THE SCHOOL

As the oldest continuously operated, co-educational, day school in New York City, Friends Seminary has prepared students 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, peace, simplicity, stewardship and community, faculty create a curriculum that awakens students’ innate curiosity and exercises their imaginations through a program of study that embraces learning in the classrooms, on the fields and stages, as well as in the community and throughout the world.

In addition to an overarching mission that interweaves the School’s college preparatory and Quaker goals, Friends Seminary is guided by Service Learning and Diversity and Inclusion 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 divisive distinctions while identifying the common threads of humanity.

In 2015 a new strategic plan, “Reimagining this Place Called School” was launched. It provides guidance for the School’s priorities, many of which have been completed. The new Lower School Head will be deeply involved continuing the execution of the plan. Please visit http://www.reimagine.school/ to view.

Located in the heart of New York City, Friends Seminary enrolls students in three divisions: Lower, Middle and Upper Schools. Friends remains grounded in its founding Quaker values while continually working toward pedagogical innovation.

This new leader will be an integral part of the Friends Seminary community and should be a collaborative, inspiring, and impassioned individual who is committed to academic excellence and to the values that define Friends Seminary’s diverse, inclusive, service-driven Quaker community.
THE POSITION

Roles and Responsibilities

The Lower School Head at Friends Seminary reports directly to the Principal and has broad responsibility for the division (274 students, K-4), including curriculum development, faculty hiring and professional development, student welfare, parent relations and Admissions consultations.

The Head of Lower School collaborates with the Associate Head of Lower School on academic and co-curricular program development and review. Academic curricula are developed and assessed in collaboration with LS faculty, as a whole and in grade level teams, and in consultation with the All-School Academic Dean. Co-curricular programs in the LS are crafted in collaboration with the faculty, the Dean of Co-Curricular Programs, the Director of Diversity & Inclusion, the Director of Service Learning and Civic Engagement, and the Director of Extended Programs (Friends After Three and Summer Friends).

The Head of Lower School is a member of the Administrative Committee that oversees School-wide policies and practices and of the Academic Team which oversees the K-12 academic program.

The Head of Lower School partners with Admissions and serves as the lead “storyteller” for Lower School with current and prospective families to ensure that cogent and inspiring information is consistently shared. This includes weekly talks to admissions tours, some evening events, participation on the Lower School Admissions Committee, and attendance at annual class potlucks.

Mentoring and Leading

The Head of Lower School is the educational thought leader for the Lower School community. The School seeks candidates who are well organized and experienced with Friends education and/or in alignment with its values. The successful candidate will have a growth mindset and an understanding of the relationship between developmental readiness and academic and social growth of children. The successful candidate must have experience in leading adults and hiring supporting and evaluating teachers; must possess knowledge of pedagogy and current thinking in education, including 21st century skills; and must possess a demonstrated commitment to lifelong learning. Candidates familiar with high-performing schools in urban locations will be viewed positively as will candidates with advanced degrees and an enthusiasm for the age-appropriate integration of technology in the delivery of the program.
Operations and Management

Friends seeks a charismatic educator who is energized by the school’s collaborative culture. The Head of Lower School collaborates with the Associate Head of Lower School and the Lower School Agenda Committee to program and facilitate weekly faculty meetings. The successful candidate will lead, in consultation with faculty and administration, recruitment, hiring and retention of all Lower School faculty. The Head of Lower School will oversee the Lower School parent conference and report card processes with the Lower School Division Associate, address individual parent concerns and questions, support the scheduling process for Lower School, and undertake other duties as assigned by the Principal, Bo Lauder, who has been leading the School for 18 years.

STUDENTS

Friends Seminary’s student body consists of 779 students K-12. 274 of those students are in the Lower School. Guided by the Quaker principles that define the School, Friends Seminary students are a diverse, curious, joyful, service-oriented group that pursue character development as much as intellectual achievement. Friends students come from over 100 zip codes within New York City, Long Island and New Jersey. It is a joy to see the Lower School children running down 16th Street to school in the mornings.

FACULTY

Friends Seminary takes pride in its dedicated faculty and perceives the group as the school’s single most valuable resource. Friends is distinct in the number of educators who choose to spend most of their careers at the school. The experienced and passionate faculty is committed to its students and to the School’s mission. While focused on the unique needs of students in Lower School, they appreciate being a part of a larger school with abundant resources for teaching and learning that can be leveraged for student success. The School takes pride in being an intentional K-12 community.

The Lower School comprises Kindergarten through Grade 4, with three classes in each grade level. In Kindergarten and first grade, there is a Head and an Associate teacher in each room responsible for 18 students. Classrooms in Grades 2-4 have a single Head teacher. Additionally, the Lower School operates on an 8-Day Cycle — along with the Middle and Upper Schools, to help balance time in homerooms and transitions to specials.

The culture among the faculty is welcoming, supportive and professional, and is characterized by high expectations. There are 52 full and part-time faculty and staff in the Lower School. There are 180 full-time and part-time faculty and staff in the School. The Lower School program is also supported by a full-time psychologist.
THE LOWER SCHOOL

The Friends Seminary Lower School is a warm, nurturing and inspiring environment that forms strong ethical and intellectual foundations for its students. A range of exciting, innovative departments capitalize upon students’ innate curiosity and teach them academic skills and character values that accompany them throughout their time at the School.

Weekly Meetings for Worship (MFW) are a central moment for the Lower School. During community periods and in the classroom, children learn the purpose and practice of silence. Parents are invited to attend Lower School MFW every Wednesday.

The Lower School strongly values the importance of the development of the whole child. Teachers work to meet children where they are socially, emotionally and cognitively to help all children develop strategies and approaches to learning that meet their educational needs. In the classrooms, students follow a highly integrated curriculum that applies theoretical principles to real life occurrences. Students make interdisciplinary connections to art, music, science, literature and social studies.

In Language Arts, students learn that the development of communication skills is the foundation for all learning. Faculty nurture a love of literature and excellent reading, writing and speaking skills. The love of literature continues in cyclical Library classes, which encourages student curiosity with story times, literary discussions and guidance in conducting research. Students practice D’Nealian Handwriting alongside Phonics, and begin cursive in Grade 3. Additionally, Lower School teachers are trained in the Hochman Writing method, where children learn how to write strong sentences and paragraphs. Our goal is to help students become active readers, strong writers, and thoughtful speakers and listeners. Learning Specialists meet with children for reading enrichment and provide individual reading, writing and executive functioning support.

The Social Studies curriculum builds on children’s knowledge of the world and their connection to it, with the concepts of self/identity, and community as the central themes. Using an anti-bias curriculum from Teaching Tolerance, we aim to expose students to the histories and experiences of various ethnic and racial groups. We aim to offer an education that fairly privileges the stories, life experiences or histories of any one people group, giving equal weight to varying cultural perspectives throughout the K-4 experience.
Our K-4 math curriculum focuses on four important components: conceptual understanding; basic skills/computation; problem solving and communication. Each of these, equally important, helps students to think flexibly and reason mathematically, thus preparing them for the demands of the upper grades and beyond. Classroom teachers, administration, and two Math Specialists work together to design and implement a K-6 scope and sequence that focuses on building students’ conceptual understanding prior to being taught algorithms.

Additionally, there are dedicated times for students to engage in low floor-high ceiling tasks where perseverance is developed. Math Specialists are also available to work with teachers to provide student enrichment and support when necessary.

Science classes introduce students to specific concepts, tools and methods of investigation. In addition to classroom science, all students visit the Lower School science lab, where an Inquiry-based program utilizes the investigation model Claim, Evidence and Reasoning (CER). Children learn to ask questions and use scientific equipment to conduct experiments.

Throughout the curriculum, Technology is integrated in appropriate and helpful ways. The Lower School Digital Citizenship Guide is a community agreement that aligns Quaker values to digital behaviors. Our Computational Thinking curriculum includes the exploration of Bee-Bot and Blue Bot robots in Kindergarten and Grade 1, hands-on computational thinking activities in Grade 2 that are inspired by the book Hello Ruby, as well a physical computing with simple machines unit in second grade science. In Grades 3 and 4, students attend Technology classes in which they explore design and graphics, Scratch programming, robotics and physical computing with Micro:bit chips.

Our iPad program in Lower School enables creative technology integrations as well as specialized apps for the delivery of content that accommodates many different learning styles. Examples of iPad use in our homerooms include storytelling with PuppetPals, StopMotion animation, iMovie, extensive use of Google Drive for writing, audiobooks, and the creation of student portfolios with the SeeSaw app.

Lower School students experience World Languages with incremental exposure to Spanish. Spanish “lives” in the Lower School classrooms. There are two specialist teachers who use storytelling, song, movement and games to teach the language, which is reinforced across subject areas. Additionally, children are exposed to other languages (Mandarin, Arabic, and French), for seven weeks each in Grade 4 as they prepare for Middle School and a long-term language choice.

Students explore their creative sides in Performing and Visual Arts classes, where they learn the fundamentals of drama, music and the visual arts as they share their creations and performances with their peers. All students in the Lower School engage in “manual arts” (shop), a centuries-old tradition at the School.
Several times per cycle, students study **Creative Movement, Dance, and Physical Education**, preparing for healthy, active futures defined by friendly competition and achievement of personal and team goals.

In the Lower School, a broad-based **Service Learning** program involving teachers, specialists and parents provides long-term and daily activities that help engender a spirit of service in students. In addition to service learning initiatives connected to curricular goals, students develop empathy and begin to understand their participation in the larger New York City community through the care of classroom materials, recycling, composting, baking for the Friends Shelter, and working with community partners like Learning Springs, Head Start, God’s Love We Deliver, and several other religious and cultural institutions.

**THE ADMINISTRATION**

The new Lower School Head will join an administration that includes three Division Heads, Academic Dean, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Dean of Co-Curricular Programs, Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management, Director of Institutional Advancement, Director of Communications, and the Principal, Robert (Bo) Lauder, who is in his eighteenth year leading the School.

**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. 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), challenging academics, and social action in pursuit of social justice came to define the practices and values of the Society.

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. Always innovative, in 1878, Friends Seminary was one of the first schools to establish a Kindergarten and the first city school to employ a child psychologist.

As the School has grown over time, it has embraced modern efficiencies and realities, using technology integration (such as the iPad program) and cutting-edge learning methods, such as blended and online learning to prepare students for entry into the global world. 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

Today, Friends Seminary continues its commitment to a Quaker education that produces spirit-filled, academically-motivated students across three divisions.

While founded in 1786, the School only recently separated from the New York Quarterly Meeting and received its own charter from the New York State Board of Regents as an independent Quaker School. It is accredited by the New York Association of Independent Schools, and holds membership or affiliation with many organizations, including the Country Day Schools Heads of America, Headmistresses of the East, and the National Association of Independent Schools. Friends is governed by a Board of Trustees with eighteen members.

PHYSICAL CAMPUS

Friends Seminary fosters a learning-rich atmosphere in a neighborhood conveniently located near Union Square in New York City. Six buildings comprise the campus:

- The historic Meetinghouse — shared with the local Friends Meeting — is the School’s place of worship, home to many music classes and performances, and the largest gathering place on campus where the entire school comes together several times throughout the year. Grades 1-4 attend recess in the Meetinghouse Courtyard daily.
- Across 15th Street from the Meetinghouse is the Annex which includes a Blackbox theater as well as Upper School science labs and classrooms.
- The Old Schoolhouse, on the corner of Rutherford Place and 16th Street, houses Kindergarten and first grade homerooms, with two art studios on the top floor. Outside the Schoolhouse is a play yard used exclusively for Kindergarten recess. The building overlooks a beautiful city park where children play after school.
- The Central building holds the remainder of the art studios as well as the Common Room — a smaller gymnasium used for many Lower School PE classes that also hosts 14 homeless guests every night of the year as the home of the Friends Shelter.
- Hunter Hall, built in 1964, houses homerooms for the remainder of the Lower School as well as the entire Middle School. The School’s Library and Gym are on the lower floors.
- New to campus September 2019, the renovated Townhouse building is the new home to the Upper School. Included in this new space — three buildings combined into one — are an Archive, Fitness Center, Dance Studio, Music Room, Great Room for lectures, performances and community gatherings, and a turfed play roof. Many of these spaces are also utilized by the Lower School.
QUALIFICATIONS

• Extensive experience in early childhood and elementary education and a demonstrated deep love of children and respect for teachers
• Experience, knowledge and understanding of elementary education programs and educational leadership, preferably through previous teaching and administrative experiences
• Experience with hiring outstanding early childhood and elementary educators
• Demonstrated leadership and an enthusiasm for innovation and curriculum development
• Demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion in all of its manifestations
• Advanced degree
• Committed team player

QUALITIES

• Appreciation and empathy around the transition between Lower and Middle School in a K-12 school
• Exceptional communication skills
• A warm and welcoming personality
• Appreciation for the complex nature of young children
• Ability to collaborate with all constituents
• Strong organizational and management skills
• Inspirational, especially for educators looking to teach and lead through example
• Ability to work closely and effectively with parents in the division and appreciate them as partners in a child’s education
• Supporting, nurturing, and guiding to Lower School faculty while also being open to ideas, knowledge, and expertise
• Familiarity with the unique characteristics of the New York Independent School market
• Proactive leadership approach to challenges and initiatives
• Sense of humor and healthy approach to work/life balance
• Eagerness to listen and seek advice from multiple constituencies
• Enthusiasm for Quaker education, values and decision-making
• Eagerness to support and strengthen programs designed for a diversity of learning styles
• A “maker mindset”

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Lower School, along with the rest of the Friends Seminary community, is in the first year of occupying a newly renovated campus. With the infusion of new spaces comes the task of learning to live, learn and share across various programs and constituencies. Determining the role of each space and how it serves the overall program and how to customize spaces to best serve the programs that will inhabit them is a major task for the Lower School in collaboration with other Divisions. Also related to Learning Environments, a major subject of dialogue and innovation amongst Lower School Faculty has been exploring the ways that classroom spaces can nurture a diverse range of learners. These conversations have been fruitful, and there is much enthusiasm among faculty for continued support in this area.
An ongoing challenge in the Lower School is the school-wide 8-day schedule. While the school as a whole has used an 8-day schedule for 5 years, an important ongoing task for the next Lower School Head will be supporting educators with planning and innovating within time structures that can feel non-intuitive to some Lower School faculty.

In the increasingly complex educational landscape in New York City, it has become more important than ever for Independent Schools to effectively communicate their unique and compelling value proposition. The Head of Lower School will play an increasingly central role in communicating the special nature of a Friends Seminary education to prospective families.

This is an opportunity for a seasoned leader to take a great Lower School into an exciting future.

TO APPLY

Please send resume/CV, letter of intent, list of five references with contact information (references will not be contacted until the candidate is notified), and statement of philosophy of education and leadership to John Faubert, jfaubert@carneysandoe.com, or Sloane Meyer, sloane.meyer@carneysandoe.com. Please do not contact the school directly.