

# HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

## THE CORNERSTONE SCHOOL

Stratham, New Hampshire

[cornerstoneschool.org](http://cornerstoneschool.org)

Start Date: July 2024



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

[CARNEYSANDOE.COM](http://CARNEYSANDOE.COM)

# Mission Statement

The Cornerstone School is deeply committed to laying the foundation upon which each child can build, in order to become the architect of their own future. The foundation consists of an open, inquiring mind, a loving heart, and a solid inner confidence that permits respect for our earth and its inhabitants. The groundwork is laid in an environment of intellectual challenge and close, supportive relationships among students, teachers, and parents.

## At a Glance



Established  
1985



Total enrollment  
167



Total Faculty  
33



Student-faculty ratio  
8:1



Students of color  
19%



Financial aid awarded  
\$46,196



Faculty with advanced degrees  
42%



Campus size  
11 acres

Faculty of color: 6%  
Students receiving aid: 10%

Quasi-endowment: \$465,805  
Annual operating budget: \$2.5M



## Overview

For nearly forty years, The Cornerstone School has served students from 17 months (Toddler) through Grade 8 (Junior) on the picturesque, New Hampshire Seacoast. The School's stunning 11-acre campus includes rolling hills and an impressive light-filled school building, beautifully designed just for Montessori learning. There are numerous developmentally appropriate spaces to learn and play, and ample outdoor space where students can physically engage with their environment and learning. As an AMS member school, Cornerstone is informed by current Montessori research and utilizes a progressive, activity-based process of learning. Cornerstone students learn in multi-aged, student-centered classes designed for their stage of development, guided by specially trained faculty. Students' freedom to choose and guide their schoolwork is supported through a curriculum that offers an intellectual and social bridge from their Cornerstone experience to high school and beyond. The community at The Cornerstone School exudes kindness and joy while fostering authentic relationships between all.

The Cornerstone School has an outstanding reputation among Montessori educators and is appreciated as a school in which the individual child is known and celebrated, and where children are inspired for life-long learning. With a strategic plan developed in 2023, the next Head of School will be tasked to support the Board in delivering its ambitious goals over the next three to five years, including enhancing consistent enrollment, growing the financial sustainability of the school, and further strengthening an already close-knit community. As an exemplary Montessori school, Cornerstone is defined by a committed, expert faculty and staff who continue to be inspired and supported to do their best work across the School's five developmental divisions. This is a wonderful opportunity for an inspiring and strategic leader to become part of a community with a dynamic history and a commitment to its future.

## Opportunities and Challenges

Cornerstone has a distinguished history of educating children aged 17 months through Grade 8. Committed to Montessori's intentional and holistic approach to education, faculty at Cornerstone guide a diverse community of learners and encourage independence and passion for lifelong learning. The inviting campus and natural surroundings provide ample opportunity for classroom learning and outdoor programming. As the school evolves, the next Head of School will need to embody the vision, organization, and exercise management skills to lead and effectively manage a talented group of faculty, administrators, and students, while nurturing a joyful and engaged community.





Among the other opportunities the new Head will find are

- Fostering community through authentic engagement with students, faculty, staff, parents, caregivers, and the greater Seacoast community; and between the five divisions of the school.
- Ensuring that the School remains fiscally sound while exploring ways to enhance and improve the School's physical plant and continue to invest in its faculty and programs as outlined in the school's most recent strategic and master plans.
- As the next Head of School articulates the vision of The Cornerstone School, there is opportunity to make the school more well-known in the market as a school committed to early childhood-Grade 8 Montessori education.
- With a commitment to supporting neurodiverse students, there is a need to screen intakes for students appropriate for the setting and to define the learning support program at Cornerstone so that the school is truly supporting all students with their learning and needs.
- Although the toddler, primary, and lower elementary divisions are consistently fully enrolled, the upper elementary and middle school divisions have historically experienced fluctuating enrollment numbers providing opportunity for growth in enrollment and retention across elementary and middle school.
- Partnering with the Board on "best practice" governance and serving as a strategic leader to facilitate the established strengths of Cornerstone while planning for the future.
- Connecting and communicating effectively with faculty members, administration, parents, caregivers, students, community members, and the Board so that these groups are appropriately informed of School matters, potential issues, and needs.
- Leading with an equitable and inclusive approach to internalize and evolve the DEIB program so all students and adults feel safe and recognized.





## Qualifications and Personal Attributes

The ideal candidate(s) will offer most or all of the following qualifications and qualities:

- A Montessori educated teacher or administrator or a candidate with an educational philosophy compatible with Montessori principles and values and a willingness to complete a Montessori administration training program; teaching experience and a track record of supporting and developing teaching faculty;
- A relational leader, one who celebrates how Cornerstone values community and faculty autonomy, and yet who is still able to help the school change and evolve;
- Eagerness to engage actively with students and faculty, and willingness to prioritize visibility amidst the demands of a busy professional schedule;
- Strong interpersonal skills, possessing the ability to communicate with inspiration and clarity;
- A collaborative, professional leadership style built on approachability, responsiveness, and transparency;
- Experience hiring, supporting, and retaining faculty;
- Familiarity with the intersection of tuition and financial assistance;
- An advocate for the school who will seek out and employ various funding sources to implement the strategic priorities.
- A creative thinker striving to enrich the Cornerstone experience based on school priorities and children's needs.
- The confidence, humor, and humility to advocate for new ideas, invite disagreement, manage difficult conversations, and welcome feedback.



# Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about The Cornerstone School.

[School Website](#)

[About Stratham, New Hampshire](#)

[Strategic Plan](#)



## To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates wishing to apply should submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé; and
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

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