North Shore Country Day School
Winnetka, Illinois

Assistant Head of School
Start Date: July 1, 2020
www.nscdcs.org

Carney Sandoe & Associates
Mission

North Shore Country Day School prepares students with a challenging education that requires them to think critically, communicate effectively, and engage fully in their intellectual growth and personal development. In doing so, they become self-confident, ethical citizens of the world who embody our motto, “Live and Serve.”

Overview

North Shore Country Day School (NSCD) in Winnetka, Illinois, is a junior kindergarten through 12th grade, college-preparatory school. Since opening its doors in 1919, NSCD has been deeply committed to answering a fundamental question: “What matters most when educating a child?” Continually refining the answer to that question and striving to engage the head and heart in equal measure has helped the school grow and evolve with purpose and passion to become one of the nation’s leading independent schools. Through a culture in which relationships catalyze learning, NSCD develops critical thinkers, collaborative problem solvers, and caring citizens. With rigorous academic pursuit as the cornerstone, the school provides a plethora of opportunities for all students to thrive.

North Shore Country Day School seeks a dynamic leader as its next Assistant Head of School starting July 2020. The successful candidate will be an experienced educational leader devoted to the school’s mission and programs. The incoming Assistant Head of School will serve as both academic dean and chief of staff, playing an essential role in implementing the current strategic plan and its subsequent iterations, revising the curriculum JK-12, supporting the growth and development of faculty, serving as thought partner to the Head of School, and stepping in as de facto Head of School as necessary. This is an exceptional opportunity to lead the strategic and academic work at a high-quality independent school with an unwavering commitment to student success.
In the summer of 1918, 12 Winnetka families met to discuss the future of their children’s education. The families wanted a new, progressive school for their community, equal in academics to East Coast boarding and day schools. They contacted a friend of one of the founding families, Perry Dunlap Smith, to head the school.

A true pioneer in education, Smith took on the task of developing the school from scratch, based on the teachings of Colonel Francis Parker and the progressive education philosophy and using the Country Day movement as his model. The school started small — its first graduating class in 1920 had three students — but would grow steadily in reputation and numbers during Smith’s impressive 35-year tenure. In 1922, the school bought the 14-acre campus it had been renting and added a new upper school building, followed quickly by a new gym and auditorium. In 1938, NSCD built a lower school to meet the demands of parents for a high-quality progressive education program for younger children.

North Shore Country Day School has had a storied history. The school was part of the famed “Eight Year Study” of progressive schools that essentially proved to top colleges and universities that students from progressive schools were not only academically excellent but also more likely to engage in the arts, politics, and other social activities. In the 1960s, at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, North Shore was one of 21 schools to publicly support the Kennedy administration’s policies of racial equality. The school is also the home of the first “jungle gym” in the U.S.

This academic year, NSCD is celebrating its 100th anniversary by both looking back at pivotal moments in its history and planning for the future through new strategic and campus master plans.
North Shore Country Day School has been described as a “small school with big purpose.” As it has from the start, NSCD embraces a progressive education philosophy that has evolved into a national model. The school is deliberate about connecting learning to living and focuses intently on inspiring each student to discover his or her passions. At the core of its current work is identifying the curricula and pedagogies that will best prepare students for the coming decades — including increased focus on civic education, social-emotional learning, and the development of a 21st-century skills curriculum.

Four essential elements lie at the heart of North Shore Country Day School’s program: purposeful challenge, intentional design, courageous exploration, and conscientious community. These elements combine to create an impressive academic and extracurricular experience that prepares students well intellectually and socially for college and life beyond.

NSCD’s curriculum is taught by exceptional teachers in an environment that encourages collaboration and creative thinking. Knowing the students well allows the faculty to support each student as a person and learner. The entire JK-12 program is also designed to optimize learning, develop skills, and prioritize wellness. The school’s diverse community and collaborative culture also help students understand themselves and their obligations to each other, their communities, and their world.

Starting in junior kindergarten, teachers focus on the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of each child. The Lower School introduces children to a love of learning while building a solid academic foundation. The Middle School focuses on helping students understand who they are as learners and as adolescents. In the Upper School, students are supported in developing into well-rounded adults by stretching themselves with experiences in core subjects, performing arts,
athletics, service, and other activities, as well as through the meaningful connections they make with their teachers and peers.

NSCD’s recent Strategic Plan challenges the community to nurture, sharpen, and enhance all aspects of school life. The work includes a deeper commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity; ensuring that the academic program provides the necessary learning experiences for students to thrive and live out the school’s motto of “live and serve”; providing all members of the community with the necessary resources to thrive at NSCD; and capitalizing on institutional momentum to move forward with financial and master planning as well as marketing, institutional research, and admissions work.

North Shore Country Day School is accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS).

**ACADEMICS**

In the classroom and beyond, NSCD’s faculty provide the learning experiences and scaffolding of skills to develop students who are ready to actively engage the world and embody the school’s mission throughout their lives. The integrated JK-12 curriculum intentionally develops skills, dispositions, and mindsets that complement content knowledge; promotes interdisciplinary and experiential learning; and demands engagement with multicultural and global issues.

In the Early Childhood Program, teachers encourage children to explore the world, master skills, ask questions, and discover their joy and interests. The curriculum is based on developmental theories
that young children learn through active participation and through constructing knowledge based on past experiences and feedback from their surroundings.

The Lower School is distinguished by its creative and innovative curriculum. Here, students are known exceptionally well. They are introduced to a love of learning and community, and are encouraged to stretch academically, explore ideas, and learn from each other — all within a safe, nurturing environment.

The Middle School focuses on understanding who the students are as learners and adolescents. The academic curriculum includes study in the humanities (English and social studies), science, math, languages, health, and the visual and performing arts. All classes are designed to help students connect content to the world around them, so they see learning in the larger social context. A week dedicated to service learning is a hallmark of the Middle School program.

The Upper School continues this combined academic and social journey. It offers an impressive academic program that prepares students well for college and life beyond, while providing support and encouragement from the faculty. The curriculum includes a well-structured course
of study in English, history, science, math, world languages (French, Mandarin, Spanish), the visual and performing arts, and physical education. An “interim week” of immersive, experiential learning opportunities across Chicago and the world is a hallmark of the Upper School program. One hundred percent of NSCD School seniors are offered admission to four-year colleges and universities. NSCD graduates attend some of the most selective colleges and universities in the nation.

**Arts**

The Arts Department provides students a wide array of classes and after-school activities in theater, dance, visual arts, and music.

The Lower School arts program is an active, process-based arts curriculum with meaningful opportunities to perform and present. Through interdisciplinary learning and collaboration, students discover the connections between music and art and culture and history. Students also develop a foundation of emerging skills and artistic literacy through kinesthetic, visual, theatrical, and musical experiences.

Middle School students explore visual arts media and techniques that will enable them to gain confidence and independence in making art. Students take a required sequence of trimester courses in visual and performing arts during each of their three Middle School years. Additionally, they participate in a performance-based course each year. Performance class offerings include Art Lab (performative visual arts), Instrumental Ensemble, Choir, Dance, Theatre, and Digital Media Production. These courses culminate in public performance opportunities for peers and parents.
In Upper School, students explore the value of convention and innovation by engaging in challenging and dynamic artistic experiences. Students develop independent thinking and personal voice through the acquisition of core artistic skills, collaboration, problem-solving, and risk-taking. The Upper School offers a wide range of studio arts, music opportunities, and theater programs. To graduate from the Upper School, all students must participate in two theater productions, at least once as part of a cast. The Upper School also offers an optional Visual and Performing Arts Signature Program Capstone that culminates with the student-designed, developed, and implemented presentation of yearlong, independent projects.

**Athletics**

All students in junior kindergarten through high school participate in physical education classes, learning lessons of competition within the boundaries of rules and sportsmanship. NSCD also offers a comprehensive JK-12 health/wellness program.

Participation in the interscholastic athletics program is required from 6th through 11th grades. The Middle School offers boys’ and girls’ soccer and basketball; co-ed teams in track and field, cross country, and baseball; flag football for boys; and field hockey and volleyball for girls.

In the Upper School, there are more than 25 interscholastic teams including soccer, basketball, field hockey, golf, cross country, baseball, tennis, volleyball, and track and field. The Raiders have recently won conference and state championships in field hockey, boys’ golf, girls’ tennis, girls’ soccer, and boys’ and girls’ track and field. An overwhelming number of Upper School students participate regularly in the athletic program.

NSDCS competes in the Independent School League (ISL) of the greater Chicago area.
STUDENT LIFE

North Shore Country Day School understands that “student life” frames every excellent school. To that end, the school offers a wide range of student clubs and after-school activities.

The school has a particularly strong service-learning program. At NSCD, “Live and Serve” is not just a motto but also a philosophy the students are encouraged to embrace in their learning and embody through their action. The school’s service program seeks to foster student ownership and leadership. In classes, teachers implement service learning, a practice that links classroom learning and service activities to empower students as ethical citizens. Other projects are student driven, taking place outside the classroom through student government, clubs, or other activities. The Live+Serve Laboratory, a manifestation of the school’s motto “Live and Serve,” opened this year and serves as a center for active, hands-on, student-centered learning and creating, with a focus on active service and global citizenship. As it evolves, the lab will be a natural launching pad for educational and entrepreneurial connections to local universities, businesses, and nonprofits. Most importantly, the school intends for this space to re-emphasize the importance of project-based and service learning in the JK-12 curriculum.

Through its service-learning program, NSCD prepares students to become self-confident, ethical citizens of the world, and to see service as an essential lifelong endeavor.
When NSCD was established in 1919, it took over the Winnetka campus of the Girton School for Girls, which had closed the previous year. While NSCD occupies the same basic 16-acre space a few blocks from Lake Michigan, most of the original structures have been demolished or moved and upgraded, with new ones constructed.

Since 2004, the school has been modernizing its teaching-and-learning spaces to provide a holistic educational experience designed for the 21st century. The school recently redesigned its Upper School building into a LEED Silver structure with learning spaces that reflect the unique teaching and learning model specific to NSCD. The building’s “classrooms of the future” more fully support and leverage the school's unique pedagogical model of rigorous individualized and holistic learning.

NSCD proudly re-opened its library this fall. After a water pipe burst last February, water flooded the Hall Library rendering it uninhabitable, and the school strategically and nimbly opted to see the accident as an opportunity. While the renovated library is in a similar footprint as the old one, the space is unrecognizable and embraces the “Learning Commons” model. As teaching and learning become more project-based and collaborative, libraries are evolving and becoming flexible spaces for that work to occur. The reimagined Hall Library features collaborative and quiet study spaces, a beautiful new Lower School area with a theater-in-the-round and “reading caves” for the littlest Raiders, and flexible furniture throughout for various projects. The library is at the heart of the campus and serves all students JK-12 on a daily basis.

NSCD is currently engaged in a new Campus Master Plan designed to create even more agile space that amplifies learning opportunities. Simultaneously, it is planning extensive improvements to the athletic facilities.
WINNETKA, ILLINOIS

Located seven miles from Chicago (16 miles from downtown), Winnetka’s name is believed to originate from the Potawatomi language, meaning “beautiful place.” With a population around 13,000 today, Winnetka is certainly a beautiful place in which to live and work, especially given its proximity to Chicago and all the city offers. The town itself includes impressive homes, tree-lined streets, sandy beaches, outstanding parks, quality recreational facilities, and business districts that include a variety of dining and shopping options. Chicago’s METRA commuter train runs right next to campus, so many faculty enjoy the ability to live in Chicago and commute to work via train.

Numerous films have been set here, including Home Alone, The Breakfast Club, and Ferris Bueller’s Day Off. The town also has a long list of who’s who — including actors Rock Hudson, Charlton Heston, Ann-Margret, Bruce Dern, and Chris O’Donnell, as well as world-renowned painter Fairfield Porter and photographer Eliot Porter.

The town is also close to Lake Michigan and neighbors the vibrant town of Evanston, home to Northwestern University.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The incoming Assistant Head of School will serve as both academic dean and chief of staff, playing an essential role in implementing the current strategic plan and its subsequent iterations, revising the curriculum JK-12, supporting the growth and development of faculty, serving as thought partner to the Head of School, and stepping in as de facto Head of School as necessary. This is an exceptional
opportunity to lead the strategic and academic work at a high-quality independent school with an
unwavering commitment to student success. As the inaugural Assistant Head departs after a lengthy
and impactful tenure at the school, the role has been reimagined to prioritize academic leadership,
allowing the school to further capitalize on its 14-grade community, the tremendous passion and
care that teachers bring to their work, and energy around developing a mission-aligned, skills-based
curriculum. The Assistant Head will join a tight-knit, deeply relational community that is predicated
on respect, and where students, faculty, administrators, and trustees are all committed to growth.

The priorities, opportunities, and challenges for the next Assistant Head include:

• Supporting the faculty in building a more intentional JK-12 curricular scope and sequence.
• Advancing work that is currently underway to create mission-aligned descriptions of the skills,
habits of mind, and dispositions at the heart of work with students, the next Assistant Head will
partner with faculty and academic leadership to integrate that vision more fully and intentionally
into the curriculum.
• Overseeing strategic initiatives across the school.
• Playing a central role in hiring faculty who live out the school’s mission and are committed to
teaching in a collaborative, student-centered environment.
• Providing strategic opportunities for professional growth as faculty continue to build capacity with
student-centered pedagogies.
• Partnering with an incoming Director of Equity, Inclusion & Community Engagement (a new
position also commencing July 2020) to ensure that all members of the community are fully seen
and heard, and that the curriculum provides space for multiple perspectives and voices.
• Nurturing the school’s “JK-12-ness” while also allowing room for departmental and divisional
identities.
• Developing an authentic, trusted, and trusting partnership with a thoughtful and inquisitive Head
of School.
CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Assistant Head is a senior member of the school’s two leadership teams. This position reports to the Head of School and serves both as the Head of School’s partner and as the primary academic administrator on campus.

The Assistant Head:

• Partners closely with the Head of School and Board of Trustees in the identification, refinement, and execution of the school’s strategic goals.
• Guides and leads all aspects of the JK-12 academic program, in collaboration with the Division Heads and Academic Department Heads.
• Implements strategic initiatives and leads all faculty/staff working group conversations related to the academic program.
• Manages and supports direct reports including Academic Department Heads and Directors of Educational Technology, Learning Support, Library and Information Literacy, and others as assigned.
• Directs all facets of faculty recruitment and hiring to achieve mission-driven hiring outcomes.
• Provides strategic oversight for and management of faculty professional development programs and funding.
• Identifies and builds relationships with partner organizations in support of the school’s mission.
• Partners closely with the Head of School and stands in for him as necessary.
DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate will offer most or all of the following qualifications and qualities:

Professional Qualifications
• An advanced degree and evidence of a commitment to lifelong learning.
• Significant classroom experience and skill as a teacher.
• A deep understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and context associated with multi-divisional, JK-12 independent school communities.
• Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills.
• Personal commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and an understanding of how EDI is best woven into the fabric of the school.
• A strong knowledge base of best practices in teaching and learning, particularly those in support of student-centered and skills-based instruction.
• The ability to manage complex projects from conception to completion.
• Proven experience leading change while inspiring others and building buy-in throughout the process.

Leadership Style
• A collaborative, consensus-building leader who actively solicits input and asks powerful questions; builds relationships first; listens well; communicates with inspiration and clarity; and effectively delegates and empowers other team members.
• Visible, communicative, approachable, relational, and responsive.

Personal Qualities
• A strategic thinker who is nonetheless able to deftly manage the systems and processes necessary to implement strategy.
• Eagerness to engage actively with students and parents and willingness to prioritize visibility despite the demands of a busy professional schedule.
• Appreciation for the sensitivities and opportunities surrounding issues of EDI in schools and a commitment to honoring multiple perspectives in order to maintain an authentic, inclusive community.
• Openness to new ideas and intellectual “give and take” towards building buy-in and commitment.
• Warmth, high EQ, and a sense of humor.

TO APPLY

Interested 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 or leadership philosophy and practice;
• A list of five professional references with name, title, organization, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission) to:

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