



**THE FRIENDS SCHOOL
OF ATLANTA
Decatur, GA**

**HEAD OF SCHOOL
Start Date: July 2023
friendsschoolatlanta.org**



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES



THE FRIENDS SCHOOL OF ATLANTA

Mission

Our mission is to provide challenging academics in a diverse environment, drawing on the Quaker testimonies, or values, of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship to empower our students to go out into the world with conscience, conviction, and compassion.

Vision

We believe that all students have within themselves unique capacities for learning and achievement. The learning program provides opportunities for students to achieve their highest academic levels. In a supportive learning environment, students develop their capacities through independent thought, service, and responsible action, thereby fostering lifelong learning, self-confidence and respect for others. We provide a caring, cooperative atmosphere encouraging students to support each other as equals and discourage that which would set one student above another.

OVERVIEW

The Friends School of Atlanta is a coeducational day school nestled on a picturesque 5.85-acre campus just a few miles east of the Atlanta Beltline. Serving students in pre-K-3 through grade 8, the school offers a challenging academic program in a diverse learning community, preparing students to step into the world with conscience, conviction, and compassion.

Guided by the Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equity, and stewardship, the school is deeply committed to providing a well-rounded educational experience that addresses the range of human development—intellectual, social, physical, and emotional. Much more than just words on a page, these shared values are pervasive and unite the entire community; parents and caregivers feel as much at home at The Friends School of Atlanta as do their children.

The Friends School of Atlanta seeks a dynamic leader as its next Head of School starting July 1, 2023. The successful candidate will be devoted to the School's Quaker education mission and program and hold "radical respect" for children and their teachers. The Head of School oversees all programs and operations, fostering a climate of excellence and ethical growth among students, faculty, and staff. This is an exceptional opportunity to build on the successes of a highly regarded founding Head of School and to propel the school into its next chapter.

At a Glance

Founded: 1991

Total students: 173

8th graders in the class of 2022: 21

Students of color: 36%

Total teaching faculty: 31

Faculty of color: 40%

Student/teacher ratio: 8:1

Annual Operating Budget: \$4.26M

Financial aid budget: \$1M

Students receiving aid: 35%



SCHOOL HISTORY

In 1943, members of the Atlanta Friends Meeting were actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement. In addition to providing a gathering place for Friends, the Friends Meetinghouse was one of the few sites in the city available for interracial meetings. To further the Quakers' work helping to desegregate public schools in Atlanta, members of Atlanta Friends Meeting held one of the city's very first integrated classes, bringing together white and black children for an art class. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. sent two of his children to participate in this history-making event.

When a Supreme Court ruling in the 1980s ended Minority to Majority programs designed to enforce school desegregation, particularly in the South, public schools largely re-segregated, reflecting the racial demographics of the neighborhoods where schools were located. In response to this disappointing turn of events, a committee formed at the Atlanta Friends Meeting to explore the possibility of opening a Friends school in Atlanta that would not only feature Quaker pedagogy, but also serve as a model of diversity. The school opened its doors in 1991 and has remained true to its founding mission of serving a diverse community and holding true to Quaker values and testimonies. Though incorporated separately from Atlanta Friends Meeting, the school continues to operate in close partnership with the Meeting.

THE SCHOOL

As the only Friends school in the state of Georgia (and one of 78 Friends schools in the country), The Friends School of Atlanta is committed to teaching to the goodness within every child by providing individualized instruction led by exceptional faculty and staff who are dedicated to meeting each child at their developmental level and challenging them to discover their full range of abilities.



Emphasizing essential Quaker testimonials for life and learning, FSA is a diverse, welcoming community of learners and seekers. Teachers and students work to educate and be educated by children from a broad spectrum of racial, economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds as well as differing physical abilities, gender and sexual orientations, and family structures. As a result, the student body is among the most diverse of any independent school in the Southeast. Learning specialists, a school counselor, and a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (beginning July 2022) offer additional support so that every child can thrive.

The Friends School of Atlanta is a member of the Atlanta Area Association of Independent Schools (AAAIS), the Friends Council on Education, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), and the Georgia Independent School Association (GISA) and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS).

ACADEMICS

The Friends School of Atlanta offers small classes and individualized instruction that incorporates such essential themes of Friends education as silent reflection; inquiry-based learning; collaborative, experiential learning; and service learning to facilitate the kind of experiences that engender self-awareness and respect for others.

A small student-to-faculty ratio ensures individualized attention, allowing each student to learn at their own pace and explore a variety of passions. Fulfilling the school's vision to guide children toward an awareness and appreciation of their own uniqueness, the curriculum is concerned with all aspects of human development: intellectual, moral, aesthetic, physical, social, and emotional.



Beginning in pre-K (3- and 4-year-olds) and kindergarten, students develop a love for learning. Classrooms are vibrant, joyful spaces where children feel safe and where age-appropriate risk taking is supported. The academic program focuses on language and literacy development and mathematical thinking and expression. Science, social studies, and geography are interwoven in exciting unit studies.

The elementary school (grades 1-4) provides an academically challenging curriculum with the flexibility to meet the needs of younger students. Two full-time teachers in each classroom work to instill self-confidence in each student while also requiring that students recognize the needs of others. There is a balance of freedom and discipline in the classroom. Conflict resolution, creative problem solving, and mediation are central to the educational experience. Older elementary students pursue a cross-curricular program that integrates science, language arts, social studies, and geography while they hone the reading, writing, spelling, and mathematic skills they use every day. Physical education, art, music, library, innovation lab, and Spanish are important additions to the schedule.

Middle school (grades 5-8) seeks to meet the educational and emotional needs of early adolescent students who are experiencing rapid physical, intellectual, and social growth. Middle school fosters successful study habits, academic growth, and individual creativity within a framework of choice and self-discipline, and students are expected to take increasing responsibility for their work. Since its founding, The Friends School of Atlanta has taught American history through the lens of truth regarding the displacement of Native Americans, slavery and the structural racism that continues to shape American society to this day. This approach to teaching history not only illuminates the origins of entrenched inequality, but also seeks to inspire students to work for a more just society through activism and the building of coalitions across race, gender, sexual orientation, different abilities, and class.

After graduating from FSA, students have gone on to all types of high schools—independent, public, and boarding—and have a record of academic and social success in these environments as well as an ongoing commitment to community service and activism.



ARTS + INNOVATION

The Friends School of Atlanta is committed to infusing creative confidence, innovative and collaborative approaches, scientific curiosity, and Quaker practice across all disciplines. Beginning with the youngest learners and continuing to eighth graders, classes explore visual arts, performing arts (music and drama), Innovation Lab, and gardening and environmental education.

The Visual Arts program inspires students to heights of artistic expression and mastery they didn't know they could reach. Incorporating both two-dimensional and three-dimensional elements in their work, students use a growing base of knowledge and skill to experiment with and practice multi-faceted techniques in highly varied and creative ways.

The Performing Arts program helps students find their own unique, creative voice and develop empathy and collaboration. Students participate in music using their voices, bodies, and minds to explore, experience, and understand musical concepts. The use of poetry, songs, games, movement, and dance are tools for exploration and teaching basic music concepts. The middle school creative dramatics program offers students an opportunity to explore and stretch their acting ability, learn how to develop characters more fully, and build a deeper understanding of the world through basic stagecraft and cooperative storytelling.

The Innovation Lab ignites students' curiosity in engineering, coding, and inventing. It features student-led projects designed to solve problems to make the world a better place. Students bring the ideas, and instructors provide the guidance, materials, tools, and equipment for students to bring the ideas to life.

Gardening and environmental education give students the opportunity to explore nature, appreciate the wonders and joy of life, and take ownership of caring for themselves, others, and the planet. Teachers make full use of extensive outdoor spaces, including a creek, an apiary, gardens, and undeveloped spaces.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Friends School of Atlanta's focus on whole person education places health directly at the center of everything it does, emphasizing the integration of physical, cognitive, emotional, and moral growth and development. FSA seeks to ensure that all children learn how to make responsible, safe, and healthy choices throughout their lives.

In the Physical Education program, students participate and practice a wide variety of age-appropriate sports and exercises to improve their fitness, skills, and enjoyment. Activities emphasize health-related fitness and promote other physical education outcomes such as developing movement and motor skills, acquiring active living habits, and fine tuning personal and social skills and cooperation.

In middle school, students have the opportunity to compete with other schools in basketball, soccer, and ultimate frisbee.



STUDENT LIFE

The Friends School of Atlanta seeks to enrich each student's educational experience by providing a wide range of activities during and after school hours. These activities develop well-rounded individuals while enhancing the sense of community. A variety of after-school clubs are offered throughout the year and have included activities such as art, acting, yoga, music lessons, gymnastics, indoor field hockey, and creative writing.

From an early age, children at The Friends School of Atlanta enjoy opportunities to be of service to the community. Students have cleaned school grounds and creek beds, planted flowers, cleaned riverbanks, created health-related coloring books for medical facilities, collected food for a local food bank, and served as mentors to the children of Our House, a preschool program for families experiencing homelessness, among scores of other activities.

Quaker values and practices are woven throughout the educational experience. Weekly Silent Meeting further strengthens students' Inner Light while building a sense of trust and connection among the school community.



DECATUR AND ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Just six miles northeast of downtown Atlanta and noted as the most walkable shopping and dining destination in metro Atlanta, Decatur boasts more than 200 boutiques, galleries, and restaurants within four-square miles. In fact, downtown Decatur square ranks second on 2021 USA TODAY's 10 Best Readers' Choice travel awards for "Best Public Square."

The capital of Georgia and its most populous city with just over 500,000 residents (5.8 million in the metro area), Atlanta is a beloved gem of the Southeast and one of the fastest-growing cities in the country. In recent decades, the city has attracted business from both domestic and international corporations and greatly expanded its civic and cultural venues and activities; the city is home to the world's busiest airport. As a major business center, Atlanta has the country's third-largest concentration of Fortune 500 companies. Delta Air Lines is the city's largest employer and operates one of the world's largest airline hubs. Media powerhouses based in Atlanta include Turner Broadcasting Company, which began in the city, and CNN. Atlanta is also home to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), as well as Coca-Cola, UPS, and Home Depot.



With more than 30 colleges and universities located in the metropolitan area, Atlanta is a center for higher education. Georgia Institute of Technology, Emory University, and Georgia State University are some of the city's most prominent institutions. Atlanta also has the largest consortium of historically Black colleges, comprised of Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, Morris Brown College, and the Interdenominational Theological Center.

Atlanta's cultural offerings are rich. Highlights include The High Museum of Art, Atlanta History Center, The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Fernbank Museum of Natural History, and The Center for Civil and Human Rights. The Carter Center was founded by Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter to advance human rights worldwide and alleviate human suffering. Atlanta's classical music scene includes the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Opera, and Atlanta Ballet. Parks—like Piedmont Park in Midtown, Downtown's Centennial Olympic Park, and the Beltline that surrounds the city—are prevalent throughout Atlanta, and it is common to see people taking advantage of these urban oases with a game of Frisbee or a family picnic. The parks also provide the perfect locations for Atlanta's numerous festivals that bring people out in droves. Nearly 48% of the land within city limits is covered by urban tree canopy, significantly more than any other major city in the United States.

Atlanta residents are also avid sports fans, flocking to Truist Park to cheer on the MLB's Braves, to State Farm Arena to support the NBA's Hawks or to Mercedes-Benz Stadium to root for the NFL's Falcons or the MLS' Atlanta United. Meanwhile, families have access to several attractions including the Georgia Aquarium, World of Coca-Cola, and the Chick-Fil-A College Football Hall of Fame.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Friends School of Atlanta has grown and prospered under the deep care and strong leadership of its founding head, Waman French. The school community celebrates the fact that with guidance from Atlanta Monthly Meeting and the vision of the current Head, they have established the only Friends School in Georgia and are able to provide to families a school that sees the worth in every child. As one student noted, “The school is passionate about sending good people out into the world.” Friends School of Atlanta is a dynamic school where Quaker values are alive and strong, and it emerges from the pandemic secure in its mission and excited about its future.

In addition to being actively engaged in the daily life and operations of running an exciting pre-K3 through eighth grade school, the new Head of School will be expected to:

- Empower the administrative team to strengthen their roles and grow their skills and abilities;
- Lead the staff and faculty to review the arc of the academic program, ensuring alignment across all grades and supporting teachers in their design of curriculum and instruction that are consistent with current best practices;
- Recruit, hire, retain, and support exceptional faculty and staff;
- Nurture engagement and deep connections between and among parents, students, employees, and divisions, as the community emerges from the pandemic;
- Focus admissions efforts in order to recruit, enroll, and retain a growing number of mission-aligned, diverse students, whose learning needs the school is well-equipped to meet;
- Undertake an evaluation of facility needs and plan for ongoing maintenance, renovations, and future expansion; and
- Further strengthen fundraising activities in support of building a strong culture of philanthropy.



DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The next Head of School will possess most or all of the below qualities and qualifications:

- The willingness to live and model the core values of The Friends School of Atlanta, developed through experience at a Quaker institution and / or strong alignment with Friends testimonies;
- A personal and professional commitment to social justice and a track record of substantive work in diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Teaching experience and knowledge of progressive curriculum and pedagogy;
- The ability to articulate a strategic vision and garner support for that vision, as well as the tactical skills necessary for successful implementation;
- The financial acumen needed to both lead an organization with a substantial operating budget, actively investigate new financial models, and cultivate “a culture of giving” among the parent body, alumni, and donor pool;
- An eagerness to serve as the external face of the school and as the school’s “chief storyteller,” supporting admissions, friend-raising, and fundraising efforts;
- Knowledge and understanding of the range of learning needs and the means by which schools can support all children to be successful; and
- A warm, kind, and accessible presence for the entire FSA community.



TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;

As the search moves forward, selected candidates will be asked to provide:

- A writing sample that highlights the candidate's resonance with the opportunities described in the position description and / or showcases the personal qualities that they would bring to the role;
- 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).

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