FRIENDS SCHOOL OF BALTIMORE
Baltimore, Maryland

HEAD OF SCHOOL
Start Date: July 2022
friendsbalt.org
MISSION

Friends School of Baltimore is a Quaker school that exists to foster in young people the skills, knowledge, and habits of mind needed to partner with their communities and to be courageous change-makers in the world. Our School is guided by the testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship, and our core belief that there is that of God in each person, and we understand these testimonies and this belief to be a call to justice. We value diversity, pursue equity, and strive to be an actively inclusive institution that works against systemic oppression, within a campus community where each individual can live out their full identities. We believe education is a journey, a continual seeking after truth that relies on both inward reflection and outward connection with others, especially across lines of difference. At Friends, learning is grounded in relationships and deepened by application to the world beyond our campus. We seek in all ways to exemplify the ideals of the Religious Society of Friends.

OVERVIEW

Friends School of Baltimore is a coeducational, college preparatory school steeped in tradition and offering a forward-thinking Pre-K through grade 12 program to 849 students. The School is also home to “Little Friends,” an early learning center for students ages six months-four years. Through a dynamic balance of academics, athletics, and the arts, Friends School cultivates the intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, and spiritual development of its students. As a result, students emerge as confident, compassionate young leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college and contribute to a better society.

Through its affiliation with the Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning, Friends School balances time-honored Quaker principles with contemporary research in brain-based learning and teaching. The School’s recent strategic plan is driving additional initiatives to further strengthen this highly regarded program.

The current Head of School will be departing Friends School at the end of the current school year. The School has recently appointed an Interim Head of School for the 2021-2022 school year. With that appointment, Friends School has actively begun the search for its next permanent Head of School, who will join in July 2022. The successful candidate will be an experienced educational leader devoted to the School’s Quaker mission and program. The Head of School has oversight of all organizational activities and serves as the School’s academic leader, fostering a climate of excellence and ethical growth among students, faculty, and staff. This is an exceptional opportunity to lead an independent school with deep roots and an unwavering commitment to student success.
SCHOOL HISTORY

Founded in 1784 by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Friends School of Baltimore is the oldest school in the city and the 16th oldest in the nation. Elementary school classes were first held in the Aisquith Street Meetinghouse in the East Baltimore community of Old Town. High school classes began in 1865. The School moved a few times over its history until settling into its current site in North Baltimore in 1925. In 1973, Friends School incorporated as an independent school and separated from the Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run — and it still maintains ties through representation on the Board.

THE SCHOOL

Friends School of Baltimore offers a leading-edge, college preparatory program guided by core Quaker values and high standards. Encouraging a spirit of inquiry, Friends School seeks to develop in each student the intellectual, spiritual, and creative foundation to become learners for life. Members of the community are encouraged to sustain an atmosphere that is inclusive, respectful, and supportive of all people.

Friends School’s values-based Quaker education is a longstanding tradition that helps the School create and sustain an inclusive community that promotes diversity and equality in all forms. The School encourages respect for the variety of beliefs and backgrounds reflected in and shared by everyone, through day-to-day activities, curriculum, and school-wide celebrations. Students have many opportunities to participate in diversity work, both inside and outside the classroom. Children in all three divisions engage in a variety of activities, from the Kids of Color group and the African American Mentoring Program to International Movie Night and cultural competency training. Students also attend
regional and national diversity conferences. The School’s diversity work is coordinated from the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and is a collaboration between students, faculty, and administration.

In 2017, Friends School became one of the first schools to enter into a three-year Science of Teaching and School Leadership Academy partnership with the Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning (CTTL). The partnership is helping Friends design and develop a school-wide, inquiry-based program that prepares students with essential knowledge and the tools, skills, and mindsets to navigate the future.

Through its Strategic Direction, Friends Connects, the School seeks to provide students with powerful educational experiences rooted in building relationships. Their learning will be enriched by their interactions on the individual, classroom, community, national, and global levels. The outcomes will be stronger minds, stronger hearts, and stronger communities. Friends Connects focuses on four goals centered around 1) students and teachers, 2) families and alumni, 3) Baltimore, and 4) the world.

Friends School is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association of Independent Maryland Schools and is a member of Friends Council on Education.

ACADEMICS

In Lower School (grades PK-5), faculty support the growth of each student socially, emotionally, and intellectually. The academic structure ensures that students have a strong foundation in the traditional subjects — math, science, history, languages, and literature — while also being encouraged and supported in developing learning and life skills. The classrooms are vibrant, joyful spaces where children feel safe and where age-appropriate risk taking is supported.
Building on this foundation, the Middle School (grades 6-8) encourages students to become self-directed learners and committed community members. Core courses in English, math, social studies, science, and world languages are augmented with studies in the arts and technology. Students have the opportunity to explore their burgeoning talents and skills and expand their capacity for innovation, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. All Middle School students take a class called Brain Lab, which helps them learn about their brain development and how to focus on key executive functioning skills, including time management, organization, planning, and test-taking.

The Upper School (grades 9-12) focuses on a mastery of the academic fundamentals and essential learning skills and dispositions. This college-preparatory curriculum extends beyond the scope of content to encompass the diverse learning experiences that students will encounter in the future. To this end, teachers provide a variety of teaching styles and practices so that students become more nimble, adaptable, and flexible in their learning. All Upper School courses are taught at an advanced (Honors) level. Friends School of Baltimore does not designate any course as Advanced Placement (AP), nor does it calculate class rank.

Two signature programs are the Scholars Certificate Program and the University Partnership Program. The Scholars Certificate Program offers students the opportunity to explore an area of academic interest in ways that extend beyond the traditional course bounds. Each certificate “bundles” different learning experiences — course work, speaker series, independent studies, internships, capstone projects, etc. — that are related by theme or area of interest and that, together, form a rich ensemble. In 2011, the University Partnership Program was launched as a unique interdisciplinary program through which students partner and work directly with professors, researchers, and others in colleges and universities around the country, in subjects ranging from neuroscience and engineering to urban renewal, political science, the arts, and more. Together, these programs provide experiential, collaborative learning environments that encourage students to understand themselves and the world around them in new and exciting ways.
THE ARTS

Friends’ celebrated visual and performing arts program is a cherished aspect of school life. Overall, the goal is to instill in students a love of creative expression through the full range of offerings — from drawing, painting, and photography to digital arts, animation, and creation in one of our five Makerspaces, audio-visual production, stagecraft, dance, drama, and music, both choral and instrumental.

Guided by expert teachers who work individually with them to cultivate their unique gifts, students at every grade level gain confidence in their abilities and delight in the works of their peers during well-attended exhibitions and performances.

Dozens of Upper School students participate in the division’s three annual productions, including a fall play, a student-run production, and a popular spring musical. For an in-depth learning experience, students also may enroll in Craft of Acting, Playwriting, or Broadway Musical Workshop.

Friends School also offers a comprehensive K-12 dance program that allows students to foster and express their creativity.
ATHLETICS

Friends School of Baltimore regards the athletic program as an essential part of its curriculum and an important element of its students’ education.

The School fields competitive athletic teams in the Middle and Upper Schools that often compete for league championships. In all, Friends School offers 34 teams — 15 in Middle School and 19 in the Upper School. Sports include soccer, field hockey, cross country, track and field, basketball, volleyball, tennis, lacrosse, baseball, badminton, sailing, golf, and softball. Athletes are supported by a highly trained staff, and a number of athletes are recruited to play at the collegiate level each year.

STUDENT LIFE

Friends School of Baltimore seeks to enrich each student’s educational experience by providing a wide range of activities during and after school hours. These activities develop well-rounded individuals while enhancing the sense of community. Through participation in the School’s vibrant culture of clubs, activities, and organizations, students are able to share their talents and interests with like-minded peers.

The Upper School offers more than 55 student-driven clubs — including Students for Prison Reform, Ultimate Frisbee, the UNICEF Club, Women’s Empowerment Club, Slam Poetry Club, Random Acts of Kindness, Robotics, Latinos Unidos, Habitat for Humanity, and the Chamber Music Club.
The Quaker values and practices are woven throughout the educational experience. Weekly Meeting for Worship further strengthens students’ inner lives while building a sense of trust and connection among classmates. Service is also a central component of the curriculum and life of the School. The active community service program engages students in the broader community throughout the year.

CAMPUS

Friends School of Baltimore is located in North Baltimore surrounded by some of Baltimore’s most beautiful neighborhoods, Homeland and Roland Park. This impressive 34-acre campus includes all three divisions — each housed in state-of-the-art facilities designed for student engagement. The Forbush Building, renovated in 2015-16, boasts a modern Performing Arts Center, fine arts classrooms, galleries, a dark room, the orchestra room, and private music rooms, as well as Senior Hall and Upper School English classrooms. The School also boasts dedicated MakerSpaces and libraries in all three academic divisions, as well as four Teaching Gardens.

Athletic facilities include a sports turf field as well as five additional fields, six tennis courts, two full-size gymnasiums, a dance studio, a wrestling room, and a weight and fitness center.
Friends Connect, the School’s current strategic plan, commits to strengthening its role in the city at large. As an independent school that is both in and truly of Baltimore, Friends School is deeply invested in alliances outside the school that enrich its neighbors and its students and contribute to the city’s future. Through many existing community activities, Friends School seeks to have a positive impact on the city’s future development and hopes to play an even larger role as the city works toward greater equity for all its residents.

The greater Baltimore metropolitan area has a population of nearly 2.8 million residents, but the city offers a small-city feel due to the network of neighborhoods, many of which, including Fell’s Point, Federal Hill, and Mount Vernon, have rich histories. Baltimore’s cultural diversity and support of the Ravens of the NFL and Orioles of the MLB in one of baseball’s most iconic stadiums creates a vibrant city.

Economically, Baltimore is supported by a range of industries — including tourism, technology, shipping, healthcare, and education. Major employers include Johns Hopkins University, the Johns Hopkins Health System, Under Armour, Franklin Templeton (Legg Mason), McCormick & Company, T. Rowe Price, and the University of Maryland Medical System. Baltimore Harbor is a one of the nation’s busiest international ports, while the Inner Harbor is a popular tourist and recreation destination. Baltimore’s revived Harbor East, Fell’s Point, and Canton areas attract businesses and young professionals to create a lively waterfront filled with activity, restaurants, and marinas. Baltimore is also home to 12 colleges and universities, providing an abundance of intellectual and workforce talent.

Baltimore also offers easy access to Washington D.C. and surrounding areas. The city itself also offers a wide range of cultural activities and institutions — including the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Peabody Institute, the oldest conservatory of music in the nation.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Friends School of Baltimore, while undergoing significant transition, enjoys great support from its families, students, and alumni. There is great appreciation for the School’s commitment to the holistic education of all children and the community is invested in the School’s Quaker mission. As the first and oldest independent school in Baltimore with nearly 240 years of history, Friends’ foundation is sturdy and synonymous with independent co-education in the city of Baltimore.

Longtime Head of School Matt Micciche’s successful tenure will end in June of 2021 and highly respected and experienced educator Dennis Bisgaard will serve as Interim Head of School for the 2021-2022 school year. Friends School is committed to making sure that all students are well served during this transition period. Additionally, the School is focused on addressing pressing concerns around social justice, faculty development, and financial sustainability. The School anticipates that there will be a high level of communication between the Interim Head of School and the Head Elect.

In addition to being actively engaged in the daily life and operations of running a dynamic Pre-K through grade 12 school that includes an early childhood center, the new Head of School will be expected to:

- Affirm the School’s Quaker mission and provide assurances that those values will guide the work of the school.
- Address the community’s deep interest in and concern about the important issues of equity and belonging in the School.
- Design and implement a comprehensive program for teacher support and development. Retention of all quality teachers — with an emphasis on teachers of color — will be a high priority.
- Renew and align the program of teaching and learning from Pre-K to grade 12 so that the outstanding academic program remains strong.
- Highlight the unique place Friends School has as the only Pre-K through grade 12 Quaker coed school in the area; these efforts will bolster enrollment in all divisions.
- Identify additional ways that Friends School can connect with the greater Baltimore community.
- Work with the Board of Trustees to continue to identify aspects of the organization that will enhance financial sustainability.
DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

• A thoughtful leader with a proven record of accomplishment and experience with issues of diversity, equity, belonging, and social justice.
• A high degree of alignment with Quaker values and testimonies or experience with Quaker education is highly desirable.
• The ability to listen, gather input, engage in appropriate consensus building, and move efficiently to decisions.
• The financial acumen needed to both lead an organization with a substantial operating budget and actively guide the many philanthropic efforts.
• Authentic ability to inspire the community through written and oral communication.
• Transparent communicator and proven leader in crisis management situations with an ability to facilitate difficult conversations.
• Genuine excitement over living and working in the energetic and ever evolving city of Baltimore.
TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

• A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position.
• A current résumé.
• A writing sample (e.g., article, speech, blog post, etc. pertaining to leadership and/or education).
• A list of five professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission) to:

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