



**FRIENDS SEMINARY**  
New York, New York

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**MIDDLE SCHOOL HEAD**  
Start Date: July 2022  
[friendsseminary.org](https://friendsseminary.org)



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES



## Mission

*Friends Seminary educates students from kindergarten through twelfth grade, adhering to the values of the Religious Society of Friends. We strive to build a diverse school where students exercise their curiosity and imagination as they develop as scholars, artists and athletes. In a community that cultivates the practices of keen observation, unhurried reflection, critical thinking, and coherent expression, we listen for the single voice as we seek unity. The disciplines of silence, study, and service provide the matrix for growth: silence opens us to change; study helps us to know the world; service challenges us to put our values into practice. At Friends Seminary, education is rooted in the Quaker belief in the Inner Light – that of God in every person. Guided by the testimonies of integrity, peace, equality, and simplicity, we prepare students to engage in the world that is and to help bring about a world that ought to be.*

## OVERVIEW

As the oldest continuously operated coeducational school in New York City, Friends Seminary has prepared students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 for success in college and beyond since 1786. A Friends School rooted in Quaker values, Friends Seminary emphasizes character development as much as it does college preparation. Inspired by the Quaker testimonies of integrity, equality, simplicity, community, service, and peaceful conflict resolution, faculty forge a curriculum that helps students locate their innate curiosity and exercise their imaginations through a program of study that embraces learning in the classrooms, on the fields and stages, in the community, and throughout the world.

In addition to an overarching mission that interweaves the school's college preparatory goals and Quaker values, Friends Seminary is guided by Community Service and Diversity mission statements. Institutional commitments to service and respect for others yield a community that is giving and nurturing, that embraces differences, and seeks to recognize "that of God" in each individual, seeing past distinctions and identifying the common threads of humanity.

Friends Seminary seeks a new Middle School Head effective July 2022. This new leader will be an integral part of the Friends Seminary community and should be a collaborative, inspiring individual who is committed to the values that define Friends Seminary's diverse, service-driven Quaker community. The Middle School Head will report directly to the Head of School, Robert (Bo) Lauder, who is in his 20th year in the position.

## Fast Facts

**Founded: 1786**

**Total students: 795**

**Middle School students: 220**

**Total faculty and staff: 172**

**Faculty with advanced degrees: 90%**

**Student/faculty ratio: 7:1**

**Students of color: 39%**

**Students receiving financial aid: 20%**

**Endowment: \$41.1M**



## SCHOOL HISTORY

Quaker Education began over three centuries ago in England, during a period of unrest and political upheaval in the country. As individuals sought something that would give meaning to lives that looked increasingly bleak, George Fox started the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). His society was defined by the idea that there exists “that of God” in everyone, and that one can gain access to the God within through stillness and the practice of silence.

Careful listening, compassion, non-violence, full equality of women (the School was co-ed from the beginning), and social action in pursuit of social justice came to define the practices and values of the Society, which first established schools in England to provide their children with a “guarded” education anchored in these values.

When Quakers came to America, they quickly established schools to educate both boys and girls. In 1786, Friends Seminary was founded as Friends’ Institute through a \$10,000 gift by Robert Murray, a New York merchant. As enrollment grew, the school moved to a larger campus on Elizabeth Street before its final 1860 move to its current location, between Gramercy Park and the East Village. In 1878, Friends Seminary was one of the first schools to establish a kindergarten.

As the school has grown over time, it has embraced modern efficiencies and realities, using technology integration and cutting-edge learning methods to prepare students for entry into the global world. Almost the entire campus has been either constructed or renovated in the last 15 years. Never forgetting the Quaker values that inspired its creation, Friends Seminary produces students who not only succeed in the world, but who strive to improve it.



## THE SCHOOL

Today, Friends Seminary continues its commitment to a Quaker education that generates spirit-filled, motivated students across divisions. Located in the heart of New York City, the School enrolls students in three divisions: Lower, Middle, and Upper School. Friends Seminary students are a diverse, service-oriented group that pursues character development as much as intellectual achievement. Looking toward the future, the School's current [Strategic Plan](#) focuses on strengthening the educational program, teaching practice, and student experience. Its goals are largely realized or are in process. The Board and administration will soon start to envision the School's next plan, defining new goals for the coming decade.

As an educational institution, the School views its primary purpose as preparing students to participate in an increasingly interdependent world and, by graduating an increasingly diverse group of students, to help build a more effective citizenry and representative leadership for the future. To this end, Friends Seminary's Center for Peace, Equity & Justice, the school's newest department, supports student and faculty development of the core values of equality, diversity, and community engagement, reflecting Quaker testimonies and their accompanying legacy of activism. The Center brings together academic, social, and cultural programs that contribute to wider movements for social change. By connecting theory to real-world practice, the Center stresses learning through action and equips students and faculty with global competencies that allow them to realize their human capacity to bring about the world that ought to be. Through its programs and course offerings, grounded in Quaker philosophy and practice, the Center seeks to connect ideas, resources, and people to advance social justice, build inclusive and sustainable communities, and foster lifelong commitments to public service.



## MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMICS

The Middle School years are a time of joyful exploration, discovery, and skill development for young adolescents. At Friends Seminary, students are encouraged to develop their academic interests, self-discipline and a good sense of self within the context of an expanding sense of community. Our classrooms, driven by inquiry and group work, encourage the development of self-awareness, independence and cooperation. We begin almost every day as a community in the Meetinghouse to find stillness and to share important news together.

Beginning in Grade 5, the curriculum is fully departmentalized, and students travel to each of their classes along with other students in their homeroom. Students in Grades 7 and 8 have individualized schedules enabling greater independence and social opportunities.

As students learn to manage a more varied and complicated schedule, they also learn to take increasing responsibility for their work and learning. Daily collaboration periods offer students the space to work independently, with their peers, and with their teachers.

The curriculum at Friends is designed to develop a growing range of skills, not only in reading, writing, mathematical understanding, and creative expression, but also in science, history, modern and classical languages (including Arabic and Chinese), in the visual arts, athletic program, and the performing arts. Students who might benefit from reinforcement in reading, writing, math and organizational skills are supported by dedicated learning specialists in each discipline.

As students move from Grades 5 to 8, the emphasis broadens from learning skills to an increasing emphasis on learning to master content. Teachers work to develop critical thinking and effective communication skills in their students. At this age, social and emotional skills such as developing self-awareness, working through conflicts and caring for the larger community are also stressed throughout the academic and co-curricular program.

## 25 Attended Colleges and Universities By Friends Seminary Graduates (2017-2021)

Bard College  
Brown University  
University of Chicago  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Emory University  
Hamilton College  
Haverford College  
Kenyon College  
Middlebury College  
The New School  
New York University  
Northwestern University  
Oberlin College  
University of Pennsylvania  
Pitzer College  
Skidmore College  
University of Southern California  
Tufts University  
Vassar College  
University of Virginia  
Washington University, St. Louis  
Wesleyan University  
Williams College  
Yale University



In collaboration with the Center for Peace, Equity and Justice, students have dedicated classes to learn about important issues of our time, including human rights and climate justice, to develop new skills, greater confidence, and a sense of stewardship for the community and world at large.

Learning extends beyond the classroom in a variety of ways: active participation in school concerts and plays is encouraged; student work decorates the hallways; many interscholastic sports are offered. Most activities are open to any student who wishes to participate, giving students the chance to experiment with possibility. The Middle School endeavors to create opportunities for students to channel their energy and their need to articulate a growing sense of self in positive ways.

Most importantly, the Friends Seminary Middle School is a joyful place populated by students who are kind and faculty and administrators who are devoted to the age group.



## ARTS AND ATHLETICS

A rich arts program is an integral part of a Friends Seminary education. With offerings in music and drama, the Performing Arts Department seeks to enable students to experience and explore areas for self-expression and provides cultural and historical study in these areas, as well as experiential and practical applications. All students in the Middle School take four years of Performing Arts study through a combination of music and drama courses. Music classes culminate in a winter and a spring evening concert featuring our Jazz Band and Winds and Strings Ensemble. After school drama opportunities are available and encouraged with our 7/8th Grade Play, 5/6th Grade Play, and spring Upper/Middle School musical. Students also have the opportunity to attend professional performances such as concerts, operas, and theater productions throughout the city, as has been the tradition of the School for over 100 years. The School has a partnership with a nearby off-Broadway theater where the spring musical is performed.

The Visual Arts Department at Friends Seminary provides a place for students to explore and share their creative potential. Throughout the program, the curriculum celebrates this inner creativity by encouraging students to observe the visual world around them and by supporting them in expressing their vision with greater skill and discipline. Friends Seminary is committed to providing a rich program in traditional studio arts and in 21st century new media. All students engage in a diversity of media as they discover their own inner voices and their craft as thinkers and makers. In a nod to Quaker traditions, all sixth graders take a semester of sewing. Art teachers all continue their professional work as artists.

The highly successful athletic program at Friends Seminary teaches the value of teamwork and sportsmanship in addition to traditional hard work, commitment, and perseverance. Students are encouraged to pursue personal goals through cooperative effort and in pursuit of a common objective. In the Middle School, students have access to a variety of athletic teams including soccer, volleyball, basketball, softball, baseball, and track.



## THE CENTER FOR PEACE, EQUITY AND JUSTICE

The Center for Peace, Equity and Justice at Friends (CPEJ) provides programming for Middle School students in Service Learning and Civic Engagement. Its aim is to foster a student's sense of purpose outside of oneself—a practice grounded in the School's Quaker testimonies. In addition to service connections through advisory programs, assemblies, after-school and academic course offerings, CPEJ also offers a four-year curriculum that allows students to delve into environmental and social justice-based themes. The goLEAD (Generation On Leadership Experience and Development) courses aim to inspire, equip and mobilize youth to take action that changes the world and themselves through service and civic engagement. In these classes, students identify and explore local and global challenges and engage in meaningful service learning and leadership skill-building that affects real community change. Using a social justice approach that incorporates ethical, social and environmental values, students are encouraged to use their head, heart and hands to help bring about a world that ought to be.

These three components can be broken down as follows: The head speaks to the importance of educating ourselves on the complexities of 21st-century challenges. The heart speaks to the importance of building empathy and understanding for those most directly impacted by these issues. The hands speak to the importance of action and developing within each of us, as global citizens, a sense of social responsibility.





## NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Friends Seminary's enviable location near New York's Union Square provides easy access to a full range of recreational and educational resources in the heart of New York's bustling metropolis and makes travel to and from the School quite accessible. The city contains some of the most famous museums in the world, including the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, the Frick Collection, the Jewish Museum of New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), the Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among several others.

The broader city of New York truly offers something for all residents with every type of interest. New York is home to some of the best entertainment venues in the country, including Broadway theaters, music halls, and sports stadiums. With every type of culture represented in its expansive boroughs, New York truly is an American melting pot. As the most populous city in the United States, New York is a global power city with significant influence in nearly every sector, from finance to the arts. Residents may select from five different boroughs in which to live: The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, or Staten Island, each of which has a distinct identity, and all of which combine to form a proud, cohesive city.

New York's Times Square is appropriately dubbed "The Crossroads of the World" and is home to the Broadway theater district and the iconic New Year's Eve ball drop. Wall Street in Lower Manhattan is the home of the New York Stock Exchange, the largest stock exchange in the world. Additionally, several distinguished colleges and universities dot New York's landscape, including Columbia University, New York University, and several schools of design, among others.



## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Friends Seminary Middle School radiates with a sense of purpose and joy. Faculty love the children, and the students adore and respect their teachers. The program is rich and challenging, as well as scaffolded to foster student success. The new Middle School Head will:

- Be expected to build on the substantial accomplishments of an already established and high-functioning division.
- Work collaboratively with an all-school administrative committee, advocating for the Middle School while understanding and appreciating the unique role it plays in a K-12 school, sharing resources across divisions.
- Partner closely with the heads of both the Lower and Upper Divisions, contributing to a true shared leadership structure that is thoughtfully and vertically aligned.
- Actively advance the School's demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, belonging, and inclusivity.
- Lead and support a talented, experienced, and unionized faculty.
- Demonstrate respect for what has been achieved as well as the courage and vision to move beyond the status quo and add value to the daily experience of adults and children.



## DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Expectations are appropriately high for the Middle School's new leader. Friends Seminary is seeking an individual who:

- Relishes being with Middle School children, and recognizes the joys, challenges, and opportunities of working with pre-adolescents as they advance from 5th to 8th grade.
- Brings the skills, experience, and understanding of a classroom teacher to this leadership role.
- Appreciates the complexity and value of a K-12 school whose cohesive identity helps define its belief in the power of a meaningful developmental experience for children.
- Believes in the essential goodness of all people, the importance of redemption, and the power of restorative justice.
- Is highly relational and relatable and possesses exceptional emotional intelligence.
- Is invigorated working with a parent community that holds the highest expectations for its children's education.
- Models candor, compassion, and transparency in dealing with others.
- Communicates gracefully and effectively in writing and speech, and is equally comfortable in individual interactions and with both small and large groups.
- Recognizes the importance of being both visible and accessible to children and adults.
- And, as one student put it, "asserts power but doesn't abuse it."



## TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are encouraged to speak with the consultant in confidence. All applicants will be expected to ultimately submit (preferably in separate Microsoft Word documents or PDFs) the following materials:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current and comprehensive résumé;
- A written statement of no more than 500 words in which they explicitly articulate why they want to lead a division of Middle School students and faculty and why they believe they are uniquely suited to do so;
- 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 prior permission) to:

**Dr. Bruce L. Dennis**

Senior Consultant

Carney, Sandoe & Associates

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