



Search for the 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 to students through a unique combination of excitement, curiosity, and character, seeks a strategic and visionary leader to serve as its next Head of School. Building on a commitment to preparing service-minded citizens for life after Peddie through academic and co-curricular pursuits, this incoming leader will strengthen existing programs and engage the community in charting Peddie's future.

While Peddie has evolved over the course of its 160-year existence, its warmth and culture of care have remained steadfast. It is a community that inspires excellence, prioritizes its people, and values the importance of authentic relationships. In 1993, a historic \$100 million gift from Walter H. Annenberg '27 changed the trajectory of the school, 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 17 countries. 51 percent identify as students of color, and 18 percent hold citizenship outside of the United States.

In collaboration with the school's Board of Trustees, senior leadership team, faculty, staff, students, and families, the next Head of School will refine Peddie's distinctive identity and guide the school into its next chapter. The next Head will build on Peddie's robust educational offerings, and will continue to prioritize evolving and strengthening the school's co-curricular and residential life programs. In leading this work, the Head must effectively manage the school's long-term strategic view and, at the same time, effectively

oversee the daily operations of a dynamic and diverse school community. Continuing to advance access, inclusion, and belonging among all campus constituents and strengthening Peddie's positioning in the broader boarding school landscape will be critical to this work. These efforts must stay true to the school's track record of embracing innovation while appropriately recognizing and celebrating its history and traditions.

The successful candidate will be an inspiring leader with intellectual gravitas and creativity, a clear and inclusive communication style, and a measured decisiveness. The next Head of School must also hold a strong belief in – and commitment to – the transformative potential of the boarding school experience. Partnering with the Board of Trustees; oversight of key internal infrastructure and processes; support of high-performing administrators, faculty, and staff; and strengthening relationships with alumni and donors will also be essential.

The Peddie School has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next 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, curricular and co-curricular offerings, faculty, and campus, please see the appendix.

PEDDIE'S NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

The next Head of School will report to the Board Chair and the [33-person Board of Trustees](#) and will lead a strong, [11-person senior leadership team](#), including the Associate Head; the Director of Admission; the Assistant Head for Student Life; the Director of Athletics; the Director of Technology; the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; the Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications; the Assistant Head for Finance and Operations; the Director of College Counseling; the Director of Human Resources; and the Assistant Head for Development.

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

Make clear Peddie's distinctive identity and lead the school into its next chapter

The Peddie community takes pride in its longstanding history, founding principles, and fundamental commitment to the intellectual, social, and moral growth of its students. At the same time, Peddie is not an institution that rests on its laurels; it has evolved and changed in marked ways during the last 160 years. For example, 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.

Looking ahead, the school must ensure that it continues to respond to the evolving needs of today's students and families, thinking carefully about the day and boarding admissions pipeline and the academic and extracurricular experiences of both day and boarding students. Under the leadership of the current Head of School, Peddie has intentionally, and notably, focused on and strengthened the caliber of the academic program. In close collaboration with the Board and the broader Peddie community, the next Head of School must articulate an ambitious and compelling vision for the next decade plus, communicating clearly and authentically engaging the school community in this process. The Head will build on the implementation of Peddie's [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.

Continue to strengthen extracurricular programming and life outside of the classroom

Peddie has carefully tended to its academic offerings over the past decade, and the next Head must continue this good work while ensuring that the school's extracurricular and residential life programming match that same level of academic strength and depth. The school proudly supports the value of the arts, athletics, and other co-curricular pursuits, and celebrates the successes of students on the stage, in the orchestra, on the fields, in the robotics lab, and everywhere in between. At the same time, this next Head of School must pay particular attention to the future of the residential program and the athletic program, investing when and where appropriate and developing a comprehensive vision for the future. The Head must also, in partnership with administrative leadership and the school more broadly, continually assess the need for revised policies and support structures to support the safety, mental health, and wellbeing of all students and community members.

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

The Head of School will be an advocate for the adult community on campus, continuing to prioritize the recruitment and retention of high-quality faculty, staff, and administrators. Adults at the school are asked to wear many hats, particularly in a dual day and residential environment. The new Head will continue to bring thoughtful leadership to balancing these roles and responsibilities, while also creating opportunities for professional development and personal care. This leader will be responsive to the school's internal culture, inviting many voices to the table and encouraging and modeling active listening, collaboration, and decision-making.

Alongside this schoolwide work, the Head of School will support and empower a strong administrative team to efficiently manage the school's operations and distributed leadership. The Head will ensure that each administrator's responsibilities effectively leverage their talents and capacities, prioritizing efficiency, cohesion, and clarity of roles and responsibilities to meet individual management needs and styles.

Sharpen Peddie's positioning in the broader admissions landscape

The Head of School will assess and evolve Peddie's enrollment strategy in what is today an increasingly competitive admissions environment. This will require an understanding of how recruitment, retention, identity development, and relationship-building work in concert to inform an impactful admissions and financial aid process in boarding and day schools. The Head will develop a clear understanding of Peddie's position in the admissions landscape – both its considerable strengths and advantages as well as its challenges and areas of opportunity. They will support a process that attracts an accomplished and diverse student body, ensuring the enrollment of students who reflect the school's core values. Given that the science (and art) of enrollment management shapes the community and influences the school's fiscal health, the Head must work closely with the admissions team to admit and then yield an academically and extracurricularly talented student body with diverse experiences, skills, and interests.

Continue to advance access, inclusion, and belonging

The Head of School will ensure that the voices of all students, faculty, and staff are heard and will continually examine and redesign policies, procedures, and services to ensure equity of experience. The Head must likewise demonstrate a commitment to financial accessibility, and work to build and support a diverse and inclusive community across race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, and ability, and promote principles of empathy and open dialogue. The Head must also demonstrate the capacity and humility necessary to engage in evolving conversations and support the Peddie community in continuing to adopt meaningful change.

Capably manage and grow the financial foundation of the school

While Peddie has enjoyed a strong and stable financial foundation over the past few decades, the school's ambitious goals and long-term sustainability necessitate a consistent focus on resource allocation and a willingness to take clear, decisive stances. The Head will continue to elevate the school's fundraising profile and successes, and will collaborate with the Assistant Head for Finance and Operations and the Board's Finance Committee to manage the budget and ensure the school's fiscal strength well into the future, with particular focus on increasing funding for the annual Peddie Fund and endowed programs. The generosity of Trustees, current Peddie families, and alumni plays a significant role in allowing the school to recruit and retain excellent faculty, sustain the socioeconomic diversity of the student body through financial aid, and plan for future improvements to the school's facilities and programs. All of these initiatives must be sustained and enhanced through continued fundraising efforts, with the Head serving as the lead ambassador in this important work.

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

- Resonance with the mission of Peddie, and the ability to clearly articulate the importance and distinction of a Peddie education;
- A commitment to, and passion for, the transformative power of a residential environment;
- Demonstrated experience as a highly collegial and collaborative leader, with the ability to engage, unite, and inspire a diverse school community around key strategic priorities;
- A clear and decisive leadership style, with demonstrated experience setting expectations, evaluating performance, and making difficult decisions;
- Proven record of supporting a high-performing faculty and staff, and the ability to recruit and retain talented, diverse faculty and staff;
- Excellence in verbal and written communication to both internal and external stakeholders;
- Skill in building and managing a high-performing leadership team and working in harmony with the Board Chair and a dedicated, engaged, and passionate Board of Trustees;
- Strong business and financial acumen, with the facility to persuasively advocate for resource and investment priorities, and enthusiasm for fundraising and building strong personal connections with parents, alumni, and donors on behalf of the school;
- Experience leading effective, transparent, schoolwide conversations around curriculum; co-curricular offerings, including athletics; and student and adult wellness;
- An advanced degree is preferred.

Personal Qualities

- High emotional intelligence, including personal and social maturity;
- Integrity, sound judgment, and the highest ethical, moral, and professional standards;
- 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, in service of the Peddie community;
- A natural ability to communicate passion about the school and its mission;
- An orientation toward 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.

Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

The Peddie School has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications (resumes and letters of interest) should be sent electronically and in confidence to:

Katie Rockman, Partner
Berkley Braden, Managing Associate
Brian Burbank, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller

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

Please note: The Peddie School will require all employees to provide proof of vaccination with an FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccine as a condition of employment.

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.

Peddie Today

Peddie has enjoyed strong and stable leadership in recent history, with an average tenure of 12 years for its last three heads of school. This consistency has allowed the school to make innovative financial and programmatic decisions that have helped Peddie remain a leader in the independent school landscape.

In 2022, the school launched *One Peddie*, the school's most ambitious fundraising campaign ever. The campaign prioritized excellence in transformational education; access for students with the greatest excitement, curiosity, and character; financial sustainability; and telling the Peddie story more boldly and broadly. The campaign raised over \$106 million, far surpassing the initial goal of \$80 million. These campaign efforts and its accompanying strategic priorities will position Peddie for its next phase.

With admiration for its past and excitement for what is to come, the Peddie community looks ahead to its continued journey of providing students with a transformative education.

Academics

A Peddie education is built on the pillars of rigor, a friendly culture, and a focus on the whole student. The school's academic environment nurtures excitement, curiosity, and character through its curricular and co-curricular offerings. Peddie offers over 150 academic courses, including 34 courses at the AP or honors level. The [Signature Experience](#) program allows students to pursue a more in-depth, independently-driven exploration of an academic or co-curricular passion. There are offerings in art, creative writing, language (Asian Studies, French, Latin, or Spanish), computer science, and research science. Signature Experiences have become a sustained and integral part of the Peddie experience and represent the additional offerings that benefit student learning.

Peddie also boasts a competitive [Robotics Club](#) with three student subteams in engineering, programming, and finance & marketing. The team works closely with adult mentors and corporate sponsors in preparation for the FIRST Robotics Competition. The team works out of the [Izzo Design Laboratory](#), a maker space that represents Peddie's commitment to STEM education and interdisciplinary learning.

Faculty

A key factor in the transformational experience of Peddie is the 92-member faculty. The warmth and curiosity that students bring each day is a reflection of 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 work on 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.

Athletics, Arts, and Student Life

Beyond the academic program, Peddie students benefit from a long athletic tradition and energy in the arts. 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 comes to a close 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 community especially looks forward to the upcoming expansion and renovation of the exercise and fitness center, which will double the size of those facilities.

In the arts, Peddie offers college-level electives across the visual and performing arts. The school offers 17 arts ensembles, and the arts facilities include an exhibition hall; a gallery; a black box theater; music and visual art studios; and a new, 300-seat, state-of-the-art music hall. 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.

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.

Finance and Governance

Peddie has a \$45 million annual operating budget and an endowment approximating \$450 million, one of the highest per student endowments of any U.S. secondary school. Approximately 39 percent of students receive financial assistance, and the financial aid budget totals \$10.9 million this year and \$11.8 million for the upcoming year.

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.

Campus and Location

Peddie’s charming, 280-acre, residential campus is located 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 to much more. It is close to several malls and shopping centers and to the beach. It is also 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.