

# Head of School

Leadership Opportunity  
July 2012

## Cape Fear Academy



Wilmington, NC  
625 students  
Prekindergarten - 12<sup>th</sup> grade  
[www.capefearacademy.org](http://www.capefearacademy.org)

Carney, Sandoe  Associates

800-225-7986 ▼ [www.carneysandoe.com](http://www.carneysandoe.com)

**THE POSITION**

Cape Fear Academy (CFA) in Wilmington, North Carolina, seeks a Head of School to lead a community of 625 pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade students and 71 faculty members. The next Head of School will find a welcoming, nurturing community that values academic excellence, critical thinking, and individual opportunity. CFA is soundly governed by a Board with a deep understanding of the School's challenges and opportunities.

A palpable sense of excitement surrounds the school today, as the campus grows and plans are made for the future of the newly constructed facilities. The next Head of School will ensure Cape Fear Academy's continued excellence by leading the school confidently into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, while remaining solidly grounded within the philosophy and traditions that have made the school a remarkable community of success.

**THE SCHOOL**

Located between the Cape Fear River and Wrightsville Beach, Cape Fear Academy is southeastern North Carolina's premier PK-12 independent school. Founded in 1967, CFA is a traditional, non-sectarian day school that is a leader in the educational community. Well respected for its academic excellence and outstanding college preparatory program, the curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning across academic disciplines. Respect and integrity, which foster an atmosphere of trust and safety within the school community, are also key components of the school's mission. Co-curricular programs such as athletics, visual and performing arts, student government, and clubs constitute an integral part of the student experience.

Cape Fear Academy is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)/Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS), having completed its five-year reaccreditation in the fall of 2009. CFA is recognized as an All Kinds of Minds School of Distinction. Professional memberships include the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS), the North Carolina Association of Independent Schools (NCAIS), the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), Independent School Management Consortium (ISM), and the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB).

**CURRENT LEADERSHIP**

The current Head of School, John Meehl, is retiring after ten years of exceptional service and solid leadership. During his tenure, enrollment grew 17%. Mr. Meehl also directed

***Mission***

*Cape Fear Academy strives to be a learning community sharing a commitment to respect, integrity, academic excellence, and service to others.*



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the development and implementation of a strategic plan, led a capital campaign toward its \$4 million goal, and oversaw the \$8.5 million capital project of the redesign of a growing campus and the construction of a new gymnasium, performing arts center, and athletic field complex.

### **CAMPUS AND SETTING**

The school is situated on a 27-acre campus. Present facilities include three classroom buildings, a student center, and a gymnasium, as well as athletic fields and a tennis facility. In 2006, 21 parents and friends of Cape Fear Academy purchased approximately ten acres across the street from the school. This land has been developed into a new athletic complex that opened in 2009 and includes a field house, coaches' stand and two fields, one of which is artificial turf.

### ***Cape Fear Academy at a Glance***

*Grades: PK – 12<sup>th</sup> grade*

*Current enrollment: 625*

*Faculty: 71*

*Faculty with advanced degrees: 56%*

*Student-Teacher ratio: 16:1*

*Operating budget: \$9.3 million*

*Indebtedness: \$8.3 million*

*Endowment: \$636,650 (12-31-10)*

*Annual giving in the most recent year before capital campaign: \$507,000*

*Capital giving most recent year: \$221,000*

*Parent participation in giving: 62%*

*Financial Aid: \$807,000*

*Students receiving need-based aid: 16.5%*

The school is currently constructing a gymnasium and a performing arts center to be completed in 2011. The gymnasium will include both a main gym and an auxiliary gym which will add additional space for practice and physical education classes. The performing arts center will house a 550-seat, multi-use auditorium as well as dressing rooms, practice rooms, and a band classroom.

### **COMMUNITY**

Parent and student surveys indicate that the feeling of community at CFA is the number one positive attribute, due in large part to the trust that is shared among faculty, students, parents, and administrators. The student body is happy, spirited, confident, and poised. One

hundred and eleven students applied for 100 places for the fall of 2010, and 82% of students accepted the offer of admission. CFA offers two types of financial aid: need-based and merit. Approximately 18% of the student body receives some type of financial aid with the bulk of the awards benefiting students in the Middle and Upper School.

The talented and passionate faculty exhibit a high level of camaraderie, working together to engage students in active learning. In 2010-2011, the teaching faculty was comprised of 21 males and 50 females for a total of 71 teaching staff. Of those, 56% hold advanced degrees. Faculty committees have recently reviewed the scope, sequence, and suitability of the curriculum using Atlas curriculum mapping as a tool. The process will be ongoing.



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## THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Cape Fear Academy offers a unique curriculum that combines traditional instruction in core academic subjects with a strong emphasis on higher-level thinking skills. CFA teachers are sensitive to the individual learning styles and needs of their students, and this is reflected in their instruction.

For more than a decade, CFA has embraced the importance of helping students develop critical thinking skills and effective study habits through a pioneering initiative known as *The Foundations Program*. Since its inception in 1996, the program has grown to also emphasize learning about learning, innovation, and creative thinking—skills to better equip students for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Foundations curriculum leads students through six levels of critical thinking – from the simple recall of facts up to the highest levels of thinking: synthesis and evaluation. To support students in their development of critical thinking skills, CFA opened the Center for Writing and Reasoning in 2006. Staffed full time by specially-trained CFA faculty members, the Writing Center offers



students in grades 6-12 help with writing and study skills. To support students in developing mathematical thinking, CFA opened the Math Lab in 2010. Students in grades 6-12 can go to the Math Lab for homework assistance, test preparation, and skill practice. For students who need additional assistance in a particular academic area or who require ongoing support with study skills or academic skill development, the Learning Skills Program offers highly-qualified, trained educators to act as tutors and academic coaches. The Learning Skills Program is a fee-based service available to students in grades K-12. Additionally, CFA provides workshops and training for teachers and parents in a variety of subject areas.

## UPPER SCHOOL (APPROXIMATELY 235 STUDENTS IN GRADES 9-12)

The Upper School offers one of the finest comprehensive college preparatory experiences in the state. There is a maximum of 66 students in each grade in the Upper School, and academic sections are comprised of up to 21 students. An impressive array of opportunities is available for this small student body, enabling all students to experience strong success not only in the outstanding academic curriculum but also in the excellent cultural arts and athletic programs. Smaller class sizes offer many opportunities for students to grow into critical thinkers, problem solvers, and responsible decision makers. A detailed Upper School curriculum guide is available at <http://www.capefearacademy.org/academicuscourses.html>.

One hundred percent of students are accepted to four-year colleges and universities, and typically 75% are accepted into their first choice school. Many Upper School students are dually enrolled in college courses while at Cape Fear Academy. A list of college acceptances can be found at <http://www.capefearacademy.org/collegeaccept.html>.

Cape Fear Academy students are well prepared for standardized tests. In the last three years, seniors have earned an SAT average of 1210, above the NAIS average. Nearly 90% of seniors take at least one Advanced Placement exam. The College Board has recognized CFA for having the largest segment of Upper School population achieve an exam grade of 3 or higher in a school of small size in two AP content areas. The 56 members of the class of 2011 include five National Merit Finalists.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL (APPROXIMATELY 160 STUDENTS IN GRADES 6-8)**

The Middle School program advances traditional studies in all curriculum areas to prepare students for college preparatory course work while maintaining a safe and nurturing environment to support academic success. Each grade has up to 58 students divided into three sections which are limited to 21 students. The curriculum has seven main components: English and literature, social studies, math, science, foreign language, fine arts, and character education. Electives include band, chorus, physical education, technology, drama, art, and video production. Middle School students can often be found conducting art projects that connect literature and social studies, taking field trips that enrich math or science, or enjoying the cuisine of cultures connected to social studies or foreign language. Technology is playing an increasingly important role in the curriculum. Students are exposed to a wide variety of media and trained to interpret them with a discerning eye. Hands-on technological tools allow students to expand their skills with real-life applications.

The Middle School offers many challenging and enjoyable opportunities in outdoor education, creative arts, athletics, and student leadership. While Middle Schoolers are continually "testing" for new limits, they have definite and communicated boundaries that provide safety as this transition occurs. Middle School faculty members are fundamental to this, providing individual attention, recognition of positive decisions, consequences for problem behaviors, and guidance in many forms to help these students navigate each day. The overall objective is for students to leave the eighth grade with respect for themselves and one another, a willingness to accept personal responsibility, and the integrity to make honest decisions about their academic and personal lives.

A hallmark of the Middle School is the fall outdoor education overnight trips. Within the first month of school, students in grades 6 and 8 go on a three to four day trip which emphasizes team-building, the development of trust, and the development of appropriate

risk taking. Students stay in cabins and work in teams with the usual outcome being increased camaraderie and positive social relationships.

Lower and Middle School students have averaged 82% on the Educational Records Bureau standardized achievement test.

#### **LOWER SCHOOL (APPROXIMATELY 230 STUDENTS PK-5TH GRADE)**

The CFA Lower School is designed to meet developmental needs as well as offer subject matter integrated around central themes. Much of the program is interdisciplinary, and class formats combine teacher-directed lessons with interactive group work. The team of dedicated and experienced teachers provides an enriching environment where each child may find success and enjoy the learning process. In the present enrollment model, there is one Prekindergarten section and two Kindergarten classes with a maximum enrollment of 18 students, as well as two sections of up to 20 students each for Grades 1-5. Classes in art, music, library, physical education, and Spanish provide students with opportunities to expand and investigate other areas of the curriculum. The Think Lab and Foundations classes also offer students the opportunity to collaborate, problem-solve, and think critically and creatively in a technology-rich environment. Field trips that range from touring historic sites and museums to exploring salt marshes, including a third grade overnight trip, are a regular feature of the Lower School curriculum. The Lower School strives to develop an increasing awareness of children's responsibilities to themselves, to other students, to parents, and to staff members. Children learn to value and demonstrate the integrity reflected in personal and academic honesty, respect and consideration for others, conservation of resources and property, and the willingness to expect these values from others.

#### **THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS**

An expansive array of artistic opportunities is available at Cape Fear Academy. Choral and instrumental music, visual arts, and drama partner with the curriculum of more technical arts, including film, graphic arts, and photography. Roughly half of all Middle and Upper School students participate in drama throughout the school year. All Lower School students are involved in dramatic productions each year. The drama department stages nine theatrical productions (two in Lower School, two in Middle School and five in Upper School). For musicians, beginning band is offered at the sixth grade level, while pep band, jazz ensemble, and advanced music classes, including AP music theory, are available to Upper School students. Each year, CFA has several band students recognized on a regional and state-level. Basic visual arts concepts are introduced to Lower School students, more fully explored in Middle School, with specialties such as drawing, sculpture and ceramics offered in Upper School.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETICS**

The CFA Athletic Program is inclusive and intensive, providing students with varying abilities opportunities to participate. The sports program teaches not only skills, but also teamwork and sportsmanship, promoting the life-long importance of maintaining good health. In 2009-2010 in the Middle School, 96% of eligible students played at least one sport, and 77% of eligible students played at least two sports. In the Upper School, 91% of the student body played at least one sport, and 54% of the student body played at least two sports. CFA participates in the North Carolina Independent Schools Athletic Association, fielding 39 teams for grades 7-12 in basketball, cheerleading, cross country, field hockey, golf, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis and volleyball. In 2009-2010, Cape Fear Academy finished the year as NCISAA state champions in Girls' Tennis and Boys' Tennis, NCISAA State Final Four participant in Boys' Lacrosse, and NCISAA state tournament fourth place finish in Varsity Golf. CFA had 42 all-conference performers and 16 NCISAA all-state performers.

**TECHNOLOGY**

Cape Fear Academy houses approximately 500 computers on campus, including five stationary computer labs and eight mobile computer labs. The Lower School Think Lab is outfitted with the latest technology, including i-pads, i-pods, Lego Mindstorm robots, GPS units, student response devices, and more. Media projection systems are available in every classroom, and twelve classrooms are equipped with interactive white boards. Middle and Upper School students have access to a professional video productions lab. Wireless internet service is available campus-wide, with internet filtering for appropriateness of content. The School's internal communication system is based in Google mail and apps for faculty, parents, and Middle and Upper School students. Grades and attendance are managed by faculty and shared with parents online. Faculty members are encouraged to use technology in appropriate places in their instruction and assessment. Technology use by faculty is part of the teacher evaluation instrument.

A 1:1 laptop program will begin in 2011-2012, with all ninth grade students receiving a laptop for their use in the Upper School.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Upper School students are required to complete 72 hours of community service during their four years of high school, by taking part in both on-campus and off-campus activities. By the spring of the eighth-grade year, students spend several days off-campus conducting service work, returning with new and broader insights into the larger world and the profound needs of others. Lower School classes participate in group projects to help those in the local community as well as to contribute to the Cape Fear Academy community through special jobs and services.

## GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Cape Fear Academy has a unified, high-functioning 18-member Board of Trustees that reflects best practices and is appropriately involved in the life of the school. The Board reaches consensus amicably with the best interests of the students in mind. The School is well managed financially with good stewardship of the school's resources. CFA has experienced the enrollment challenges all independent schools have faced during the recession, and enrollment has fallen from a high of 671 (08-09) to the current 626. Knowing that many families would suffer economic challenges they had never before faced, the Board and administration increased the financial aid budget by 15% as a "recession buffer." As a result, families who wanted to stay were able to do so.

The 2006-2011 Strategic Plan, *Capturing the Energy of the Cape Fear Academy Hurricanes*, focused on four themes: student programs, faculty sustenance and improvement, facilities planning and management, and financial soundness and institutional advancement. The plan specifically called for improvements and increases in academic program and classroom space, athletics facilities, and fine arts facilities. The Integrated Campaign of the same name combined the Annual Fund and Capital Campaign for four years. Despite the global financial crisis, CFA met the challenge by launching a capital campaign that earned over \$4 million in gifts and pledges between 2007 and January 2011. Phase I included the construction of the athletic complex (artificial turf field, coaches' tower and field house) which was completed in the fall of 2009. Phase II includes an athletic center and the construction of a perimeter road system, followed by the renovation of the current gym to a performing arts center. The road system is complete, and the gymnasium complex, which will include classrooms, is scheduled to open in the spring of 2011. Reaching the \$4 million threshold allowed the school to move forward with the facility and program plans, and the Performing Arts Center is slated to be completed near the opening of school in the fall of 2011.



## WILMINGTON

Located on the southeast coast of North Carolina in New Hanover County, Wilmington is rich in history, arts and culture. With a population of just over 100,000, Wilmington is home to The University of North Carolina - Wilmington, a film industry, a state port, and marine science center, and a historic downtown. Settled in 1729, Wilmington flourished as a major port and was at one time home to the largest cotton exchange in the world. The historic district covers over 250 blocks and includes many fine examples of antebellum architecture. Today, a popular destination is the scenic two-mile Riverwalk that follows the Cape Fear River through downtown Wilmington. The World War II battleship *North Carolina* is berthed along the waterfront and is open

to the public. Wilmington is a relaxed and welcoming community, combining the charm of a small Southern town with a wide variety of recreational and cultural activities. Events and festivals throughout the year include the annual Azalea Festival and the Cucalorus Film Festival.

The city has experienced astounding growth since 1990 and has become one of the most business-friendly cities in the Southeast. Wilmington now ranks #14 in the nation on Fortune Small Business Magazine's "Best Places for a Start-Up." Wilmington has grown into a major center for film and television production, in large part because of the founding of EUE Screen Gems Studios in the city in 1984. Today, the studio is the largest domestic television and movie production facility outside of California.



The climate is ideal, with inviting temperatures in the 60s throughout the fall and spring and mild winters. Outdoor enthusiasts enjoy biking, sailing, kayaking, and jet-skiing along the Intracoastal Waterway and swimming, surfing, fishing, and parasailing in the ocean. Five-mile long Wrightsville Beach is just 15 minutes to the east of Wilmington on the Atlantic side of the peninsula. Many families have been coming to

Wrightsville Beach for generations to enjoy the low key lifestyle and village charm. To the south are the towns of Carolina Beach and Kure Beach, both of which are located on Pleasure Island. The renovated Carolina Beach Boardwalk offers small shops, boutiques, restaurants, and an amusement park. Kure Beach boasts the state's oldest continuously operated family owned wooden fishing pier.

Wilmington International Airport is just four miles from Wilmington and is served by several national carriers with direct flights to Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C.

### **THE OPPORTUNITY**

The Head of School is the Chief Executive Officer of the School, reporting to the Board of Trustees. He/she will execute the mission of the School and carry out the policies determined in conjunction with the Board. The Head of School's responsibilities include oversight of all academic, extracurricular, enrollment, and personnel matters, as well as management of the school budget and external relations. The new Head will be expected to be the inspirational leader of the School, broadly informed about academic matters, committed to excellence, and possessing both a moral and educational vision to take the School forward in the 21st century. This person should enthusiastically support the mission statement and core values of Cape Fear Academy.



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### **SPECIAL STRENGTHS OF CAPE FEAR ACADEMY**

- Nurturing and caring community with pride and passion for the school
- Academic excellence and strong college placement
- Trusting and productive teacher-student relationships
- An up-to-date curriculum, with ongoing evaluation, expansion, and improvement
- A well-balanced program offering diverse enrichment opportunities
- Small classes with nurturing, dedicated teachers
- An excellent faculty committed to professional development
- Cooperative spirit among teachers who work collaboratively
- Opportunities for success for all students with attention to diverse learning styles
- Positive reputation in the community
- Well governed by a strong and committed Board of Trustees
- A supportive and involved parent body
- A location in a dynamic, growing region

### **CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL**

- Address enrollment challenges and develop strategies that attract and retain mission-appropriate students
- Pursue highest standards of educational excellence
- Expand ethnic and socioeconomic diversity
- Continue to recruit and retain high-quality faculty and staff
- Market effectively to enrich the broader community's understanding of the value of a CFA education
- Establish appropriate roles and responsibilities for parents, students, faculty, and administrators
- Contribute to the strategic planning process
- Strengthen fundraising and the school's culture of philanthropy
- Oversee continued physical plant expansion
- Continue to expand the arts and athletics program
- Further unify the three divisions

### **PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

- Proven track record in senior level administrative and leadership positions
- Broad experience in curriculum development
- A deep understanding of current educational issues and well developed knowledge of child development
- Well developed understanding of the role of technology in education
- A skilled manager with a commitment to faculty and administrator development
- Fundraising and community outreach experience

- Experience understanding and championing diversity efforts within a community

**QUALITIES DESIRED IN THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL**

- A commitment to the mission and core values of CFA
- Excellent communication and public speaking skills, a good ambassador
- Faculty/staff advocate and mentor, a good delegator and team-builder
- Consistent, fair, and open-minded
- Forward-thinking, with a creative vision for the future of the school
- Thoughtful, reflective listener
- Charismatic, dynamic and engaging personality
- Approachable, welcoming, friendly with an open-door philosophy
- A deep understanding of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning
- Well-rounded, balanced view of academics, arts, and athletics
- Courage/determination to be firm, yet flexible when necessary
- Eagerness to embrace local culture and be involved in the Wilmington community
- Demonstrated experience in managing complex financial budgets

**TO APPLY:**

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically and as separate documents the following materials:

- *cover letter expressing interest in the Cape Fear Academy position*
- *current résumé*
- *statement of educational philosophy and practice*
- *list of 5 references with name, phone number, and email address of each to:*

**Dr. Thomas Redmon**  
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