing it. They will be an inspiring leader with intellectual gravitas, a clear and inclusive communication style, and a measured decisiveness. They must also hold a strong commitment to the transformative potential of the boarding school experience. In particular, the next Associate Head will make clear Peddie's distinctive academic identity; leverage the interplay between academics and life outside the classroom; continue to advance access, inclusion, and belonging for students and adults; recruit, retain, and support excellent faculty, while demonstrating care for the adult population; further Peddie's commitment to teaching excellence and professional development; serve as a trusted partner and advisor for the Head of School, senior leadership, and trustees; and support, develop, and empower a high-performing team of academic leaders.

The Peddie School has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next Associate Head of School. Please direct all inquiries, nominations, and applications to the search firm, as indicated at the end of this document. For more information about Peddie, including its founding, history of leadership, faculty, and campus, please see the Appendix.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

A Peddie education is built on the pillars of rigor, a friendly culture, and a focus on the whole student. Operating under a three-term system, the school's academic environment nurtures excitement, curiosity, and character. Peddie offers over 150 academic courses, including 34 courses at the AP or honors level. Of particular note is the Signature Experience program, which allows students to pursue a more in-depth, independently-driven exploration of a passion in art, creative writing, language (Asian Studies, French, Latin, or Spanish), computer science, or research science. Signature Experiences have become a sustained and integral part of a student's time at the school.

Peddie believes that a foundation in the arts is critical, so every student spends their first year exploring classes in visual arts, music, and theater. In the arts, Peddie offers college-level electives across the visual and performing arts, with 17 arts ensembles and facilities that include an exhibition hall; a gallery; a black box theater; music and visual art studios; and a state-of-the-art music performance space, which seats about 300.

Peddie also boasts a competitive Robotics team with three student sub-teams in engineering, programming, and finance & marketing. The team works closely with adult mentors and corporate sponsors in preparation for the FIRST Robotics Competition, utilizing the Izzo Design Laboratory, a maker space that represents Peddie's commitment to STEM education and interdisciplinary learning.

Like many schools, Peddie is actively exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence and its evolving impact on the classroom experience. While each department ultimately determines what best applies to their pedagogy and content, all departments refer to Peddie's Teaching and Learning Framework. Current efforts aim to stay agile and flexible with regard to AI, routinely considering topics as varied as plagiarism, AI dependency, time savings, organization, and proofreading. Next-level work will include further exploration of the many ethical, environmental, and economic complexities of AI and how its use can best serve Peddie and its students.

Peddie believes deeply in extending learning into community spaces. As the school has evolved into a secular institution, its iconic chapel has remained a literal and figurative centerpiece, symbolizing a commitment to community and reflection. Twice a week, the Peddie community gathers in the chapel to focus on one of the school's core values: balance. During these gatherings, students and employees stand before their entire community to perform music and share their experiences at Peddie and beyond. These chapel talks are as diverse as the student body itself: often personal, occasionally humorous, and always deeply moving. The chapel program provides a unique platform for individuals to express their thoughts, showcase their talents, and connect with their peers on a deeper level.

FACULTY LIFE

A key factor in the transformational experience of Peddie is the 92-member faculty. The warmth and curiosity that students bring each day reflects the school's teachers, advisors, and coaches. With a median of 16 years' teaching experience, 75 percent of the faculty hold advanced degrees in their field, and approximately 90 percent live on campus.

The recruitment, retention, and development of faculty will remain core to Peddie's efforts as the school continues to pursue its strategic initiatives. The role of Director of Teaching and Learning for Citizenship and Scholarship was created in 2022, and other changes have also been made, including the expansion of faculty professional development, use of classroom technology, and the facilitation of collaboration and team teaching across disciplines. The Associate Head, Director of Teaching and Learning, and academic department chairs observe all teachers new to Peddie throughout their first year, with that observation extending into a teacher's first three years if they are entirely new to the profession. After the first year of observation, faculty enter a three-year review cycle. Through a widely embraced colleague observation framework, which emphasizes shared knowledge and best practices regarding curricular design, routines, norms, classroom management, and student engagement, Peddie has experienced a strengthening of its pedagogical practices.

LEADERSHIP

James A. Hamilton became Peddie's 17th Head of School on July 1, 2025.

Previously the Head of School of Berwick Academy in Maine, Jim has spent his entire career in independent schools as a teacher, coach, and school leader. Prior to his time at Berwick, he was the Associate Head for External Affairs at Brooks School in Massachusetts and the Director of Admission at St. George's School in Rhode Island. He began his independent school career at Brooks, where his first role was Director of Financial Aid and Associate Director of Admission. In addition to his leadership roles, Jim has taught English; coached basketball, baseball, and football; and served as an advisor and dorm parent.

A lifelong New Englander, Jim attended The Roxbury Latin School in Boston before earning degrees from Amherst College (B.A., English) and Wesleyan University (M.A., Liberal Studies). He gives back to the schools he attended, including serving on the Board of Trustees of Roxbury Latin and as a class agent at Amherst. Well known in the independent school community, Jim is chair of the Board of Trustees of the Enrollment Management Association and serves on the Board of Directors of The Music Hall in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Jim and his wife, Lucy, live on campus and have three children.

PEDDIE'S NEXT ASSOCIATE HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Associate Head of School leads faculty hiring, onboarding, professional growth and feedback, and the academic program. This leader will bring a keen understanding of the faculty's role and the academic program's significance in creating a 24/7 ecosystem for student learning and growth. They will work closely with the community to increase capacity to execute both immediate and long-range strategic projects and priorities; be a champion of inclusive and reflective practices that enhance belonging; and promote the ongoing evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning across the faculty.

The Associate Head reports to the Head of School as a critical member of a strong, 11-person senior leadership team, including the Director of Human Resources; the Assistant Head for Student Life; the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; the Director of Athletics; the Director of Enrollment Management; the Director of Technology; the Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications; the Assistant Head of Finance and Operations; the Director of College Counseling; and the Assistant Head for Development.

Direct reports to the Associate Head include: the Director of Academic Support, the Registrar, the Director of the Annenberg Library, the Director of Teaching and Learning, and the academic department chairs.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

To best serve Peddie, the next Associate Head must be prepared to address the following opportunities and challenges:

Make clear Peddie's distinctive academic identity.

In recent years, Peddie has intentionally strengthened the caliber of the academic program. Under the leadership of the new Head of School, Peddie must now articulate an ambitious and compelling vision for the next decade plus, continuing to respond to the evolving needs of today's students and families. The Associate Head will be a vital steward of this effort, helping the school build on its four existing strategic pillars, while retaining an identity that is distinctly Peddie—a school that equally balances academic challenge with the highest quality of citizenship. This new leader will play a fundamental role in engaging the broader community in strategic goal setting, ensuring that Peddie takes all voices into account, clearly communicates benchmarks and outcomes, and considers the aspirational and practical realities of its ambitious aspirations.

Leverage the interplay between academics and life outside the classroom.

Boarding school educators teach constantly, inside and outside of the classroom, and the successful candidate will intimately understand this unique aspect of residential life. Students learn from the institution itself, including from the structures that govern all aspects of their days, whether in the dining hall, in the classroom, at rehearsal, in athletics, or in their dorms. While Peddie has carefully tended to its academic offerings over the past decade, the next Associate Head must partner effectively with other leaders to ensure that the school's extracurricular and residential life programming match that same level of academic strength and depth. Peddie contends with the opportunities and challenges of a mixed boarding (60 percent of students) and day environment (40 percent) and must think carefully about how that dynamic impacts the experiences of students. Key tasks include working with the Assistant Head for Student Life and the Director of Residential Life to discuss effective methods for extending the classrooms into the residences, as well as ensuring community when some students live on campus full-time and others do not.

Continue to advance access, inclusion, and belonging for students and adults.

Peddie has evolved in notable ways since its founding 160 years ago, particularly regarding its student demographic. In recent years, Peddie has enrolled an increasingly diverse student body, including a growing number of residential students from abroad; the changing demographics of the Princeton area and Mercer County have impacted the overall composition of the student body as well. The Associate Head of School will partner with the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to continually examine and redesign policies, procedures, and services to ensure equity of academic experience. This leader will support a diverse and inclusive community across race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, and ability, and will promote principles of empathy and open dialogue.

For the adult community, this work includes recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty alongside department chairs, as well as ensuring that all faculty feel welcomed and included once on campus. The Associate Head will collaborate with other leaders to establish clear and transparent processes for

equitable compensation and housing policies. They must also demonstrate the capacity and humility necessary to engage in evolving conversations and support the Peddie community—students and adults alike—in continuing to adopt meaningful change.

Recruit, retain, and support excellent faculty and staff, while demonstrating care for the adult population.

The Associate Head of School plays a key role in recruiting and retaining an outstanding and diverse faculty who thrive in a school environment characterized by high academic standards and rich and rewarding residential and co-curricular experiences. Adults at the school are asked to wear many hats, particularly in a dual day and residential environment, and the role of Peddie’s faculty must evolve to meet emerging challenges to the “triple threat” model. Many residential schools, including Peddie, rely on volunteerism to best serve students, and this leader must continue to galvanize volunteerism among the faculty. With department chairs, deans, and directors, the Associate Head regularly identifies the high-priority needs across the major areas of teaching faculty responsibility: classroom, dorm, advising, and co-curriculars. The Associate Head will continue to bring thoughtful leadership to balancing these roles and responsibilities, while also creating opportunities for professional development and personal care.

Further Peddie’s commitment to teaching excellence and professional development.

Successful faculty retention is often tied to effective opportunities for growth and professional development. The high caliber of the faculty is a distinctive strength of Peddie’s academic program, and faculty development will be a critical charge for the incoming Associate Head, especially given a high percentage of seasoned faculty members. This leader will be responsive to the school’s strong internal culture, inviting many voices to the table and encouraging and modeling active listening, collaboration, and decision-making. What boarding school educators do is a way of life—an all-consuming experience that offers distinctive opportunities and challenges—and leading these dedicated individuals requires generosity of spirit, empathy, tact, creativity, good humor, and grace. The Associate Head assists the department chairs in identifying professional development opportunities, particularly those that support teaching and innovation within the academic program. They evaluate department chairs and work in tandem with chairs in evaluating teaching faculty, while also supervising a multifaceted program for faculty professional growth. The Associate Head should remain committed to clear measures for success and must value a collegial atmosphere in which faculty are seen, acknowledged, and appreciated.

Serve as a trusted partner and advisor for the Head of School, senior leadership, and trustees.

As a key senior leader, the Associate Head will provide counsel to the Head of School, other senior leaders, and trustees on the academic program and the faculty experience. They will keep a finger on the pulse and will serve as an accessible and authentic entryway for feedback from the faculty. They will escalate themes and key challenges to the Head and senior leadership team, as needed, and will communicate transparently back to the faculty. In addition, they will maintain academic metrics and regularly update

the Board of Trustees on the performance of the academic program. They will clearly describe Peddie's academic priorities to the broader school community, often leading key strategic initiatives that will help shape the future of student learning and growth.

Support, develop, and empower a high-performing team of academic leaders.

The Associate Head must invest in people and create a workplace characterized by collaboration and transparency. They will inspire other leaders to make positive changes and will support a team culture rooted in mission-aligned goal setting and evaluation. Being a "triple threat" faculty member, much less a senior administrator, at a boarding school is among the most demanding of professions—intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Together with the Head of School, the Associate Head will clarify and streamline academically related roles and responsibilities across their team. This individual will lead the curriculum committee and maintain consistent communication across chairs and directors; work with department chairs to interpret and implement the school's mission, as well as establish goals and objectives for their respective departments; and partner with Peddie's Technology Department to keep abreast of best practices and innovations with respect to academic technologies and AI.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following qualifications and attributes:

Professional Experience

- Proven experience as a classroom teacher and a deep understanding of the challenges that educators face;
- Student-centered leadership;
- Experience supporting academic excellence and inspiring a culture of innovation by engaging with academic leaders and faculty on critical discussions of academic policy, pedagogy, curriculum, AI, and interdisciplinary and global education;
- A commitment to the transformative power of a residential environment;
- Proven record of supporting and mentoring a high-performing faculty and staff, and the ability to recruit and retain talented, diverse faculty and staff;
- An advanced degree is preferred.

Personal Qualities

- High emotional intelligence, including personal and social maturity;
- Integrity and sound judgment;
- Excellent interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills, while using discretion to maintain confidentiality;

- A bent toward collaboration, innovation, and strategic thinking, along with a growth mindset;
- A convener who is able to synthesize many ideas into a common end goal;
- A strong sense of humor;
- Comfort with listening to and inviting varied points of view, in an effort to establish a culture of trust, transparency, and candor, coupled with the ability to choose a direction and inspire action.

Research shows that people belonging to structurally marginalized groups often only apply to jobs if they meet 100 percent of the qualifications. As no one ever meets 100 percent of the qualifications, we encourage you to apply if you feel that most of the above qualifications reflect your experience and expertise.

Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

The Peddie School has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. The target salary range for this role is \$200,000 to \$230,000 and will be commensurate with experience. All inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications (resumes and letters of interest) should be sent in confidence to:

Katie Rockman, Partner
Berkley Braden, Managing Associate
Maria Connor, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/peddie-school/associate-head-school>

The Peddie School is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, protected veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law.

APPENDIX: ABOUT THE PEDDIE SCHOOL

Mission

Guided by the motto, “We Finish Our Labors to Begin Them Anew,” the Peddie School welcomes individuals with diverse talents and backgrounds whose excitement, curiosity, and character create an educational community where passion for learning grows. With enthusiasm, humor, and patience, Peddie challenges students to reach beyond their expectations and to define success by the progress they make. In a boarding school environment, Peddie not only prepares students for the rigors and rewards of college, but also inspires each to strive for the highest quality of citizenship.

Founding and Brief History

The Peddie School was founded in 1864 as the Hightstown Female Seminary, a Baptist preparatory school. Later that year, boys were admitted, and the school began a series of name changes. In 1872, the school took its current name in honor of philanthropist and politician Thomas B. Peddie (1808–89), who gave the school a \$25,000 gift. Peddie remained coed until 1908, when it was decided, for social and economic reasons, to admit boys only. This standard was reversed in the early 1970s, when girls were readmitted. The school is now coeducational and nondenominational.

Wilson Hall (1866–1978) served all of the school's needs until 1889, when additional land was acquired and more buildings erected. Peddie's longest-serving head of school, Roger W. Swetland (1898–1934), drew up the master plan to create the central grassy mall. Gifts from Ambassador Walter H. Annenberg '27 were used for the construction of two libraries, dormitories, and an athletic center, among other projects. The school has grown to include 57 buildings on a 280-acre campus.

In 1993, Annenberg gave \$100 million to Peddie, which provided an endowed fund for financial aid, enabling students from every walk of life to receive a Peddie education. The ambassador died in 2002, just after giving the cornerstone gift for the construction of The Walter and Leonore Annenberg Science Center, which was completed in fall 2005.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Peddie embraces the sustained and ongoing work of making the community inclusive, safe, and welcoming for all students and adults. To achieve that mission, Peddie seeks to remove barriers to access, equity, and safety for every member of the school community and, each day, works toward becoming a more inclusive and open community.

An integral part of Peddie's DEI work is understanding and navigating the relationship between the personal, the interpersonal, and the systemic. The school holds space for individual stories and lived

experiences, keeping community at the center of its work and striving to develop discussion and programming that is thoughtful, intentional, and well-informed.

Peddie enacts its vision for diversity, equity, and inclusion through a range of programs and initiatives. It offers all-gender housing for students, as well as a NEST Program, which is pre-orientation programming for students who hold historically underrepresented identities in independent schools. Other structural supports include a dedicated Bias Response Program and “DEI Day,” one full class day each term that is intentionally dedicated to community programming and reflection on aspects of identity and belonging. Peddie also offers more than 12 affinity groups for students and has independent DEI councils for students, employees, and alumni/ae.

Athletics and Student Life

Beyond academic and arts programming, Peddie students benefit from a long athletic tradition. Peddie offers 47 interscholastic teams across 15 sports, and the athletic experience has come to represent the school pride that many students and alumni hold dear. Peddie is a member of the Mid-Atlantic Prep League and the New Jersey Independent School Athletic Association. Each year, the fall athletic season ends with the traditional Peddie-Blair Day, and the school with the most team wins on that day is awarded the Kelley-Potter Cup. Peddie has won the Cup 20 times in the 34 years since its inception.

The school also offers more than 50 student clubs, organizations, and interest groups, in addition to service opportunities, affinity groups, a student newspaper, a literary magazine, and admissions ambassadors and tour guides. Students also benefit from a robust residential offering. Boarding students live across nine campus residential halls where, with 90 percent of faculty living on campus, there is a strong sense of community and care. The more than 300 boarding students also frequently take advantage of the school’s proximity to New York and Philadelphia.

Notably, the Peddie community gathers regularly for Family Style Dinner, an experience that hearkens back to the traditional family meal. The community dresses formally, sitting at assigned tables headed by faculty members and their families. Student servers bring meals to the table, and the head of school invites everyone to begin. The school enjoys a delicious meal and the company of community members they may not see every day. Family Style is required for boarders, and day students are always welcome to join.

Finance and Governance

Peddie has a \$45 million annual operating budget and an endowment approximating \$500 million, one of the highest per-student endowments of any U.S. secondary school. Tuition revenue covers approximately 82 percent of the annual budget, with the remainder coming from annual fund giving, auxiliary enterprises, and the endowment. Approximately 39 percent of students receive financial assistance, and financial aid totals \$11 million annually.

The school is governed by a 33-member Board of Trustees. Trustees may serve up to three consecutive three-year terms. The Board usually meets three weekends per year, while Board committees meet regularly and additionally on an as-needed basis. Board committees, where most of the substantive work of the Board is done, include Audit and Risk; Buildings and Grounds; Community Affairs; Development; Finance; Investment; Legal; Marketing and Communications; Strategic Planning; and Trustees and Governance. The Executive Committee meets on an as-needed basis. The Head of School is an ex officio member of each committee.

Established in 2022 with a generous gift from Michael Armellino '57 GP'19, Peddie's Student Investment Committee (PSIC) is one of the country's few high school investment committees managing real money for the school's endowment. This distinctive program sets Peddie apart from other high schools, offering students an extraordinary chance to develop financial acumen and leadership skills. While guided by a faculty advisor, the committee is entirely student-run, with decisions made through deep research and democratic processes. Students have direct access to accomplished alumni in the finance industry. The PSIC comprises nine students: three each from the sophomore, junior, and senior classes. This structure ensures continuity and mentorship within the group. Students are selected through a rigorous application process, emphasizing diversity of thought and a passion for learning.

Campus and Location

Peddie's charming, 280-acre, residential campus is in Hightstown, New Jersey, home to national franchises and independent shopkeepers, to pizza and bagels and food from Jamaica and India and Japan, to a farmers' market and the Hometown Harvest Fair, and much more. It is close to several malls and shopping centers and to the beach. It is equidistant from Philadelphia and New York, which means that field trips, cultural events, internships, and research opportunities are readily available to students and faculty alike.

Peddie is situated 8 miles southeast of Princeton, New Jersey and is easily accessible by car, train, and air. The nearest New Jersey Transit station is just a 15-minute car ride away, while the Trenton Amtrak station is 15 miles from campus. International airports in both Philadelphia and Newark can be utilized in getting to campus.