



Junior High School Principal

July 2012

THE WESTMINSTER SCHOOLS



Carney, Sandoe  Associates

800-225-7986 ▼ www.carneysandoe.com

Atlanta, GA
1,846 students
Pre-1st -12

www.westminster.net

THE POSITION

The Westminster Schools in northwest Atlanta seeks a Principal of the Junior High School to lead a vibrant learning community of 550 students, grades 6 to 8, and 70 faculty. The Principal reports directly to the President and serves as a member of the senior leadership team, working closely and collaboratively with the President, division leaders and a knowledgeable, engaging faculty. This division leader is charged with guiding all aspects of the Junior High School's operation within the context of the Westminster mission statement and ensuring that excellence, excitement, imagination, and creativity pervade the division programs. This is an exciting time in Westminster's history, as an excellent school continues to advance and develop, balancing an exceptionally strong traditional academic program with visionary initiatives to prepare students for future success.

THE SCHOOL

A premier co-ed, Pre-First-12, inclusive Christian preparatory school, Westminster is located a few miles northwest of downtown Atlanta in the established neighborhood of Buckhead. Its 180-acre campus includes 18 academic and residential buildings and multiple athletic fields. Two hundred and sixty six faculty members—79% of whom have graduate degrees—form a foundation of excellence. Vigorous academics, enhanced by a newly-introduced 1:1 laptop program and a strategic 21st century teaching and learning vision, help Westminster's 1846 students develop far beyond the classroom, finding success at the nation's top colleges and universities. As a complement to nationally recognized academics, Westminster offers award-winning arts, athletics, debate, student-led service learning and outdoor education, and an array of international programs, all supported by resources and facilities that rival those of a small college.

Mission Statement
Westminster is a Christian, independent day school for boys and girls, which seeks to develop the whole person for college and for life through excellent education.



SCHOOL HISTORY

The origin of The Westminster Schools dates to 1909, when the North Avenue Presbyterian School of Atlanta, later called The Napsonian School, was founded. In 1951, when the financially-strapped school's prospects were bleak and closing seemed inevitable, the NAPS Trustees reincorporated their school as a nonprofit, non-sectarian institution with a Board of Trustees from various denominations. At that time, it was also renamed The Westminster Schools. Washington Seminary, founded in 1878 by grandnieces of George Washington, merged with Westminster in 1953. Dr. William L. Pressly, the founding President, served from 1951 until 1973. In the mid-1950s,



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Westminster served as a pilot site for the Ford Foundation project that eventually matured into the Advanced Placement program, and today Westminster students graduate with an average of over four AP courses. A. Emerson Johnson III was President from 1973 until 1976. Donn M. Gaebelein, a teacher and High School principal at Westminster, 1952-1963, returned to serve as President from 1976 until 1991. William Clarkson IV was appointed President in July 1991.

Westminster Schools at a Glance

Grades: Pre-1st – 12th grade

Enrollment: 1,846

Faculty: 266

Faculty w/ advanced degree: 79%

Operating budget: \$53.5 million

Endowment: \$224 million

Indebtedness: \$19 million

Tuition 2011-12: \$18,375-\$21,315

Financial Aid budget: \$4 million

Students receiving aid: 18.4%

Average award: \$11,656

Diversity of students: 24%

Diversity of faculty: 13%

The plural name, The Westminster Schools, originated from the three divisions of the school – the Westminster Elementary School, The Westminster Boys School, and the Westminster Girls School – functioning as semi-autonomous operations. Over the years, along with the change to the three current divisions, a gradual centralization occurred, beginning with the construction of Pressly Hall and its common high school library and its dining hall for all students. Today, while the three divisions are run by their respective principals, they are carefully coordinated so academic and extracurricular programs offer a high degree of consistency and integration.

Over the brief span of 60 years, the school has grown from a last-minute dream for revitalizing a small girls' school into one of the most successful independent schools in the nation. By almost any objective measure – academic achievement, scale and quality of the campus, sound financial health – Westminster has matured into an outstanding educational community. Yet the school's leadership aspires to grow in new ways to continuously improve the school's practice and the student's experience.

CAMPUS AND SETTING

Located just a few miles northwest of downtown Atlanta, the Westminster campus consists of 180 wooded acres along scenic Nancy Creek, which runs through it. Buckhead itself is one of Atlanta's most desirable communities, with stately homes shaded with old-growth, hardwood trees and many of Atlanta's finest restaurants, hotels and shopping venues. With the Chattahoochee River on its northern edge, Buckhead is also dotted with numerous parks and nature preserves.



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The new Junior High School is a state-of-the-art building that accommodates both the unique needs of the Junior High student and the faculty who nurture their academic, spiritual, and emotional growth. What began as a wish list for the “ultimate learning environment” now stands as a building filled with the laughter, exuberant energy, and wonder of children engaged in creative discovery. The opening of the new Junior High School, which has been greeted enthusiastically by faculty, students, and parents, creates



a more unified campus, linking the new facility aesthetically and functionally with the existing Elementary School and the High School. With the exceptions of instrumental music, physical education, and lunch, all Junior High classes are self-contained in one building. Classrooms are spacious, bathed in natural light, and equipped with SMARTboard technology. Three outdoor patios and an amphitheatre provide great play space for free time.

The George Woodruff Library serves Westminster’s Junior High School students and faculty. Six thousand square feet provide space for browsing and pleasure reading, reference and research, group and individual study, instruction in library skills, media production, faculty study, and library volunteer work. This wing opened in 1985 and allowed the Junior High School to become a self-contained educational unit for the first time.

The primary athletic facility is the 160,000-square-foot Turner Gym, home of Westminster’s varsity basketball, wrestling, volleyball, swimming and diving, and gymnastics programs with room at the main performance floor for 1,428 seated spectators. There are also three practice basketball courts, a multi-purpose floor, four squash courts, a rock-climbing wall, and an indoor jogging track. The weight room has approximately 6,000 square feet of space that holds 40 machines and 22 pieces of cardiovascular equipment. Swimmers compete in the 10-lane pool and the natatorium holds 560,000 gallons of water and has a diving well with three one-meter boards and two three-meter boards. Outdoor facilities include fields for football, baseball, soccer, softball, and lacrosse, 16 tennis courts, track and field, and a cross-country course.

LOCATION

Atlanta, the capital and largest city in Georgia, is the ninth most populous metropolitan area in the United States. At the foothills of the southern Appalachian Mountains, Atlanta is distinguished by rolling hills and broad uplands with the Chattahoochee River forming the northwestern boundary of the city. The City of Atlanta covers 130 square miles. The metropolitan area of Atlanta has an estimated population of 5.1 million; it is one of the

fastest growing cities in the country. The climate offers hot humid summers and mild winters with an average annual snowfall of two inches.

Atlanta is a major business center and has more Fortune 500 companies headquartered within the city than any other American city except New York City and Houston. The Coca-Cola Company, an organization closely aligned with the roots of Atlanta and its rapid ascension in the South, is headquartered here. Delta Air Lines is the city's largest employer and operates one of the world's largest airline hubs at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Several media powerhouses are based in Atlanta. Turner Broadcasting Company began in Atlanta, and the city remains the home of Cable News Network (CNN). Cox Communications, also based in Atlanta, is the nation's third-largest cable television service provider and publishes over a dozen daily newspapers, including *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Atlanta is also home to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with 15,000 employees.

The High Museum of Art, a division of the Woodruff Arts Center in Midtown Atlanta, includes a permanent international collection of nineteenth and twentieth century art with a concentration on collecting and supporting works by Southern artists. History museums chronicle the city's rich history and include the nearby Atlanta History Center and Kenan Research Center with exhibits of the Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement and the 1996 summer Olympic Games in Atlanta. Situated downtown is the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and the new Georgia Aquarium which opened in 2005, the largest in the world. Children's museums include The Fernbank Science Center and Imagine It! Children's Museum of Atlanta. Atlanta is home to The Carter Center, founded by former President, Jimmy Carter and Rosalind Carter to advance human rights worldwide and alleviate human suffering. Atlanta's classical music scene includes the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the Atlanta Opera, Atlanta Ballet, New Trinity Baroque, the Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestra, and The Atlanta Boy Choir.



Atlanta is home to a number of notable colleges and universities including Emory, Spelman, Morehouse, Morris Brown, Clark Atlanta University, Georgia Tech, and Georgia State.

Professional sports franchises include the Atlanta Braves, the oldest continually operating professional baseball team in Major League Baseball at whose stadium its own Hank Aaron hit his 751st homerun to break Babe Ruth's career record. The NFL Atlanta Falcons play in the Georgia Dome, host to two Super Bowls. Basketball is popular and

the NBA Atlanta Hawks and the newest professional team, the WNBA Atlanta Dream, both play at the Philips Arena.

STUDENTS

Enrollment at Westminster exceeds 1,800 students coming from more than 50 zip codes in the Atlanta metropolitan area and it represents all major religious groups. Twenty-four percent of Westminster students are students of color and the enrollment figure for Hispanic students stands at 62, double the number since 2006-07. Admission is competitive with approximately four applicants per available spot yielding three quarters of those offered admission enrolling as students. Westminster's substantial endowment ensures economic diversity and a commitment to meet all demonstrated needs of the accepted students. The primary entry point is Pre-First grade, which typically enrolls 68 students in four classes. Each year approximately 15 new students enroll in grades one through five. Enrollment expands again in the Junior High School. With wonderful unanimity, the faculty praise the talent, industry and attitude of the student body they feel privileged to work with. Parents in turn, recognize and appreciate the school's focus on educating the whole child.



FACULTY

The exceptionally strong Westminster faculty represents a blend of enthusiastic young teachers and seasoned veterans. Both collectively and individually, Westminster teachers are widely recognized for their professional skill and commitment. They include eight readers or table leaders for the College Board Advanced Placement examinations, eight Klingenstein Center for Independent School Education participants (including three fellows), 18 different Georgia STAR teachers of the year, and two Radio Shack National Teacher Award winners. Over three-quarters of the 266 faculty members school-wide hold advanced degrees. Faculty remuneration is in the top 10% of JRPO (Joint Research and Planning Office) schools. Faculty realize the extraordinary support the school provides to their professional development.



The entire faculty average over 11 years of experience at Westminster, bringing continuity and exceptional experience. As one administrator noted, it is a “strong veteran faculty with deep content knowledge.” One gets the sense around campus of the faculty's commitment to excellence and its passionate pursuit of that goal.

Nearly one of every five current Westminster teachers is 60 years of age or older, suggesting the school may need to replace a large number of the faculty within the next five years. The current economic climate has led many teachers to delay retirement and attrition is at a historic low. Through the successful completion of its capital campaign *Teaching for Tomorrow* in early 2011, Westminster raised over \$ 100 million with the intent to elevate and celebrate the transformative profession and to attract and retain the next generation of teachers. Plans for these funds are to increase faculty salaries, recognize and reward exceptional promise and performance, and provide faculty and students with the resources to enhance learning and perform to their highest potential.



Westminster's Center for Teaching, in partnership with Drew Charter School, is devoted to professional development opportunities to help teachers improve their understanding of the craft of teaching. The Center pursues partnerships to present programs and resources designed to identify best practices in education, recruit and retain excellent educators for Westminster and member schools, and build on each school's

excellence. Internally, the faculty benefit significantly from having this resource on campus for the support it provides and also the opportunities it presents for faculty to have impact across and outside Westminster.

THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL (550 STUDENTS IN GRADES 6-8)

The Junior High program is rich, challenging, and fast-paced, and focuses on the development of the emerging young adolescent. In a comprehensive program that maintains a deliberate and careful balance of traditional and innovative teaching methods, the faculty celebrate students' creativity, concentrate on their skill development, and support the students in their personal growth. Throughout the disciplines teachers emphasize study strategies, technology use, experiential learning, and critical thinking skills. The average class size is 15. Students take seven courses in a rotating, six-periods-a-day schedule, with each course meeting four days per week. At each grade level, students take four exam classes and three non-exam classes. School-wide gatherings and assemblies enrich the experience every week.



The Junior High School believes in and promotes an appropriately rigorous and challenging course of study, as well as a supportive, nurturing academic environment. Students experience an excellent and relevant curriculum balanced in content knowledge and skill development. The curriculum is appropriately differentiated at each grade level and combines required classes in Bible and Religious Studies, English, history, mathematics, science, and physical education with electives in language, performing arts or visual arts. Detailed course descriptions can be found on the school website, www.westminster.net.



The Affective Education program in the Junior High provides an integrated curriculum that builds on itself from 6th through 8th grades and provides opportunities for students to wrestle with some of the issues inherent in being in Junior High: how to manage self, how to navigate changing friendships, how to respect differences and resolve problems, and what it means to be trustworthy and act justly. In short, students experience a program that allows them to think about what it means to grow into the kind of people they want to be in the world. Through these genuine experiences, Westminster Junior High students learn how to create the conditions for civil community, solve their own problems, and engage in moral decision making, the cornerstones of good character.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Westminster continually seeks ways to focus students' attention on the importance of developing a sound and wholesome spiritual life. In the Junior High, a semester Bible class is offered to all students. In High School, the process begins with graduation requirements, which include two credits in Biblical studies, one in Old Testament and one in New Testament. Beyond the classroom, students have numerous opportunities for spiritual growth including daily devotionals, morning prayers, and Bible study groups. Once a month Westminster provides Holy Communion services for Christian faculty and staff. Programs outside the school day include weekend retreats three times per year. In addition, students of all faiths have opportunities for discussion and reflection by attending meetings of Nosh (the Jewish students group) and the Tree House of Knowledge (an open discussion group for students to explore spiritual and religious issues). While rooted in the Christian tradition, Westminster welcomes students and faculty of all faith backgrounds and encourages civil, respectful and open dialogue about matters of faith.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

In its relatively short history, Westminster has established itself as a school with remarkable attributes. The buildings, grounds, and playing fields are ideally designed to support an extraordinary array of offerings for the intellectual, artistic, athletic, social, and spiritual development of the students. In the Junior High School, the faculty and administration are passionate about their life's work with their students and colleagues. Among the parents and alumni there is a deep and abiding pride for the profound impact of the Westminster experience.

Westminster is fully aware of the exciting challenges that lie ahead and it is fully committed to reach its full potential. By simultaneously holding true to its core mission and values *and* by opening itself to the opportunities and admitted challenges of defining what a 21st century education really looks like, Westminster will fulfill its bold aspirations. To do so, however, will require concerted progress, already underway, in the following key areas, across all three divisions in the school:

- Establishing more unified collaboration among the three division heads
- Working collaboratively within and across divisions to implement the understandings and practices of 21st century skills, content and pedagogy
- Incorporating new technologies and learning tools into the curriculum
- Identifying and meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body
- Increasing visibility and communication with the faculty, students, and parents
- Establishing a culture of mutual respect, trust, and understanding

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- A master's degree or equivalent
- A commitment to the school's mission and values, especially the "*Learning for Life*" Vision Statement.
- Previous experience as the leader of a middle or junior high school
- Expertise in 21st Century learning practices and current with new research as it relates to learning and early adolescents
- Experience promoting the effective and innovative use of technology in teaching and learning

SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Passion for middle school education
- Strong management and leadership qualities
- Easy, articulate communicator
- Effective interpersonal skills; comfortable with students, teachers and parents
- A dynamic team player and strategic, inspirational leader



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- Personable, warm, and approachable
- High integrity with a steady moral compass
- Commitment to creativity
- Known for having a good sense of humor

Westminster also seeks to continue reinforcing the Pre-First-12 nature of the school community and foster more connectivity among the three school divisions. The three Principals are expected to work very closely – and collaboratively – with each other and in concert with the President and the Pre-First-12 Administrators (two Assistant Headmasters, Director of Office for Institutional Advancement, Director of the Center for Teaching, Dean of Faculty, Dean of Instructional Technology, Director of Business and Finance, Director of Marketing and Communications, Director of Admissions, and Director of Athletics). Indeed that Principal partnership is essential to making positive, lasting institutional change and to insuring the school operates smoothly, consistently, and harmoniously. Appropriate technology balance, connecting curriculum Pre-First-12, 21st century learning, marketing and communication, are all current agenda items for the leadership team.



COMPENSATION

Compensation package will be very competitive, commensurate with experience and the regional independent school market. On-campus housing may be available.

TO APPLY

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

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

Larry Becker and Devereaux F. McClatchey

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