Norfolk Academy
Norfolk, Virginia
Middle School Director
Start Date: July 1, 2020
www.NorfolkAcademy.org

Carney Sandoe & Associates
OVERVIEW

As Virginia’s oldest independent school, Norfolk Academy carries forward the spirit of independence and innovation that has shaped America’s trajectory. Since its founding in 1728, Norfolk Academy has thrived and grown, with a fascinating story that reflects the nation’s own history. Serving students in grades 1-12, the school provides a transformative education for children in Hampton Roads. 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 Middle School Director, effective July 1, 2020, to advance the philosophy and mission of Norfolk Academy’s Middle School for students in grades 7-9.

The Middle School experience is the division that provides the educational bridge in the school’s multifaceted 12-year program; students begin in the Lower School as energetic, curious, and imaginative first graders, and they emerge responsible and responsive citizen-scholars, prepared for the nation’s most selective colleges and universities. 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. A distinctive attribute of the school’s approach arises from its Statement of Philosophy and Objectives: 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.

Teachers are passionate educators and wise counselors. Daily handshakes and heartfelt conversations between students and teachers evolve into loyal bonds and trust that shape experiences in the classrooms, on the playing fields, and on stage. It’s these relationships, which germinate in grade one and continue to grow through grade 12, that 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 Academy friends and teachers 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 steps to prominence were 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 just three headmasters in the past 68 years. The school recently completed its $67 million *Defining Leadership* campaign, which reshaped the campus with a new stadium, leadership center, expansion to the school’s cafeteria (known as the refectory), and a major addition to the Lower School.
The School

Today, the school enrolls 1,200 students in grades 1-12, 340 of those students in Middle 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-four percent of the student body is made up of students of color, and 18% of students receive need-based financial assistance.

Norfolk Academy’s 114 faculty members (43 in Middle 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 approximately 8:1 in the Middle 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 System. Each member of the Norfolk Academy community commits to behaving honorably in all school activities and programs; students write the honor pledge on all graded assignments. 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.

Norfolk Academy is the only school in the region that enjoys accreditation by all three school accrediting organizations: 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 the Virginia Council of Private Education (VCPE), 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).

**Royster Middle School**

Norfolk Academy seventh, eighth, and ninth graders present themselves with more poise and polish than most adolescents thanks to the natural culmination of coming of age within the school’s respectful, relational culture and community. The benefits in including its ninth grade to cap the Middle School experience are clear. Because the Middle School extends to ninth grade, Norfolk Academy students don’t feel rushed to “fit in” among juniors and seniors before they’re ready. Instead, they hold a vast array of leadership positions their ninth-grade year—including the opportunity to begin their journey through the Batten Leadership Program. More than just the precursor to Upper School, grades seven through nine at Norfolk Academy present students with myriad opportunities to learn how to be an insightful scholar, a wise advocate, a confident leader, and a staunchly reliable friend.

Middle Schoolers possess the intellectual capacity to take on big new concepts, perform their own research, run their own experiments, and embody divergent perspectives through role playing and creative assignments devised by the passionate Middle School faculty. During these formative years, students take Latin to build vocabulary and better understand the ancient world’s continued relevance today, embark on an annual “service season” that reaches far beyond campus bounds, and thoughtfully choose their own faculty advisor, who serves as mentor, confidante, and inspiring advocate.
The Middle School curriculum includes study in English, foreign language (French, German, Latin, or Spanish) history and social science, mathematics, science, fine arts, and physical education. This program of core subjects is supported by a speech program that shapes students into poised and dynamic public speakers. In ninth grade, each student presents a persuasive speech to the faculty and the entire Middle School. Each student works closely with a faculty advisor and school librarians throughout the process of selecting a topic, researching, drafting, polishing, and practicing. The delivery of the speech is a rite of passage that marks each student’s preparation for Upper School.

The Batten Library is central to promoting research and reading in the life of the school. Librarians work closely with the Middle School faculty to integrate research projects into the curriculum and to teach students the skills and strategies they need to conduct research thoughtfully and effectively. The library staff is also committed to helping students develop a lifelong love of reading. The library is well-stocked with popular fiction and non-fiction, and librarians are always happy to recommend books to students and faculty. In addition, the library hosts a number of special events to promote pleasure reading, including author visits and the school’s bi-annual Book Fest.

The Batten Leadership Program instills in its Fellows a responsibility for understanding and engaging the intricate and systemic challenges facing the global community: the environment, health care, international relations, literacy, and infrastructure. This innovative programming provides opportunities for outstanding students to pursue a four-year (beginning in ninth grade), multidisciplinary and experiential course of study grounded in developing actionable solutions to real-world issues. Fellows engage in deep intellectual investigation in a chosen field and participate in leadership programs and experiential learning to build critical skills necessary to effect real change in the world.
ARTS AND ATHLETICS

Norfolk Academy provides the resources, facilities, and inspiration to grow in both discipline and discernment in the arts. In music, seventh graders start by taking a music appreciation course. As students progress through Middle School, they may participate in performances groups such as jazz band, chorus, orchestra, and chamber music. Students have the opportunity to perform outside of school by participating in district and regional chorus and at school events like Fine Arts Day. In the performing arts, eighth grade students participate in a year-long course in the study of drama. Students in grades 7-12 have the opportunity to perform in three theater productions each year: the fall play, the winter musical, and the spring play. Ninth graders are required to take one semester of studio art before exploring electives in Upper School.

In athletics, Norfolk Academy’s teacher-coach model builds cohesion and continuity throughout the Middle and Upper Schools. With classroom teachers coaching nearly all competitive athletic teams, students come to know and appreciate their teachers on multiple levels, and teachers see students as the growing, talented, and multi-dimensional young people they are. Trust earned in the classroom continues to build on the field, and lessons learned on the court—about teamwork, patience, strategy, and tactics—find applications back in the classroom. The comprehensive athletic program features 74 interscholastic teams for grades 7-12. Teams compete in the Tidewater Conference of Independent Schools, the League of Independent Schools, and the Virginia Prep League. Students in grades 7-9 are eligible to participate in sub-JV teams (Junior Orange and Bulldog). Seventh and eighth graders are also eligible for junior varsity teams if warranted by Norfolk Academy coaches.
STUDENT LIFE

Norfolk Academy strives to develop civic-minded, socially aware, and active leaders as an essential component of its educational program, and the school’s co- and extra-curricular offerings reflect this mission.

The school’s International Programs inspire and inform students, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively engage with local and global communities and become culturally perceptive citizens. The Eighth Grade Odyssey is an inter-disciplinary, capstone study-abroad program for 10 days in southern Italy and Sicily with the goal of demonstrating the interconnectedness of the history, art, architecture, philosophy, literature, mythology, religion, archaeology, geology, science, and mathematics they have learned on their journey and to understand its relevance to their lives today. A cadre of eighth graders also have the opportunity to travel to the United Kingdom for seven days during Middle School Mini-Mester where they undergo an interdisciplinary exploration of science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math (STEAM) set against the backdrop of the history and culture of London and its surroundings.

Numerous extra-curricular activities are offered in the Middle School, some taking place during the regular school day and some after school. Offerings include options in the arts, sports and fitness, math and science, community service, special interest groups, and more.
Norfolk, Virginia

Norfolk, a waterfront city in southeastern Virginia with a population of approximately 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, Norfolk 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 Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) and the Virginia Aquarium are major attractions in Virginia Beach. The Norfolk Botanical Garden, a 155-acre garden and arboretum not far from the school, is open year-round. More than 100 festivals are hosted each year throughout the Hampton Roads region, many of them free.

The region has a wide array of shopping, including upscale boutiques and major regional malls; the restaurant scene is robust, with a range of dining options along the Virginia Beach Oceanfront and the brand-new Waterside District in Norfolk.
The Hampton Roads region also serves as home to the two highest level professional franchises in the state of Virginia — the Norfolk Tides play 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.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

With the support of the Headmaster, Norfolk Academy’s next Middle School Director will be asked to:

- Engage in thoughtful and strategic conversations about existing programs and curriculum, making measured improvements while resisting the temptation to add more to teachers’ and students’ plates.
- Maintain the unique character of the Middle School, fostering a culture which celebrates and supports students at this stage of their development, preparing them for the Upper School while providing them with appropriate opportunity to take risks and learn from mistakes.
- Evaluate and refine recent programmatic changes (e.g. – Latin, Mini-Mester) which will have impacts throughout the Middle School program.
- Work alongside members of the school leadership team to finalize and implement a new strategic plan.
DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The successful Middle School Director at Norfolk Academy will be:

• A collaborative leader who is eager to work in a tight-knit leadership team.
• A relationship-builder who understands the primacy of knowing and valuing students.
• A strategic educator who will thoughtfully identify opportunities for improvement, while respecting and honoring Norfolk Academy’s traditions and nearly 300-year history.
• An advocate for faculty, respecting both their time and expertise.
• A proactive and responsive communicator who listens first and communicates well with colleagues, faculty, students, and parents.
• An educator who loves Middle School students and their teachers and is willing to engage fully as a member of the community.
• A scholar who represents Norfolk Academy’s commitment to academic excellence.
• An effective public-speaker and gifted consensus builder.
• A confident leader who nonetheless approaches his or her work with humility and a sense of humor.
• A champion of Norfolk Academy’s signature programs, including the Honor System, the ninth grade speech program, fine arts, and athletics.

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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