Kent Place School
Summit, New Jersey
Director of the Upper School
Start Date: July 1, 2020
www.KentPlace.org
KENT PLACE SCHOOL

Mission
Kent Place has for more than 100 years has provided a superior education for young women who demonstrate strong scholastic and creative ability. Our mission is to offer students of diverse backgrounds, in Preschool through grade 12, an academically rigorous curriculum in a caring atmosphere; to encourage them to contribute to and find success in this challenging program; to inspire young women to leadership; and to strengthen moral awareness. Committed to a liberal arts education that combines tradition and innovation, Kent Place provides the stimulus for each student to achieve her full academic, physical, and creative potential; to love learning; to gain confidence; to live responsibly; and to develop respect for herself and others in the global community.

OVERVIEW

A vibrant and visionary place to learn and grow, Kent Place School seeks a Director of the Upper School to begin July 1, 2020. Kent Place is an independent, nonsectarian, college-preparatory day school for girls in grades K–12 with a coeducational Preschool that educates and empowers the next generation of female leaders. Kent Place demonstrates its commitment to providing lifelong learning experiences for students, faculty, and staff, within and beyond the school, through its signature programs, such as Global Learning, the Ethics Institute at Kent Place School, the Girls’ Leadership Institute, Economic and Financial Literacy, and STEM.

An innovative, integrated curriculum and rigorous coursework are designed to challenge students’ minds, a spirited community supports their dreams, and the school’s Honor Code helps them learn, work, play, and live with integrity and respect. A talented faculty helps each girl develop a strong understanding of herself in an environment that promotes risk-taking and exploration. Students graduate with a dedication to academic excellence and become leaders on college campuses and, later, in their workplaces and their communities. Graduates succeed in a wide range of fields, from science and business to writing and the arts. Many alumnae maintain their bonds with the school, coming back to campus for events and to share their experiences in panels and workshops.

The Director of the Upper School is the primary administrator for grades 9–12, a division of approximately 300 girls and 50 faculty. The Director of the Upper School has overall responsibility for curriculum, faculty support and supervision, and student and parent programs for the division. He or she reports to the Head of School and is a member of the Leadership Team. Among support personnel are an administrative assistant, the Dean of Students, the Academic Dean, the Director of College Advising, the School Counselor, the Learning Specialist, and a nurse.
SCHOOL HISTORY

In the spring of 1894, six Summit, New Jersey, families got together to discuss the establishment of a school for girls: Their vision called for it to offer the academic training and intellectual pursuits already accessible to boys and young men. That fall, on an estate once belonging to New York State Chancellor James Kent, Kent Place School for Girls opened its doors — and ultimately altered the course of education for generations of young women. The school prided itself then, as it does today, on its outstanding faculty, challenging curriculum, and wide range of cocurricular and social activities.

THE SCHOOL

Today, Kent Place is a highly selective college-preparatory school with a strong national reputation for providing a 21st-century learning environment through its comprehensive curriculum. The only nonsectarian girls day school in New Jersey, Kent Place educates more than 650 students in Kindergarten through grade 12. A coed Junior Pre-Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten program is also offered. The school’s 26-acre campus draws families from more than 80 communities throughout northern and central New Jersey, and 43 percent of learners are students of color.

Kent Place’s 170 faculty and staff members personify the school’s commitment to professional development, multiple perspectives, equity, and inclusion. Providing academic rigor in a supportive environment, its teachers — 80 percent of whom hold an advanced degree — value and reward independent thinking, creativity, and grit. The student-to-faculty ratio is 7:1, which gives teachers the opportunity to carefully guide each girl’s academic, personal, and social growth. Twenty percent are faculty and staff of color. Eighty percent of faculty have at least 10 years’ teaching experience and 100 percent of KPS faculty receive professional development.
The school is committed to its mission to educate students for responsible participation in a global community. Kent Place values diversity and seeks to be inclusive and affirming of all the different voices and stories at its community’s table. Through the curriculum, conversations, and campus climate, it strives to be culturally responsive and equitable. At Kent Place, diversity is not a program; rather, it is in its fabric.

In the fall of 2019, Kent Place School’s Board of Trustees, along with the Leadership Team, will begin to outline a path to propel the school into its next phase of growth by creating a new Strategic Plan. The strategic priorities will chart the course for the next three to five years as KPS continues to deliver an outstanding education.

**ACADEMICS**

In Kent Place learning spaces, expert teachers challenge students to express their ideas and stretch their ways of thinking, so their natural curiosity is sustained and becomes a habit for life. The curriculum is dynamic, intentional, and collaboratively constructed, offering relevant classes and individualized opportunities that enable students to excel in many ways and in all stages of their learning. Twelve academic departments form a framework for discussion and inquiry-based classes, accented by frequent interdisciplinary connections, from which students gain a depth of knowledge and a breadth of skills.

Technology is infused throughout the learning environment and is used as an academic tool not only for learning but also for building community. Every Middle and Upper School student is equipped with a laptop. Students in grade 9 and 11 will bring their own laptops as we begin a BYOD program.
on campus this academic year. The 1:1 Program integrates the latest digital technologies while teaching critical online safety and communication skills. The Innovation and STEM labs provide space for computer science and robotics programs to prepare students to be nimble, adaptable leaders and engineers.

The multipronged Global Learning program, which emphasizes leadership, multicultural competency, language proficiency, and global service, sets Kent Place apart from its peers. A rigorous Global Education curriculum — world geography and cultures, multiple foreign languages, and Hispanic and Francophone literature — is joined by travel, global partnerships, exchanges, and community service to give students hands-on, real-time experiences living, learning, and leading in an increasingly interconnected world.

**Upper School**

The Upper School experience for every Kent Place girl is guided by one word: *limitless*. A dynamic curriculum, inspiring faculty, and one-on-one advising challenge every student to become the best, most brilliant scholar, artist, leader, and world citizen she can be. At the end of four years at Kent Place, graduates see an incredible beginning — and have studied, played, danced, sung, and wondered harder than they’d ever thought possible. They’re ready to take on the world.

An extraordinarily rich array of college-prep course offerings — e.g., Conscience and Consequence; Identity and Graphic Novels; AP Biology; Etymologies — join student-designed practical research projects, independent study, and seminars on ethics and leadership to comprise an intense, inspiring four years. Students are thoroughly prepared for the SAT, the ACT, the SAT subject tests and a wide range of Advanced Placement examinations. Academic success is measured not by grades alone,
but also by integrity, audacity, competence, and intellectual curiosity.

Students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning. As part of that process, they often pursue academic interests that extend beyond the explicitly stated curriculum. Daily, faculty support students’ unique interests within the framework of class instruction by presenting assignments that allow for student choice, and by offering courses that inherently demand an individualized approach (e.g., AP Art Portfolio, research classes, and technology classes). They also support students’ academic goals through an individualized advisory system.

The opportunity to participate in an independent study at Kent Place School is reserved for seniors. Students can follow a path that extends beyond coursework, with opportunities to pursue interdisciplinary work and to apply knowledge and skills in venues other than their individual classrooms. Recent topics have been Solving an Engineering Problem Using Google SketchUp and Ruby Programming Tools; From Bartering to Bitcoin; The Development of Comedic Characters (comediennes); Nuestros Ojos: El Mundo Cubano Entrejido Con Una Voz Femenina (Our Eyes: The Cuban World Explored with a Feminine Voice); Musical History and Theory; and A Study of French Film.

College Matriculation

The following is the Class of 2019's college destinations:

- American University
- Amherst College
- Barnard College
- Bates College (2)
- Boston College (6)
- Boston University
- Bowdoin College (2)
- Brown University
- Bucknell University
- Columbia University (2)
- Cornell University (3)
- Denison University
- Dickinson College
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
- Emory University
- Georgetown University (2)
- Hamilton College
- Harvey Mudd College
- Haverford College
- Hobart and William Smith Colleges
- Johns Hopkins University
- Lafayette College
- Middlebury College
- New York University (5)
- Northeastern University
- Princeton University (4)
- Smith College
- Southern Methodist University
- Syracuse University
- Tufts University (2)
- Tulane University
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of Geneva
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (2)
- University of Michigan (2)
- University of Notre Dame (2)
- University of Pennsylvania (5)
- University of Southern California
- University of St. Andrews (3)
- University of Toronto
- Vanderbilt University (3)
- Vassar College
- Villanova University
- Wake Forest University (2)
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Williams College
- Yale University
ARTS AND ATHLETICS

Kent Place offers visual arts, dance, theater, and music instruction in all grades. Central to a Kent Place education, students can choose from a broad array of offerings. Learning is enhanced by professional performers and artists who come to the school to talk about their work and their insights. Students have been selected for state and national choirs, won awards in tri-state competitions for theatrical productions, and exhibited visual artwork in museums and galleries at the school and in the greater community.

The Kent Place Gallery, located in the Center for Innovation, is open to the public and hosts a number of exhibitions by professional artists. These guest artists typically meet with students and teachers to discuss the work on display. Student exhibitions also take place throughout the year, giving girls the valuable experience of presenting their work before a larger audience.

Kent Place places a high value on athletics and gives every girl a chance to challenge herself physically while developing leadership and teamwork skills. The school’s elite varsity teams have a proud history of winning conference, county, state, and sectional championships. Scholar-athletes have won places on all-conference, all-county, all-state, and all-star teams and have been recruited at top DI and DII schools. Junior varsity teams develop tomorrow’s student-athletes by emphasizing the fundamentals. Students can participate in interscholastic teams such as basketball, cross-country, field hockey, fencing, ice hockey, squash, golf, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and field, and volleyball. To encourage girls to try a new sport, teams are open to all.
STUDENT LIFE

The Kent Place Honor Code, with its guiding principles of respect, ethical behavior, and good judgment, is at the core of student life. The Ethics Institute at Kent Place School, a first-of-its-kind program at the primary and secondary school levels, cultivates in every girl a strong sense of integrity and a commitment to ethical decision-making. Specific areas of study are Bioethics, Ethical Leadership in Business, and Ethics in Action. Workshops, seminars, and lectures are offered; the school also hosts the annual Bioethics Symposium and participates in national conferences. Last year, EIKPS celebrated its 10th anniversary with a National High School Ethics Bowl Championship win.

From the first day of the academic year, students, teachers, and coaches forge bonds that endure long after graduation. The community is strengthened by deeply valued traditions such as the Opening Convocation’s candle-lighting ceremony, Graduation’s Daisy Chain, Global Perspectives Day, Spirit Week, Middle School Field Day, and the Science Expo.

Upper School students lead and participate in more than 30 distinct governing bodies, clubs, affinity groups, societies, forums, publications, and global and ethical initiatives, all of which build self-esteem and interpersonal and leadership skills. Busy committees plan open-mic nights, Spirit Week, community service projects, and dances.

Throughout the year, students engage in community service. Opportunities to make a difference encourage students to think early, deeply, and often about giving their time and talents to helping others. They work at food banks, send care packages to military personnel serving in the Middle East, and find ways to cheer up children in hospitals. More than 90 percent of Upper School students voluntarily participate in community-service projects.
CAMPUSEDucation with a blend of historic Tudor architecture and more-modern facilities, the 26-acre campus is comfortable and welcoming with wide open spaces and towering trees that combine a sense of history with growth and change.

The Upper School’s campus enjoys state-of-the-art classrooms and university-level science and computer labs. The Great Room is the main space for academic and social gatherings; the Arts Center has a 260-seat theater and a dance studio. The campus also has outdoor spaces for alternative classroom learning.

Middle and Upper School girls share a library that features a bright and open study space along with online catalogs, research databases, and an outstanding collection of fiction, nonfiction, and periodicals.

The newest building on campus, the Center for Innovation (CFI), is a learning center focusing on the study of STEAM subjects. It is home to innovation labs, a mathematics studio and classrooms, a STEM lab, a technology center, a library and information center, a media and production studio, a global-leadership center, the Kent Place Gallery, and visual arts studios.

With multiple turf playing fields and a wealth of open green space, the campus easily accommodates team practices and games. There are also five tennis courts and a field house, which is equipped with a gymnasium and weight room.
SUMMIT, NEW JERSEY

A city in Union County in northern New Jersey on the Second Watchung Mountain (hence its name), Summit has a population of 21,500. Known for its small-town feel, Summit is a desirable place to live with highly regarded schools, good access to highways, and a convenient commute to New York City, only 20 miles away. Newark Airport is about 10 miles to the east. In 2015, the New York Times called Summit “a place to grow into and stay.”

The town center is charming and walkable, with a village green across the tracks from a busy train station with direct service to New York’s Penn Station on the New Jersey Transit. Lined with shops and a growing variety of restaurants, Springfield Avenue is the main commercial street. Summit Avenue runs north from the center of town; a cluster of apartment buildings is within walking distance of the train station, with larger homes farther from the center.

Although it is easy to head into New York City to enjoy its innumerable attractions, Summit provides a fair share of its own. There is a nine-hole municipal golf course, an aquatic center, and community programs for residents of all ages. The Summit Playhouse features live dramatic performances; the Dreamcatcher Repertory Theater produces plays and holiday specials and has an improv comedy program. The Visual Arts Center of New Jersey, on Elm Street, is a professionally recognized regional art center with an art school and an exhibition program.

For lovers of the outdoors, horseback riding is available at the Watchung stables, located in the Watchung Reservation, a 2,000-acre nature reserve and recreation area. Children and adults may enjoy nature in several other parks and at the Reeves-Reed Arboretum.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Director of the Upper School will lead a strong division that is poised to achieve its next level of excellence. Kent Place students learn to speak for themselves, support one another, and step into leadership roles as they pursue their passions. Confident and capable of excelling academically, Kent Place graduates attend some of the most selective colleges in the country. The Upper School faculty and staff are open to and excited about the infusion of new ideas that accompanies leadership change. The Ethics Institute, a burgeoning STEM program (with a newly created STEM and Innovation Chair role), and the Innovation Lab are examples of recent initiatives that enrich the academic program, position Kent Place as a leader in girls education, and support an intellectually rich environment for teachers and students. Under the leadership of Dr. Jennifer Galambos, Kent Place develops “brave and brilliant girls,” and is committed to mentoring current and future leaders in girls education.

The next Director of the Upper School will:

Articulate a shared vision for the Upper School.
The next leader will identify and prioritize curricular and pedagogical initiatives for the Upper School, focus energy and attention on those priorities, and inspire a sense of momentum and collaboration among the faculty. Recognizing the abundance of good ideas and possible paths forward, the Director will clarify and communicate the Upper School's priorities and center attention focused on agreed upon goals.

Strengthen communication, transparency, and decision-making protocols.
As the Upper School has grown and introduced new programs, there is the need for improved communication systems, greater transparency around decision-making and equitability, and
consistent follow-up. Accordingly, the new Director will create a predictable environment that supports long-term planning and collaboration, at the same time being nimble and confident enough to evaluate and address the immediate needs of the community as they arise.

**Build on the strengths of the Upper School faculty to deliver the best possible academic program for Upper School girls.**
Kent Place has a strong academic reputation and an impressive college list. The reputation of its humanities programs is exceedingly strong, but the community seems in agreement that more can be done with its STEM program. As a result, the school named a new STEM and Innovation Chair this past year, and the new Director will help guide initiatives, all while remaining mindful not to lose ground in other areas of the school’s academic program.

**Work collaboratively with the other division heads.**
The next Director will relish the opportunity to advocate for the Upper School but remain open to and supportive of the specific needs of the other divisions. Possessing a growth mind-set, he or she will consider how programmatic alignment and cross-divisional collaboration can be improved through the wisdom of the group. The Director will be a visible presence in the life of the school and form strong relationships with students, faculty, staff, and parents.

**Assess whether the current schedule optimizes learning for Upper School girls.**
After a yearlong engagement with Independent School Management (ISM), three years ago Kent Place forged ahead with a major schedule change. Although many of its aspects have been positive, the work is ongoing and requires continuous evaluation of how the division allocates time to deliver academic excellence and also to foster creativity, experimentation, and the social-emotional health of the girls.
Manage distributed leadership.
The Director will support and guide the work of the division’s leadership team, which currently comprises a newly hired Academic Dean (in 2019) and two Deans of Students, and support collaboration with other key administrators, such as the K–12 Director of Diversity and Inclusion, the STEM and Innovation Chair, the Director of College Advising, and the Department Chairs. The Director will mentor teacher leaders by delegating responsibilities and providing opportunities for leadership and professional growth, and will clarify roles and responsibilities.

Partner with and advise parents as families balance desired college outcomes with a commitment to the health and wellness of each girl.
Kent Place parents, a sophisticated group, seek guidance from the division director as their girls navigate the high school years. The Director will provide clear guidance to help parents understand the academic and emotional stressors of adolescent girls in an environment of high expectations, including the college-application process.

Set high expectations for behavior and academic achievement, but maintain a strong and nurturing presence.
The next Director will be approachable and personable, and interested in the development of every girl. The Director will establish clear expectations and encourage each girl to learn from missteps, uphold community standards, and achieve her highest academic goals.
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE UPPER SCHOOL

Champion for girls education.
Fluent with current research and passionate about the advantages of single-sex education, the Director will maximize opportunities to convey this message to prospective parents, educators, and broader communities.

Confident decision-maker.
School leaders rarely make decisions that are met with universal approval. The Director will tackle difficult situations and, when legal and appropriate, explain the “why” behind the decisions, and be able to weather occasional blowback with equanimity and without defensiveness.

Culturally competent.
Forty-three percent of the student body at Kent Place identify as students of color. Accordingly, the Director will be sensitive to the ranges of experiences of Kent Place constituents. The Director will possess the courage to facilitate difficult conversations and model a growth mind-set regarding all issues relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position
- A current résumé
- A one-page statement of educational philosophy and practice
- A list of five professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission)

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