Norfolk Academy
Norfolk, Virginia
Lower School Director
Start Date: July 1, 2019
norfolkacademy.org
Norfolk Academy strives to live by our conviction that sound moral and spiritual values define the individual in a more significant way than academic achievement.

**OVERVIEW**

Since its founding in 1728, few other independent schools have as rich a history as Norfolk Academy. A coeducational, private school serving students in grades 1-12, the school provides a transformative education for children in Hampton Roads. As Virginia’s oldest independent school, Norfolk Academy carries its historic mission into today as it continually reevaluates and improves upon its purpose, performance, and the lasting effect it has on its students and its region. The school seeks a Lower School Director, effective July 1, 2019, to advance the philosophy and mission of Norfolk Academy’s Lower School for students in grades 1-6.

Norfolk Academy offers children a multifaceted 12-year program intended to shape capable students into responsible and responsive citizen-scholars. Students follow the rhythms of childhood from joyful exploration toward ambitious, sophisticated scholarship. The broad strokes of honor that students encounter in Lower School mature into the finer points of empathy, integrity, and character.

Teachers are passionate educators and wise counselors. Daily handshakes and heartfelt conversations between students and teachers evolve into loyal bonds and trust that exist in the classrooms, on the playing fields, and on stage. It’s these relationships that germinate in grade one and continue to grow through grade 12 which make possible both the authentic kindness and the outsized accomplishments of Norfolk Academy’s students. That’s why years after graduation, Norfolk Academy students still count their friends and teachers here as among the largest influences on their lives.
School History

Norfolk Academy entered into official existence on November 13, 1728. As early as 1680, however, its presence had been foreseen by Norfolk town planners who reserved a large parcel of land across the street from the parish church as a “school lot.” Some 48 years later the lot was deeded to three prominent citizens with the instructions that a school be constructed there for the benefit of the “inhabitance [sic] of Norfolk Town.” That 1728 “trust deed” would serve as the charter for the school and create the school’s first trustees.

The modern era for Norfolk Academy began with the arrival in 1950 of James B. Massey, Jr. as headmaster. Through his uncompromising leadership and the vision of an outstanding Board of Trustees, the Academy grew and prospered. The final essential step to prominence was the 1966 merger with the Country Day School for Girls in Virginia Beach, and the concurrent move to the school’s present location on the Norfolk/Virginia Beach border. The school has enjoyed remarkable leadership and stability, having only just three headmasters in the past 68 years.
The School

Today, the school enrolls 1,200 students in grades 1-12, 500 of those students in Lower School. A college-preparatory curriculum, coupled with a strong sports program and exciting arts program, innovative curricular offerings, and time-honored traditions, provides students an exceptional educational experience. Students who attend Norfolk Academy come from all areas of Hampton Roads (Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach), the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and northeastern North Carolina. Twenty-three percent of the student body is made up of students of color, and 21% of students receive need-based financial assistance.

Norfolk Academy’s 114 faculty members (36 in Lower School) seek to develop engaged learners who possess both the intellectual abilities and the character traits needed to thrive in today’s world. Faculty have an average of 19 years of experience teaching at Norfolk Academy. With a student-to-teacher ratio of less than 14:1 in Lower School, teachers know their students well and dedicate themselves to making sure their students achieve their highest potential.

The school’s most cherished tradition is its Honor Code. Each member of the Norfolk Academy community commits to behaving honorably in all school activities and programs. Being truthful helps build a community of trust. It is in this environment that the Honor System helps students and all members of the community strengthen and advance their ethical development and their capacity to make sound, moral, and mature decisions about matters of right and wrong.

Norfolk Academy is the only school in the region that enjoys accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS/AdvancEd), the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS), and the Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS). Under the auspices of
Norfolk Academy is recognized as an accredited school by the Virginia State Board of Education. The school is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the College Board, the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), the Secondary School Admissions Test Board (SSATB), and the World Leading Schools Association (WLSA).

**Smith-Hofheimer Lower School**

The educational journey at Norfolk Academy starts with first graders, whose attention spans, curiosities, developmental milestones, and capabilities teachers know inside and out. The school is deeply attentive to the stages of childhood development during the elementary school years and seeks to ensure students are ready to learn, live, contribute, and thrive within the campus community.

Norfolk Academy’s Lower School programs begin with single sex classrooms in grades one through four. This intentional structure allows girls and boys to explore, learn, and take risks among their peers of the same gender in their initial years of education as they adjust to the rhythms of school. This purposeful learning structure is unique to Norfolk Academy and allows students to grow and develop as learners within a single sex environment before moving into a co-ed setting in the later grades. In fifth grade, the school brings boys and girls together for dynamic co-ed classes.

Norfolk Academy also sees clear benefits in including its sixth grade in elementary school to cap the Lower School experience. Sixth graders enjoy the self-contained “mini quad”—a space to exercise more freedom and concentrate more deeply—and have access to a full spectrum of opportunities to take charge and lead their younger counterparts.
A program of core subjects is supported by a general music curriculum and visual arts immersion starting in grade one, as well as by a speech program that shapes students into poised and dynamic public speakers and culminates with a Senior Speech. Throughout the Lower School years, students also participate in taking a leadership role in the classroom as “Boy-of-the-Day” or “Girl-of-the-Day,” leading the Pledge of Allegiance and presenting a short report or project, often tied to the curriculum. This highly anticipated and appreciated experience for each student occurs at least once a month and furthers NA’s commitment to developing confident learners who are strong public speakers, a goal that continues into the later school years.

Cooper Library for Lower School students, one of the largest and most technologically-advanced elementary school libraries in the state, functions as the heartbeat of NA’s liberal arts program. The library’s collection includes over 28,000 titles, and the facility includes various creative components including a story room, a computer lab, a research classroom, and a tutoring room. Two librarians and three research teachers provide dynamic and inspiring instruction and a variety of activities to support and enhance the curriculum of the Lower School. Each fall, the library hosts a visiting author. Past visits have included nationally renowned and award-winning authors and illustrators. The resources provided by Cooper Library are geared to help develop passionate readers and writers by making reading and writing appealing and fun.

Norfolk Academy also boasts an exciting Engineering Design and Innovation program for lower school students. Two full time teachers provide instruction and experimentation in dedicated classrooms for students as part of their regularly scheduled classes.
**STUDENT LIFE**

Numerous extra-curricular activities are offered in the Lower School, some taking place during the regular school day and some after school. Offerings include Forensics, the Student Council Association, Ecology Club, Robotics Club, Destination Imagination, Chess Club, Grade Level Community Service Projects, Piano lessons, String Orchestra, Concert Band, and Chorus.

Lower School students can contribute to an annual literary magazine, *The Mockingbird*, and fifth and sixth grade students produce a weekly news show, aired live in the Lower School on Friday mornings, called Bulldog Bytes. Students are involved in all aspects of researching, producing, and presenting the program.

Bulldog Athletic Programs are run by Norfolk Academy varsity coaches, and varsity players and other coaches are on hand to help the students learn basic skills. Interscholastic teams begin in Middle School.

Enrichment at the Academy offers a rich array of after-school and weekend programs for students and interested children in the greater community. These offerings include the Young People’s Theater Program, karate, dance, youth sports clinics, and specialty classes in art, science, math, and engineering.
Norfolk, Virginia

Norfolk, a waterfront city in southeastern Virginia with a population of around a quarter-million people, is the third largest city in the state and shares a border with Virginia Beach, the largest city in Virginia. With the Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic Ocean, countless rivers, and 144 miles of shoreline to be explored and enjoyed, one is never far from the water. Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy fishing, boating, and surfing in the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay. Considered to be the historic, urban, financial, and cultural center of the region, Norfolk was named Favorite American City for 2018 and was selected as one of the Top 50 Places to Travel in 2017 in the world.

The cultural heart of the Hampton Roads region, it is the principal home for several major performing arts companies and museums. Norfolk also plays host to numerous yearly festivals and parades, mostly at Town Point Park in downtown. Chrysler Hall, Norfolk’s downtown performing arts center, is home to the Norfolk Forum lecture series, the Virginia Symphony and touring Broadway Shows. The Virginia Opera, the official Opera Company of Virginia, has its home base in Norfolk. The Chrysler Museum of Art, considered one of the Top 20 museums in the USA, features masterworks from every major civilization, historical period, and culture of the past 5,000 years.

The city has a variety of historic neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods, such as Berkley, were formerly cities and towns. Others, such as Willoughby Spit and Ocean View, have a long history tied to the Chesapeake Bay. Today, neighborhoods such as Downtown, Ghent, and Fairmount Park have been transformed with the revitalization the city has undergone. More than 100 festivals are hosted each year throughout the city, most of them free.

Two major regional shopping malls are located in Norfolk, and the waterfront offers Waterside Festival Marketplace with revitalized places to dine and enjoy entertainment. The Norfolk Botanical Garden,
opened in 1939, is a 155-acre botanical garden and arboretum located near the Norfolk International Airport, and is open year-round.

The city also serves as home to the two highest level professional franchises in the state of Virginia — the Norfolk Tides plays Triple-A baseball in the International League, and the Norfolk Admirals play ice hockey in the ECHL. Two Norfolk universities have Division I sports teams — the Old Dominion Monarchs and the Norfolk State University Spartans — providing numerous sports, including football, basketball, and baseball.

**STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL**

The next Lower School Director of Norfolk Academy will benefit from the school’s notable strengths which include:

- A highly collegial, collaborative, and joyful learning environment dedicated to the development of all students;
- A strong academic program built upon an honor code and values-based learning;
- State-of-the-art facilities for the entire 1-12 school community, including a brand-new Massey Leadership Center and athletic complex;
- An engaged, passionate, and dedicated Lower School faculty committed to meeting the needs of individual students;
- An interconnected community of a 1-12 school that embraces children from numerous neighborhoods around the greater Norfolk area;
- A well-balanced program of academics, arts, and physical activity to support the whole child and meet individual student needs.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

With the support of the Head of School, the next Lower School Director will be charged with the following:

• Provide a nurturing and safe learning environment that celebrates children and prepares them for lifelong learning;
• Be a visible part of the community and an ambassador for the division and the school;
• Further develop relationships with the parents, students, and faculty to strengthen the community within the division;
• Provide clear and transparent communications within the division and to the greater community;
• Ensure that the Lower School curriculum continues to align with 21st-century skill development, is reviewed and strengthened regularly with innovative initiatives, and prepares the students for success in the Middle and Upper School divisions;
• Partner with the Head of School and the Admissions team to maintain strong enrollment and define the Lower School’s distinctive place in the Norfolk marketplace;
• Contribute to a dynamic school-wide leadership team by advocating for the needs and being responsive to concerns of the Lower School community.

DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate for Lower School Director will be:

• A warm and relationship-driven educator with a deep appreciation for children’s education;
• A highly visible leader in every aspect of the Lower School program;
• A visionary who can lead strategically and encourage innovation and creativity in programs and pedagogy;
• An articulate communicator who can promote the Lower School program in admissions and development;
• A person with experience teaching elementary school students and who truly delights in children;
• An empathetic leader who will cultivate a welcoming, caring, diverse, and inclusive community;
• An experienced educational leader able to be a parent educator and collaborate with the parent community.

**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) to:

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