Mission
Thacher Montessori School is a diverse, collaborative learning community. Through the Montessori Method we embrace each child’s unique potential and cultivate a passion for discovery. We empower children to achieve academic excellence and become confident, compassionate, and proactive members of the world community.

THE POSITION
Thacher Montessori School, a coeducational Montessori school for students ages 18 months through 14 years, seeks a Head of School effective in July 2018. Thanks to a steadfast commitment to its founder’s vision, Thacher has grown from a single classroom to a complete schoolhouse offering an outstanding Montessori education to diverse, excited, and curious children from metro Boston and throughout the South Shore area.

After five years at Thacher, current Head of School Don Grace departs at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. Now, the Board seeks a passionate educator to lead the school toward its half-century mark in 2021 and into the future.

SCHOOL HISTORY
Founded in 1971 as a single classroom, Thacher has grown over the last four and a half decades into a vibrant community of learners. In 1989, the school moved to the current campus on Blue Hill Avenue, settling into a purpose-built facility designed for Montessori learning. In 2008, in response to growing enrollment, the building was expanded to include a second floor, and a new Toddler Program welcomed children aged 18 months to three years to the Thacher community.

THE SCHOOL
Thacher Montessori School is a nonsectarian school of 215 students aged 18 months through 14 years. Accredited for all ages by the American Montessori Society and recognized at the 0-3 and...
Montessori is currently the fastest-growing form of education, preparing students to thrive in dynamic 21st-century environments. At Thacher, students benefit from a comprehensive Montessori program that cultivates confidence and creativity. Guided by the school's 51 faculty and staff members, students develop motivation and independence in a setting that offers both freedom and responsibility. In addition, Thacher provides a series of workshops and activities designed to acquaint families with Montessori philosophy and its transformative impact on student growth.

**ACADEMICS**

With an academic program that integrates core knowledge areas, Thacher students are immersed in an interdisciplinary learning environment incorporating Spanish, the arts, cultural literacy, and environmental education. Thacher supports differentiated, child-centered instruction inspired and guided by Maria Montessori's comprehensive curriculum. Learning follows children's intellectual, social, and emotional development, allowing students to work toward mastery of key subjects and skills.

In keeping with the tenets of Montessori, a Thacher education cultivates intellectual, social, and emotional growth through robust, multi-age learning environments. With each classroom devoted to a two- or three-year age span, children develop leadership and interpersonal skills. Classroom
layout encourages independence, and Montessori materials provide students with tools to support and stimulate learning. From an early age, students build focus through uninterrupted work periods of two and three hours and learn to value process over product in their academic pursuits.

**Faculty**

Each of Thacher’s 11 classrooms is led by a Montessori-trained teacher, or “lead guide,” and a second assisting faculty member, who work together as role models, demonstrators, record keepers, and observers. At the elementary and adolescent levels, specialist teachers support student learning in certain subjects, creating a dynamic program that prepares students to excel at Thacher and beyond. 78% of administrators and 100% of lead teachers hold advanced degrees, and Thacher is committed to an ongoing program of professional development for all staff members.

**Toddler Program and Children’s House**

Montessori teaches that the first six years of life are fundamental in human development, with children propelled by their “absorbent minds” to take in language, culture, and sensory information to create the people they will become. Accordingly, Thacher’s Toddler Program and Children’s House offer a nurturing setting in which children can learn and grow, with inviting classrooms and easy access to the outdoors for gardening, play, and nature study.

Children aged 18 months to three years explore and learn in the calm, welcoming environment
provided by Thacher’s Toddler Program. Child-sized materials furnish opportunities for independent play, allowing students to build hand-eye coordination and gross motor skills through familiar daily activities. Throughout, a safe, structured, and inviting classroom sets the stage for a dynamic and joyful learning.

In Children’s House, students aged three through six become active participants in the classroom, developing as individuals through hands-on activities in the areas of practical life, language, Spanish, math, music, movement, and cultural studies. Social growth is similarly central to this age group, with students learning to exercise patience and treat peers and adults with courtesy and respect.

**Elementary**

Thacher’s elementary program is centered on the demands of Montessori’s second stage of development. In this phase, elementary-aged children expand on their individual identities in order to gain a sense of themselves within a social context, developing moral values and the ability to collaborate effectively with peers. Cognitively, children use imagination and reason as they begin to understand how the world works, allowing for increasingly complex, and ultimately, abstract thinking.

In Lower Elementary, Thacher students in grades 1-3 use concrete materials to build skills across disciplines, practice critical thinking, and work in groups to build collaborative and discussion skills. Children receive lessons based on individual readiness, working at their own pace to master concepts before moving forward.

Upper Elementary allows students in grades 4-6 to continue this process, progressing from concrete
to abstract thinking in a curriculum-rich environment. Faced with new challenges, students build confidence and develop independence in their intellectual pursuits. At the same time, Thacher teachers support students’ adjustment to the social and emotional pressures associated with this age group, contributing to a positive and healthy dynamic in the classroom and beyond.

**Adolescent Program**

Thacher’s unique Adolescent Program prepares 12- to 14-year-old students for the transition to secondary school. With a block class schedule and a highly adaptable, interdisciplinary curriculum, seventh and eighth grade students pursue academic excellence through seminars, independent studies, and hands-on learning opportunities. In the Adolescent Program, students run businesses, conduct community service, work on a small farm, and complete community-based internships as a complement to classroom learning. Throughout, Thacher’s oldest students cultivate a sense of identity and purpose in preparation for adult life.

**Secondary School Placement**

Thacher students continue to a variety of area independent and public schools:

- Beaver Country Day
- Boston Arts Academy
- Boston College High School
- Boston Latin School
- Boston Latin Academy
- Brimmer and May
- Buckingham Browne and Nichols
- Cambridge School of Weston
- Catholic Memorial
- Dana Hall
- Dedham Country Day
- Derby Academy
- Dexter-Southfield
- Milton Academy
- Milton Public
- Moses Brown
- Newman School
- Newton Country Day
- Nobles and Greenough
- Park School
- Sage School
- Sharon Public
- St. Agatha’s
- St. Sebastian’s
- Thayer Academy
- Woodward School
ARTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Across grade levels, the arts are fully integrated into Thacher’s curriculum, with students practicing music and visual arts both on their own and as part of the school’s interdisciplinary program. The annual Community Concert features performances by children aged three and above, and students in the Adolescent Program run their own music business, booking and producing performances in local community spaces.

Movement and physical education, including camping and skiing, are another main feature of the Thacher experience. Examples of programs offered recently include: soccer, basketball, flag football, cooking, baking, knitting, recycled art, karate, wiffle ball, pottery, rock climbing, YouTube video production and yoga. The girls basketball team won the BPS basketball championship in 2017.

EXTRACURRICULAR LIFE

In addition to before and after school care options for younger children, Thacher offers after-school programs for Elementary and Adolescent students. Programs run six weeks and include sports, yoga, cooking and baking, recycled art, karate, and more. During the summer, Thacher runs a comprehensive Toddler and Children’s House program as well as themed offerings for older children in hiking, cooking, and the arts.
Physical Campus

Just a half mile outside of Boston’s city limits, Thacher is situated between a 7,000-acre nature preserve and The Wakefield Estate, a 23-acre arboretum with livestock and specimen gardens. The school’s building, most recently updated in 2008, consists of classroom buildings with adjacent patios, an activity center, greenhouse, and library, as well as rooms devoted to music and science. Ample natural light makes for a cheerful learning environment, and easy access to the outside world supports Thacher’s integrated curriculum: students benefit from the ability to work and study on the neighboring Wakefield Estate.

Milton, Massachusetts

Milton, Massachusetts is an affluent suburb located half an hour from downtown Boston. Connected to the city by public transportation, Milton is a popular commuter community, featuring historic homes and New England charm. Known as the home of highly regarded prep school Milton Academy, the town of Milton also has a strong public school system and a handful of other independent schools.

Boston is one of the world’s premier cities, home to world-class cultural and educational resources. BU, Harvard, Tufts, MIT, BC, Berklee College of Music, Northeastern, New England Conservatory, and Wellesley College contribute to the area’s youthfulness, vitality, and pride. Rich in history and central to the birth of our nation, Boston also gave the country its first college, secondary school, public park, subway, and periodic newspaper.

Boston is a world leader in medicine and pharmaceutical research, technology innovation, and
education. Other leading cultural institutions that call Boston home include the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston Ballet, the Athenaeum, Boston Symphony and Pops, and Museum of Science. Boston is a legendary sports town, abounding in professional, collegiate, and youth teams of all varieties (and generating plenty of opinions). A river city with a busy harbor and the adjacent Massachusetts Bay, Boston is also ideally positioned for recreation with mountains, lakes, and seacoast all within easy drive. Served by a good public transit system, Boston is an eminently walkable (and bikeable) city.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Head of Thacher Montessori will take charge of a vibrant, diverse and welcoming school community. Thacher has a clear mission and the school’s program truly empowers children to achieve academic excellence and become confident, compassionate and proactive members of the world community. Thacher has a sturdy foundation comprised of an experienced teaching staff and a remarkable leadership team supporting future growth and possibility. The school boasts a strong structure of teamwork and partnership between parents and teaching guides; children and parents demonstrate a great respect and admiration for all the school’s talented and committed educators. Thacher’s physical plant is purpose-built for Montessori education and it sits adjacent to the Wakefield Charitable Trust providing students with farm access for outdoor education. The school’s location in Milton, MA, makes very easy access to all the resources of Boston and the South Shore of Massachusetts.

As Thacher prepares for new leadership, the Board of Trustees and the community at large recognize that the transition from Don Grace’s successful tenure as Head represents a superb opportunity to move the school forward to a position of even greater strength. The new Head will be charged with anchoring the school to the vision of its founder while continuing measures to grow the school’s enrollment and program. S/he will be asked to enhance retention so that the elementary and adolescent programs
become fully enrolled. As well, s/he will be tasked to build the school’s fundraising programs both through more effective appeals to the school community and through outreach to other funding sources in the Boston area.

Thacher’s Head of School must be an articulate and passionate advocate for Montessori education as this is a school deeply committed to and rooted in Maria Montessori’s philosophy. S/he will be someone with a supportive leadership style, one that mimics the guide model of teacher that is at the core of the Montessori philosophy. Thacher seeks a compassionate person who is unafraid to lead; someone with the wisdom to properly manage ongoing change. The next Head will find that the community of Thacher is enthusiastic and ambitious about its future.

QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

• A passionate commitment to Montessori education. The school desires that the next Head will be Montessori trained and have had substantial experience in a Montessori classroom.
• A love for children.
• Demonstrated leadership experience in education.
• Confident communication skills with faculty members, parents, students, community members, and the Board of Trustees.
• Enjoyment from being an active and visible presence on campus. Dynamic and energetic.
• A trusting leadership style, one comfortable with delegating tasks to others. Eager to empower people and willing to support people as they do their work well.
• A warm, approachable presence that invites and respects the views of others, yet is able to be proactive and decisive when needed.
• Comfort asking for financial support and a commitment to encouraging a culture of philanthropy.
• Aptitude for strategic thinking and planning.
• Willingness to hold him/herself and all members of the community to high standards.
• Sense of humor.

TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

• A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position
• A current resume
• A statement of educational philosophy and practice
• A list of five (5) professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each to:

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