



Head of the Lower Division  
**Greens Farms Academy**  
Westport, CT  
July 2021

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## The School

At Greens Farms Academy (GFA), students are empowered to do the hard, thrilling, essential work of shaping their own world, of building their own future. 715 PreK -12 students come from 23 towns in Fairfield and Westchester counties and form an inclusive community that plays on 64 interscholastic athletic teams, participates in a robust service-learning program, and aspires to live by the school's motto, "Each for All."

Founded in 1925, GFA is situated on a former Vanderbilt estate in the Greens Farms section of Westport, CT. The School is located on a scenic 44-acre campus. The Lower School enrolls 170 students, the Middle School 230 and the Upper School 315.



The School's highly regarded academic program is built around small class sizes (average 15), mentoring partnership with faculty (8:1 student to teacher ratio), and Signature Programs (World Perspectives, STEAM, and Sustainability) spanning all grades. The faculty is characterized by its growth-mindset, embracing innovation, exploring a range of student-centered approaches, and constantly seeking to better serve its students.

A stunning waterfront campus in Westport, CT, comprises three ecosystems - a salt marsh, Audubon woodlands, and the Long Island Sound - and architecture ranging from a modernized Vanderbilt estate to a state-of-the-art center for arts and global studies. Greens Farms Academy has graduated thousands of compassionate, enterprising, broad-minded women and men - people with the courage and vision to build a better world.



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The GFA mission plays an essential role in school life: *GFA engages students as partners in an innovative, inclusive, and globally minded community to prepare them for a life of purpose.* Faculty and staff have committed that language to memory, along with our core values -- passion, integrity, empathy, curiosity, excellence -- so as to better live out the spirit of those words.

GFA is a suburban school close to major transportation and a five-minute walk from the Greens Farms Metro North train station. The campus sits on the Long Island Sound, a half hour south of New Haven and an hour north of New York City by car or commuter train.

## The Lower School



A strong sense of community, an intellectually stimulating environment, and close attention to the social, emotional, and physical needs of young children are hallmarks of the Lower School. The richness of the education is enhanced by its unique setting along Long Island Sound, which includes a rich and diverse salt marsh, Audubon trails, and Burying Hill Beach, all of which provide students with a sprawling “outdoor classroom” for hands-on, active learning. The Lower School’s facilities, built and renovated in 2002, provide spacious, light-filled classrooms, a community assembly hall, a dedicated science lab, a library, music and art rooms, a full gymnasium, and four wireless traveling computer labs.

In support of academic excellence and achievement, the Lower School provides a nurturing environment in which children grow intellectually, realize personal creativity and competency, develop self-confidence, and gain respect for the diversity of the world around them. Small group work, hands-on learning, personal challenges and responsibilities, and an appreciation for the connections among all disciplines are integral components of the program.

The Lower School is an inspiring teaching community of perpetual learners, where teachers regularly collaborate to share the most up-to-date research and best practices. With a team of motivated and innovative teachers, the Lower School continuously strives to improve the quality of education for every student.

Through daily class meetings, family-style lunch, community service, and weekly assemblies, the Lower School emphasizes the joy that can come from working together and being part of a learning community. The Lower School Curriculum Guide and additional specific information about the Lower School Program are fully described on the GFA website.



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## The RULER Program

The Lower School recognizes that social-emotional learning is critical to a child's development. Guided by a team of trained teachers, the Lower School has begun to implement the RULER Program developed by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. This intentional approach focuses on Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, and Regulating emotions, and is designed to help children develop empathy and self-regulation strategies.

## The Wilson Foundations Program

Students in grades K through 3 participate in the Wilson Foundations Program as part of our comprehensive approach to literacy instruction. This multisensory, structured language program provides our students with strong foundational skills, including phonemic awareness, phonics/word study, reading fluency, spelling, and handwriting. Foundations is taught in whole-group, small-group, as well as one-on-one settings.

## Math In Focus

Math in Focus is the cornerstone of our math curriculum in the Lower School. Using this program, our teachers focus on conceptual understanding as well as math fluency. Students develop a deeper understanding of new concepts through engaging teacher lessons, repeated practice, and enjoyable activities. Our goal as educators is to help our students develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills so they may persevere, not just in the math classroom, but in the world at large.



## STEAM

The School has embraced a hands-on, design-focused approach to integrating STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics) throughout the Lower School program, and as a result is widely perceived as a leader in the field. Working in close concert with homeroom teachers and arts and science specialists, the Lower School Coordinator of Technology engages every class in a range of projects aimed at fostering curiosity and design thinking: e.g., robotics, prototyping, 3D modeling and printing, circuitry, animation, programming, video production, and music making. A recently opened, dedicated Maker Space in the Lower School serves as a hub for constructionist education and a resource for students and faculty alike.



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## World Perspectives Program

The World Perspectives Program is an integrated collection of globally-minded curricular and co-curricular offerings. Interdisciplinary experiences in the Lower and Middle Schools give students their first “world perspectives.” By the time students reach the Upper School and are able to take advantage of international study and travel opportunities, they have already studied other cultures, communicated with peers in other countries, and had several years of language training.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

After five years as GFA’s Head of Lower School, Aléwa Cooper was named the Head of School at Foote School in New Haven. During her tenure, Aléwa cultivated a cohesive, caring, and highly professional environment amongst the Lower School faculty, staff, and students. Parents view the Lower School program and its teachers with great respect, and they demonstrate their commitment by volunteering whenever needed. The next Head of Lower School will be asked to sustain the strong sense of community and a collegial environment in which teachers support each other professionally and personally. The next Head of Lower School will seek to pursue these objectives:



- Embrace the Lower School’s commitment to high academic standards within a caring, joyful community;
- Ensure that the Lower School program remains informed by best practices;
- Verify that all aspects of the Lower School program reflect a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Support teacher professional development and the empowerment of teacher leadership, particularly in the areas of curriculum review and refinement;
- Strengthen the already well developed parent-teacher partnerships in the name of supporting student growth and development;
- Maintain the strong connections among the Lower School and the Middle and Upper Schools, supporting GFA as one unified school.



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# PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES DESIRED

Greens Farms Academy is interested in all candidates who possess the proven leadership and interpersonal skills needed to help the school maintain the excellence and vibrancy of its program and community. The most promising candidates will be educational leaders who deeply understand child development within the context of a larger PreK-12 school. The school is most interested in candidates who possess or are able to demonstrate most, if not all, of the following characteristics:

- Demonstrates a love of working with children;
- Listens and communicates well;
- Leads with both head and heart, has a sense of humor and values the importance of play;
- Is deeply immersed in educational best practices and has the confidence and wisdom that comes from experience and reflection;
- Maintains an open-door policy and is approachable and transparent;
- Embraces the family atmosphere of the division;
- Encourages risk-taking and rejoices in the lessons learned from making mistakes;
- Champions student-centered, place-based, interdisciplinary, and project-based approaches to teaching and learning;
- Demonstrates the ability to create and foster a culture of innovation and inclusivity;
- Exhibits wisdom and judgement vis-à-vis working with a large and diverse community.
- Has a confident, caring, and approachable presence.

## TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates should submit the following materials:

- Cover letter expressing interest in the Greens Farms Academy Lower School Head position. The cover letter should connect the candidate's skills and experience with GFA's specific needs and aspirations.
- Current résumé.
- Statement of educational philosophy and practice.
- List of five references with name, phone number, and email address of each. References will not be contacted until later in the search.

Please submit the materials electronically in one e-mail and as separate PDF documents to John Faubert, [jfaubert@carneysandoe.com](mailto:jfaubert@carneysandoe.com), or Namita Bhattacharya, [namita.bhattacharya@carneysandoe.com](mailto:namita.bhattacharya@carneysandoe.com). Please do not contact the school directly.



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