



**NATIONAL CATHEDRAL SCHOOL**  
Washington, DC

**ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL  
FOR FINANCE & OPERATIONS**

Start Date: July 2022

[ncs.cathedral.org](https://ncs.cathedral.org)



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES



## Mission

*We believe in the power of young women and educate them to embrace our core values of excellence, service, courage, and conscience.*

## Core Values

- **Excellence:** *We strive to offer our best work, to maintain the highest standards, and to set goals within a context that honors the contributions and achievements of the entire community.*
- **Service:** *We believe we have an obligation to make a difference in the world, to contribute to the greater good, and to respond with purpose to the needs of others.*
- **Courage:** *We act with conviction, strength, and integrity. We stand up for ourselves and others.*
- **Conscience:** *We work to develop an abiding sense of right and wrong, and guided by that moral sense, seek ethical responses to life's challenges. We act towards others with kindness, respect, and compassion.*

## OVERVIEW

Founded in 1900, National Cathedral School (NCS) is an independent, college-preparatory, Episcopal day school for girls Grades 4-12. Steeped in tradition and a strong belief in the power of young women, the education at NCS is designed to capture students' curiosity and fuel their academic, artistic, athletic, and personal growth. NCS expresses the philosophy of the Washington National Cathedral and Episcopal Church while embracing the core values of excellence, service, courage, and conscience. In a nurturing environment, dedicated faculty and staff challenge students to lead lives of purpose, meaning, and joy, inspired by the Cathedral, and encourage young women to take risks, think critically, and act with empathy as they prepare to step into the world as global leaders.

National Cathedral School is seeking a seasoned professional to become Assistant Head of School for Finance & Operations (AHOSFO), assuming the role in July 2022. Working closely with the Head of School, the AHOSFO serves as a strategic thought partner and as a member of the Executive Leadership Team. NCS is searching for a goal-oriented senior leader who will embrace the culture and values of the institution and will respect the operational pace of an innovative institution with high standards and expectations.



## At a Glance

Founded: 1900

Total students: 593

Students of color: 46%

Total faculty: 73

Faculty of color: 21

Faculty with advanced degrees: 78%

Student/teacher ratio: 8/1

Financial aid awarded (2022) \$4.8M

Students receiving aid: 21%

Endowment: \$40.6M



## THE SCHOOL

With over 120 years of expertise inspiring young women to develop their unique talents and lead a life of purpose, National Cathedral School provides academic curriculum and extra-curricular activities that promote the joy of discovery and develop creative and critical thinkers, unafraid to express their ideas and adept at navigating challenging issues. Students are highly motivated and emerge from NCS prepared for success in college and beyond. The school community is one that values and honors all faith traditions and welcomes students of all backgrounds. Students of color make up 46% of the student body and all faculty, staff, students, and families value NCS's inclusive culture of kindness, empathy, and camaraderie.

Students at NCS benefit from a spiritual community enlivened by academic achievement. NCS provides students an environment proven to offer academic, personal, and social advantages over their peers at coed independent schools including greater academic engagement and stronger academic skills, higher levels of cultural competency and political engagement, deeper commitment to community service, and stronger writing and public speaking skills.

NCS celebrates diversity and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, disability, national origin, family structure, or sexual orientation. With the belief that a multicultural community enriches learning experiences, NCS is committed to growing its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices at every level in the school community. National Cathedral School offers events and activities throughout the year to engage students, faculty, and staff in workshops, lectures, and celebrations around diversity, equity, and inclusivity.





Small class sizes and an emphasis on community allow faculty to form lasting, meaningful relationships anchored in trust with students. This relationship creates an environment fostering intellectual risk-taking, healthy emotional growth, a lifetime love of learning and is central to NCS's belief in the power of women. To that end, the advisory program pairs students with faculty advisors whose role is to encourage and guide each student as she faces both the opportunities and challenges of an NCS education. Advisors serve as guides, listeners, mentors, and role models to students and play a key role in their growth. Students are introduced in the beginning of their journey at NCS and continue advisory throughout their academic career. The relationships are so impactful at NCS that in fact, 97% of alumnae say NCS faculty made a difference in their lives.

NCS is overseen at a governance level by a Governing Board composed of parents, alumnae, and other friends of the School. The Governing Board entrusts the administration of the school to the Head of School. Primary responsibility for the well-being of the school rests with the Board.





## ACADEMICS

NCS offers a rich liberal arts education infused with training in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math), preparing young girls for a wider array of studies and choices of future careers. The dynamic curriculum ignites students' curiosity for learning. The curriculum is designed to provide an engaging, comprehensive, and stimulating academic program where students are encouraged to think analytically, solve problems in innovative ways, and expand their creative imagination, preparing them to perform at the highest level in college as well as to lead and serve honorably in the larger community. Classes are small allowing students to hone their skills, build their confidence, and challenge themselves.

In all three divisions – Lower School (Grades 4-6), Middle School (Grades 7 and 8), and Upper School (Grades 9-12) – math, science, world language, social sciences, and English are at the heart of the daily curriculum. In the Lower School, students also explore studio art, instrumental and choral music, physical education, and computer science. Middle School students find a wider variety of art offerings, two additional language options (Chinese and Latin), and the opportunity to play competitive sports. Upper School offers more electives in the arts, humanities, and sciences.



## College Matriculation

100% of NCS students are admitted to a four-year university. Matriculations from the Classes of 201-2021 include the following universities and colleges, among many others:

Boston College  
Brown University  
Bucknell University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Colby College  
Colgate University  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Dartmouth College  
Davidson College  
Duke University  
Emory University  
Georgetown University  
Harvard University  
Howard University  
Johns Hopkins University  
Northwestern University  
Oberlin College  
Princeton University  
New York University  
Scripps College  
Spelman College  
Stanford University  
Syracuse University  
Tufts University  
Tulane University  
University of Chicago  
University of Miami  
University of Michigan  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Southern California  
Vanderbilt University  
Wake Forest University  
William and Mary  
Yale University



Learning is hands-on and occurs both in and out of classes. Co-curriculum including health and wellness, religious studies, community service, and leadership is woven into class and seminar experiences, as well as Cathedral worship services. The dynamic curriculum helps girls discover their strengths, explore new ideas, and fulfill their academic potential. In the Upper School, hands-on experiences include independent-study projects, internships, and fellowships. NCS students have gained hands-on experience at the National Institute of Health, NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, the Naval Surface Warfare Center, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and George Washington University.





NCS understands the path to attending college is different for every student. The College Guidance Office provides comprehensive college planning working in collaboration with students and parents to ensure each student enrolls in a college where she will thrive.

## THE ARTS

The NCS arts program is among the most diverse in the country. Visual and Performing Arts at National Cathedral School are designed to help students foster creative thought and provides opportunities for self-expression, social interaction, and fun. Visual Art offerings include drawing, bookmaking, painting, ceramics, and traditional and digital photography.

The Performing Arts at NCS has a long tradition of excellence and are an integral part of a girl's education. NCS's Performing Arts Department is coordinate with St. Albans School: that is, students at both schools practice, study, and perform together. The music department provides ample opportunities ranging from chorale groups, jazz club ensembles, Upper School Orchestra, and even private lessons. Middle and Upper School students are introduced to theater and explore their interest in acting, production work, or design. The NCS/STA Dance Program is the largest such independent-school offering in the Washington area with more than 100 students attending class in a variety of disciplines including Broadway dance, hip-hop dance, modern dance, jazz dance, and more.





## ATHLETICS

Students at NCS enjoy a large variety of athletic activities allowing each girl to develop skills and healthy habits while pursuing interests and honing talents. Research shows that physical activity helps to develop neural pathways and reduce stress, aiding in students' academic endeavors. Fitness offerings at NCS also develop life lessons about commitment, resilience, and leadership and include strength and conditioning training, dance, outdoor education, and 13 different team sports. The unique Voyageur Program introduces youth to outdoor education by teaching them how to rock climb while developing environmental stewardship, leadership, and athleticism.

NCS students compete at the highest level and benefit from a 90,000-square-foot training facility housing two turf fields, four courts, a fitness and weight-training room, an indoor jogging track, dance studios, and a 40-foot free-standing climbing wall.





## STUDENT LIFE

National Cathedral School students explore, play, and learn in a spiritual community that prepares them to enter a diverse and exciting world. NCS believes that a moral education is as important as academic instruction and have the unique opportunity to discover faith in chapel, the classroom, or in service to the community. In Cathedral, students cherish time of self-reflection and celebration. Many students participate in readings, performances, sharing experiences, helping each individual to find their voice and develop a sense of respect for one another. In a nurturing and inclusive environment, students are offered more than 30 different clubs and organizations for leadership and development ranging from STEM, English literature, Model UN, Book Club, and the Black Student Union. NCS students benefit from an all girls' education that offers many co-educational opportunities in the arts and athletics, allowing for collaboration with their brother school, St. Albans.





## WASHINGTON, DC

National Cathedral School is situated in a unique location - both in the nation's capital and on the Cathedral Close. Located minutes from historic Georgetown, the Potomac waterfront, and a short drive to the museums, monuments, and other local historic sites. Steeped in history, this culturally rich city is home to more than 70 museums and art galleries, 175 embassies and cultural centers, and countless theaters and outdoor events offering year-round entertainment options.

Outdoor enthusiasts enjoy all four-seasons, numerous parks and green spaces, along with 60 miles of bicycle and pedestrian tracks for avid bikers and hikers. Sports lovers cheer on several professional athletic teams, including the Capitals, the Wizards, the Nationals, and the Washington Football Team. Washington, DC is a popular tourist destination but also ranks highly on world livability rankings. The city's diverse neighborhoods provide distinct and unique areas to enjoy culture and arts events, food, and shopping. The city also has a very active environmental community and has been at the forefront of many global discussions about our natural environment.





## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The new Assistant Head of School for Finance & Operations will inherit a healthy office and financial situation due in large part to the retiring incumbent Faye Ferguson's dedication and skill during her 15 years at NCS. The School has a \$40 million endowment, selective admissions, and a physical plant with little deferred maintenance.

The successful candidate will manage four people in the Business Office. The key member of the office is the Director of Finance is a CPA and provides strong accounting and finance skills to the team. The office also includes a Controller; a Payroll/Benefits specialist; and a Staff Accountant who handles payables and student receivables. In addition, the AHOSFO will supervise the Director of Facilities who has a team of receptionists, housekeepers, and facilities support staff. This individual is a long-standing employee at NCS who is well-regarded for his knowledge and management skills. The food service is outsourced to Flik, with oversight from the AHOSFO, who also oversees the school store and auxiliary programs.

An unusual aspect of this position is its relationship as a chief representative of the School with the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation (PECF). The PECF is the non profit legal entity of which NCS is a part. The PECF also includes the Foundation, an entity that provides shared services to NCS, St. Albans School (boys, G4-12), Beauvoir (coed, PK-3), and the Washington National Cathedral, the institutions whose buildings and campuses occupy contiguous space known as the Close. In all NCS contributes \$2 million a year to the Foundation to fund services as well as shared capital projects. The AHOSFO meets weekly with their counterparts on the Close and the Executive Director of the PECF to discuss areas of common interest. In addition, there are governance level meetings at the PECF level that meet periodically (e.g., finance, audit, investment, buildings and grounds). As well, the PECF recently hired a Chief Legal Officer who will play a role in human resources legal issues, policies and practices as well as serve as legal counsel in other areas (e.g., contracts) for all the institutions. In short, working within the PECF structure represents a dual layer of governance and decision-making that requires the utmost in engagement to ensure effective working relationships.





In the next few years, NCS envisions staging a campaign to raise money for endowment. Additionally, the Head and Board will want to look at replenishing operating reserves, ensuring that faculty salaries remain highly competitive, monitoring debt capacity, moderating tuition increases, and determining the right level of enrollment.

Dr. Elinor Scully, currently in her first year as Head of School after leading The Langley School for eight years (and prior to that, she served as the Associate Head of School and the Upper School Head at NCS), is looking for a thought partner with exceptional skills who is dynamic, strong and outward-facing. In addition, the successful candidate will be a detail-oriented, organized person who can manage competing perspectives to recommend and make decisions that are in the best interest of the school. The individual is personable, authentic, grounded, and a problem solver. S/he will work closely with administrative leadership within the School and will develop meaningful and effective relationships with colleagues, will bring critical issues to the table, and have the self-confidence to stand their ground as an advocate for NCS.

## ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide School-wide strategic leadership as well as analysis, and management of the School's finances, both short and longer term.
- In partnership with the Director of Finance, develop and implement financial and capital strategies that enhance the long-term value of the School and are consistent with the School's strategic priorities.
- In consultation with the Head of School and the Governing Board, create, administer, monitor, and adapt the School's strategic financial plan, operating and capital budgets, and other financial matters as needed; provide oversight of the management of the endowment.
- In close partnership with the Head of School, serve as a point person for managing legal issues.





- Support the chairs of the Finance, Investment, Facilities, Audit / Risk Management and Compensation Committees of the School's Governing Board; prepare and present management, Board and Committee reports.
- Valuate and improve systems, processes, operations, and controls by championing continuous improvement, adopting best practices, and effectively utilizing technology to do so.
- In collaboration with the Director of Finance, manage and actively participate in all Business Office operations including budgeting and accounting, financial modeling and analysis, payroll, human resources, risk management, and benefits, challenging collections cases.
- Supervise the managers, operations, and budgets of Facilities, Dining Services, Rentals, and the School Store.
- Serve as a chief advisor and support to the Head of School on strategic matters, particularly as it relates to finance, operations, and risk management. Serve on the Head of School's Administrative Team.
- As a member of the PECF Operations Committee, make recommendations regarding decisions of Close wide importance (e.g., insurance programs including property, casualty, medical, and workers' compensation; benefits, establish expectations of Close wide services)
- Work with the Director of Finance and external auditors as needed to ensure compliance with applicable accounting procedures and standards; oversee and actively participate in the annual audit process.
- Coordinate with the Foundation to ensure the timely and accurate filing of all required financial reports in accordance with GAAP and in compliance with the IRS and other regulatory standards and requirements.
- Support the Head of School and other senior administrators during accreditation reviews.
- Work with colleagues to identify areas in which greater coordination or collaboration can improve the quality or cost-effectiveness of operations, services, and administrative support.
- Collaborate effectively with and provide support for the Office of Advancement and the Office of Admissions.





- Within the School, serve on the Domestic and International Travel Committee and the Financial Aid Committee.
- With the Head of School, serve as point person and maintain positive and effective relationships with the Foundation and the institutions on the Close.
- Complete annual surveys and reports for benchmarking purposes.
- Maintain appropriate professional memberships and represent NCS at related meetings and conferences.
- Attend Board meetings as a senior staff member.
- Work collegially; must be committed to working in a diverse community and have the ability to communicate effectively with diverse populations; must enjoy working with young people in a school environment.
- Demonstrate an interest in social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion work and participate in professional development as related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion work.

## DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree required, MBA or CPA preferred.
- 10-15 years of senior-level experience creating and executing financial planning and management strategies.
- Outstanding leadership skills and the ability to work collaboratively and proactively with all members of the community, the Head of School, and the Board to evaluate and improve business processes and operations and to advance the mission of the School.
- Demonstrated ability to manage a team of senior direct reports in diverse administrative and operational areas.
- A passion for innovation and experience as a relentless problem-solver who takes initiative and contributes as a business-oriented strategic thinker.
- A nuanced understanding of the complexities of an independent school.
- Outstanding written and oral communication skills.





## TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- 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 permission) to:

**John G. Clark**

Senior Search Consultant

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