

the college school



## The College School At A Glance

Founded: 1963

Type: Co-ed Independent  
Day School

Grades: Preschool—8th  
Grade

Enrollment: 260

Diversity: 25% Students of  
Color

Student-Faculty Ratio: 9:1

95% of students accepted  
into first-choice upper  
school/high school

Tuition:

Kindergarten—8th Grade:  
\$17,950

Full Day Pre-school—  
5 days: \$15,900

3 days: \$10,500

Half-day Pre-school:  
\$9,300

Financial Aid: Received by  
25% of families

Annual Budget: \$4.4M

Endowment: \$1.7M

Professional Affiliations:  
ISACS, NAIS, ISSL

# The College School Head of School Search

7825 Big Bend Blvd | Webster Groves, MO

Applications Due: July 20, 2018

Co-ed Independent Day School

Start Date: July 1, 2019

## HISTORY

The College School began in 1963 as the Webster College Laboratory School. It was originally formed as a teaching school for undergraduate education majors at Webster College, a school where student teachers could explore different teaching techniques and test new educational theories. It was soon evident that the “experiential” method – in which children explore a subject with an active hands-on approach instead of more passive book learning – was an exciting and effective way for students to learn. The College School embarked on its innovative approach to education, offering children an experientially-integrated, hands-on education with an emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking.

Despite the great success that the school was achieving, Webster College officials decided to close the school in 1978, as part of their restructuring from a single college to a broader university. Due to enormous enthusiasm and support for the school many families came together and made it possible for The College School to stay open and eventually become an independent school. In later years, the school would purchase a vacant school building and eventually add a middle school. Since their early days as a lab school and their independence in the fall of 1978, The College School has never stopped with their innovative and dynamic approach to education.

Today, The College School is accredited by ISACS (Independent Schools Association of the Central States) and NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools), has an enrollment of 260 students, retains some of the best teachers in the area, and is widely acknowledged to be one of the finest learning institutions in the area.

## MISSION, VISION & CORE VALUES

### *Mission*

To explore the world through authentic experiences, empowering students to engage deeply and be ready for what is next.

### *Vision*

To be the innovative leader and ongoing advocate for experiential education in preschool through eighth grade.

### *Core Values*

1. We believe experiential education (including project-based learning, place-based learning, and outdoor education) is the best method for learning.
2. We believe that academic mastery is optimized by using a thoughtful balance of interdisciplinary experiences and individual disciplines of study.
3. We believe that every voice matters and that collaborative participation throughout our school community makes us stronger.
4. We believe our school is a place to build social-emotional and intellectual character.
5. We believe taking risks in a safe environment is an essential component of lifelong learning.
6. We believe reflection on an experience is as important as the experience itself.
7. We believe in the richness and power of an inclusive, transparent, and diverse community.
8. We believe it is our responsibility to live and work sustainably within our environmental and human community.
9. We believe in serving our communities as caring citizens of the world.



## PROGRAM

### *School Philosophy*

Above all else, we believe that children construct their own knowledge. They actively make sense of the world around them through authentic experiences and meaningful connections and collaborations. And we believe that the outdoors is a great place to teach personal and group skills as well as academics. We know academic subjects are best mastered in thematically connected projects and experiences.

Our hands-on, project-based, and experiential approach to education is what makes us The College School. And this philosophy is not a one-size fits all program. The program adapts and evolves based on the people and experiences of any one class community. The philosophy meets students where they are and honors their voices. We draw on many different educational sources to bring our students the best possible learning experience. It's not hard to see that our teachers and students benefit from the educational beliefs and practices of Jean Piaget (Constructivist Education), John Dewey (Progressive Education), TheodoreSizer (Coalition of Essential Schools), Howard Gardner (Multiple Intelligences), and Loris Malaguzzi (Reggio Emilia). Our application of this philosophy takes on many perspectives and manifests in many concepts.



There are many dimensions to our teaching philosophy that makes it so successful, but a few key components of our approach to experiential and constructivist education are:

- Experiential Learning
- Adventure Education
- Reflective Learning
- Education For Sustainability

### ***Experiential Learning***

At The College School, experiential learning is not separate from a rigorous academic program: they are one and the same. It is through experiential education—learning

through experience—that students master academic and personal skills. Students learn core subjects and critical life lessons through hands-on, thematic learning experiences. Lessons are taught both individually and within integrated thematic projects; this approach makes learning meaningful and makes lessons stick. Whether it's activities happening between grade levels or across subjects, teaching interdependence helps link curriculum to real-life experiences.

### ***Adventure Education***

The concept of outdoor adventure education begins in Preschool with trips to local parks to explore the environment and continues throughout the grades with increasing levels of complexity and length of overnights. Different than other schools that send students on outdoor adventure programs, The College School's outdoor adventure programs are run by their teachers and directly connected to their curriculum. Along with the benefits of any outdoor adventure program (teamwork, personal development, and environmental stewardship), students have the added benefit of a curriculum that lives in the wilderness as the classroom.



Age-appropriate trips provide children with fresh, life-altering experiences and new challenges, along with opportunities to apply skills learned in the classroom, collect data for use in the classroom, solve problems, bond with classmates and teachers, and develop self-confidence. Trips into the field are an inextricable part of the way we teach and learn at The College School.

### ***Reflective Learning***

It is crucial to take the time to reflect upon an experience to help solidify the lessons learned. Processing can be achieved through a variety of mediums: students have discussions, paint, journal, create art reflections, and produce tremendous final displays celebrating their adventure and lessons.

### ***Education for Sustainability***

The College School was founded on the rich tenants of sustainability and environmentalism. The recent media, political, and education attention paid to “going green” is nothing new to them. Their school works to monitor our progress and growth in our implementation of best ecological and environmental practices throughout our community, curriculum, and grounds. Recycling of paper and commingled goods, a green parking lot with semi-permeable pavers, environmentally responsible construction and maintenance of our grounds, and continued education and integration into our curriculum are all part of The College School going green, or rather staying green.

### ***Early Childhood Program***

The College School’s Early Childhood program has been inspired by the educational approach of the renowned preschool programs in Reggio Emilia, Italy. The program is widely known for its interpretation of the Reggio Approach, and it has developed and evolved, offering a rich educational foundation for the youngest students and their families.



The Early Childhood program shares the philosophy of experiential, integrated learning with the larger school. Students are viewed as protagonists, capable of navigating and leading their own learning experience. Well-designed classrooms are cultivated by the teachers to provide a beautiful, inspiring environment for exploration and learning to occur. Children are given ample time and support to explore the classroom and outdoor spaces by means of open-ended play. They are presented with rich, artistic mediums such as paint, clay, weaving, movement, and music to aid them in making meaningful connections in their play and learning.



The Atelier, an art studio dedicated to our youngest students, is a creative hub where the Reggio concept of the 100 languages of learning comes to life. Children develop relationships with artist grade mediums and hone expressive techniques through both child-led research and teacher directed experiences. Emergent themes and projects that materialize within the Early Childhood classrooms are woven into dynamic experiences in the Atelier to expand the scope and breadth of student investigation.

Projects and emerging curricular pieces are documented to highlight children's voices and perspective. These documentation pieces provide the opportunity for the children's learning to be reflected

upon by the children, teachers, their families, and the wider school community. These carefully crafted displays are comprised of photos, words, and images allowing the youngest children at TCS to witness the importance of their ideas, theories, and opinions.

### **STUDENT SERVICES**

Beyond the everyday support and guidance of classroom teachers, there are additional systematic support structures throughout the school, ready to intervene, help, and provide assistance to students and families. These support structures are in place to help the entire student body as well as to help individual students when specific needs arise. Whether the needs are academic, social-emotional, physical, school planning, or psychological, the school seeks to support every child's needs to the best of our ability.

The support structures and programs happen within the general scope of the school day. There are other programs (such as After School Program, Food Services, or Summer Programs) that happen beyond the school day. The College School offers three programs for the benefit of working or busy parents: Before School Program (BSP), After School Program (ASP), and No School Camp (NSC) days. These programs provide a safe and nurturing environment with activities and choices consistent with the philosophy of experiential education. A twice-a-week lunch option and the Summer Experience Camp add value to the school life for many families.

### **ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID**

The goal of Admissions is to fully enroll each grade level with qualified students who fit well with the school's philosophy and approach and enhance the diversity of the school community. The Director of Admissions & Marketing works in concert with the Head of School, Director of Equity and Inclusion, Director of Student Services, Communications Coordinator, and faculty to achieve this goal.

## ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID

Marketing and communications work supports the admissions process in all aspects. The official admissions process begins with an inquiry. The Director of Admissions & Marketing seeks to connect personally with each inquiry. Sometimes this is accomplished by phone and other times by email or in person, depending on the inquiry source.

When a family applies to The College School, they are communicated with personally throughout the process. First, they receive an email confirming receipt of their application and suggesting possible visit dates for their child. Next, they schedule the student visit so that our teachers can meet and evaluate each prospective student. The family receives a visit confirmation email prior to the agreed upon date. We greet each family on the visit day and also close each visit personally.

During the inquiry, tour, and application process, some families indicate that they plan to apply for financial aid. The Admissions Office shares this information with the Director of Equity & Inclusion, who coordinates the financial aid application process for the school. The Director of Admissions & Marketing asks the Director of Equity & Inclusion to follow-up personally with any family who seeks additional information about financial aid or requests a financial aid application. The Associate Director of Equity & Inclusion then becomes the key contact person for that family regarding aid. The Director of Equity & Inclusion coordinates this process with the Business Manager, with continued input from the Director of Admissions & Marketing and Head of School, as relevant.

In general, the demand for financial aid has been increasing steadily over the last several years. For 2016-17, 55% of our applicants indicated an intention to apply for financial aid on their applications.

## ADVANCEMENT

The Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees is charged with the responsibility of overseeing fundraising efforts at The College School. The Advancement Chair works with the Head of School and the Director of Institutional Advancement to meet the goals as projected in the annual budget.

In 2016, The College School adopted a new organizational structure for personnel supporting fundraising, alumni relations, enrollment, and marketing/communication efforts. By shifting from a Development model to an Institutional Advancement model, the school looks to implement a more strategic, integrated method of managing relationships to increase understanding and support among the school's key constituents. The Office of Institutional Advancement

includes three full time employees, the Director of Institutional Advancement , the Director of Admissions & Marketing, and the Communications Coordinator.





## FINANCE

The College School prepares a zero-based operating budget each year and expects to match revenues and expenses for a zero change in net assets. The majority of revenue is driven by tuition and auxiliary services. The balance is made up between summer camp revenue, an annual auction, and annual fundraising campaigns. The majority of expenses are for salaries, benefits, and educational programs. The balance is for general expenses and administration of building operations. For the 2016-2017 school year, total budgeted revenues were \$4,366,850 and budgeted expenses were \$4,079,000.

The school has an endowment totaling approximately \$1,700,000 as of April 1, 2017. This endowment is for the future benefit of the school. A portion of the funds are restricted for use to a specific purpose, as designated by the donor. The majority is in an unrestricted endowment that may be designated for special projects or otherwise restricted by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees may access this fund to address emergency issues or extraordinary expenditures.

The Business Manager is responsible for the day-to-day financial operations of the school. The Business Office is supported by a full-time Associate Director of HR/Accounting and Associate Director of Auxiliary Programs. The Business Manager reports to the Head of School and provides assistance to the Board Treasurer, as well as to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee meets monthly for the purpose of establishing the budget and then monitoring the monthly operating results. The Finance Committee also advises the Board on the financial impact of Board proposals.

## FACILITIES

The College School purchased their current building in 1979, and many physical plant needs were addressed over the past 37 years. The College School's physical plant has grown and improved dramatically. In 1998, the school financed construction of a 6,200 square-foot addition, and in 1999 adjacent property facing Big Bend Boulevard was purchased. In recent years, improvements have included razing the out-lot facing Big Bend Boulevard and constructing a new parking lot, installing a wind turbine, building a new greenhouse and gardens, renovating the Dining Room, new fencing around a

portion of the campus, security camera installation, theater renovation, and a new Early Childhood playground.



## GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

### ***Board of Trustees***

A self-perpetuating Board of Trustees oversees the College School. The Board consists of approximately 16-25 members, 85% of whom are current parents in the school, and also includes one faculty representative and the president of the parent organization. Members are nominated by the Trustee Committee and elected by the Board to serve a three-year term. The Board's membership rotates with approximately one-third being replaced every year, and most individuals are actively engaged on a Board-level committee before being nominated to the Board. The Trustee Committee considers how many people need to be added to the Board and what particular experience or skill sets are needed to assist with current and future initiatives. A slate of individuals is then presented to the full Board for consideration in the spring of each year, and a vote is taken in May. New Trustee Orientation is held annually through ISSL and new Trustees attend the June Board meeting, the final one of the school year.

### ***Administration & Support Staff***

Administration of The College School currently consists of the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Business Manager, Director of Institutional Advancement, Director of Student Services, Director of Equity & Inclusion and Director of Admissions & Marketing. This group works collectively on administrative and school governance issues. In the organizational chart, the four directors report directly to the Head of School, and each have various faculty and staff that report directly to them. For the entire administration team, formal weekly or every-other week meetings are scheduled. Additionally, smaller groups or teams work on myriad projects, with necessary administrators and staff involved in relevant projects.



Support staff consists of a variety of additional clerical staff, assistants, and other individuals who report to administrators. This currently includes our Administrative Assistant, Administration & Faculty Support, Associate Director of HR/Accounting, Associate Director of Auxiliary Programs, Associate Director of Technology, Communications Coordinator, After School Program Supervisor, Maintenance Supervisor and Maintenance Staff. Every member of the administration and staff is accessible to students and parents throughout the workday.



## **FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF THE SCHOOL**

The Board of Trustees at The College School is conducting a national search to identify a new Head of School. Evan Peterson and Doug Cummings of Educators' Collaborative, LLC solicited input from over 90 stakeholders during an on-campus visit and gathered additional input from constituents by way of an online survey. These included faculty, administrators, staff, parents, students and trustees. Based on this input and the impressions of the consultants, as well as input from the Search Committee, the following represents a summary of The College Schools' strengths, challenges, and the qualities and traits the trustees and the School seek in the next Head of School.

### ***Strengths of The College School***

- Students come first! Students feel loved, nurtured, and prepared for future success
- The School is highly committed to its mission of exploring the world through authentic experiences, empowering students to engage deeply and be ready for what is next
- Each classroom has two highly qualified teachers in Pre-K through Fifth Grade
- A professional culture honoring each teacher's professional autonomy, but embracing collaborative decision making
- A strong sense of community and camaraderie among faculty who share high standards of professional excellence
- The importance of The College School's role as a leader in the field of experiential education
- Imaginative, flexible, child centered curriculum
- A comfortable, casual community

### ***Challenges for the School and the New Head***

- Restructuring its administrative structure to better serve the total school community
- Establishing policies and procedures coupled with the necessary training to create a more consistent organization
- Building a more cohesive community that embraces a greater sense of consistency relating to communication and decision making protocols
- Creating a more sustainable and transparent financial model for the School
- Continuing to provide support for professional development of faculty and staff
- Building an enrollment management plan that allows for an adequate ongoing level of admissions to sustain school operations in the future.
- Communicating to the greater St. Louis community the importance of the education provided by The College School

- Hiring teachers who understand, appreciate, and contribute to the uniqueness of The College School
- Attracting full-pay families who embrace the School's unique philosophy
- Developing clear communications with parents to help develop trust and understanding in the school administration and Board of Trustees
- Finding the balance between a flexible curriculum and a curricular scope and sequence that is understood by all members of the community
- Developing a community where in all Shareholders are valued and considered

### ***Characteristics of the Next Head of School***

*The next Head of School at The College School should have the following personal attributes, professional competence, and leadership skills:*

- Compassionate, nurturing, and eager to interact with students in a loving and understanding way
- Warm, personable, approachable, diplomatic, and fair-minded with the confidence and strength to make difficult decisions
- A visible presence and able to connect well with all stakeholders

*Embracing experiential education and The College School's mission to provide a 'life changing experience' for children is essential. TCS's Head of School should be:*

- Intellectually vibrant and visionary, able to 'lead the charge' as TCS claims its position as a national leader in the field of experiential education.
- Up-to-date on current research in the field and able to promote and inspire the professional development of faculty and staff as TCS more fully realizes its reputation as a 'research-based' experiential program

*The Head of School must have significant senior administrative experience in the following areas:*

- Skillful leadership of a senior administrative team to foster collaboration, respect, and professional excellence at all levels



- A skilled listener who can efficiently and effectively process information and make expedient decisions coupled with a clear rationale for critical decisions
- A leader who understands the need for organizational systems and protocols
- Strong financial acumen and the ability to oversee a complex budget as decisions are made about the source of revenue and the allocation of resources
- The ability to be a compelling spokesperson for TCS and an expert fundraiser
- Able to articulate the mission of TCS, and its value proposition

## SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials:

- EC Candidate Summary Sheet (contact Doug Cummings or Evan Peterson for this document)
- Letter of Interest addressed to the Search Committee
- Current résumé
- Personal Statement or Statement of Educational Philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information (including phone numbers and email addresses)
- Up to three letters of reference (optional)

Application materials are to be sent, electronically via email, as a single WORD document to:

Doug Cummings, Partner, Educators' Collaborative, LLC  
dcummings@educatorscollaborative.com

or

Evan Peterson, Partner, Educators' Collaborative, LLC  
epeterson@educatorscollaborative.com

Candidates are encouraged to speak personally with Doug Cummings (207-564-9000) or Evan Peterson at (817-307-3832)

**Applications for the position will be accepted until July 20, 2018**



In summer 2018, the Search Committee plans to identify a preliminary list of candidates whom they will interview. From this group they will narrow the selection to candidates who will be invited to the School for further interviews. The Trustees expect to reach a decision and appoint a new Head of School by early October 2018, with the term of office to commence on or about July 1, 2019. Salary and benefits are competitive. The College School is an equal opportunity employer.