

# HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

## WOODLYNDE SCHOOL

Strafford, Pennsylvania  
[woodlynde.org](http://woodlynde.org)

Start Date: July 2024



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

[CARNEYSANDOE.COM](http://CARNEYSANDOE.COM)

# Mission Statement

Woodlynde School welcomes and serves students who learn differently and empowers them to become strategic thinkers and self-advocates in a challenging and supportive college preparatory environment.

## At a Glance



Established  
1976



Enrollment  
196



Student-teacher ratio  
4:1



Campus size  
20 acres



Students of color  
38%



Total faculty  
79



Financial aid awarded  
\$1.5M



Faculty with advanced  
degrees  
82%

Towns represented: 73

Faculty of color: 2%

Lower School average class size: 9

Middle School average class size: 10

Upper School average class size: 8-12

Students receiving aid: 43%

Endowment: \$1.6M

Annual operating budget: \$8.6M

Athletics: 17





## Overview

Woodlynde School will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2026. Throughout the last five decades, Woodlynde has done an exceptional job of preparing students who learn differently for college and for life. Parents routinely report relief, joy, and even tears because their children have found a safe home where they can completely accept themselves, discover how they best learn, and develop the life skills that will stand them in good stead as they go on to higher education and life beyond.

Woodlynde's student population includes children who often have more than one diagnosis which defies any kind of one-size-fits-all approach. The school is nationally recognized for its expertise in serving students with language- or math-based learning differences, executive function challenges, ADHD, auditory processing disorder, or a need for a small classroom environment. Woodlynde students are academically capable and need different methods of support. Most importantly students remark that they struggled elsewhere, and they thrive at Woodlynde. You can feel the warmth, joy, and caring in the halls, in the classrooms, and on the playing fields.

Woodlynde is in a very competitive marketplace with excellent public schools and private schools, including those who serve neurodiverse students. It stands alone in its determination to understand each student's needs and strengths with authenticity and accountability to equip each child with the knowledge and self-confidence to navigate inevitable challenges.

The current head is leaving to return to her roots in boarding schools close to family in New England. She has assembled a strong, capable, and collaborative leadership team who work well together and will be an asset to the new head who will start July 1, 2024.

This is a fantastic opportunity for a dedicated and passionate educator who can assure that the student-centered school program remains excellent and can be a dynamic ambassador in the communities Woodlynde serves.



## Strengths of the School

Over the storied history of Woodlynde, the school has built many strengths that have had a life-changing experience on students, their families, and the colleagues in the community. Among the most often cited, especially in comparison to some other schools are:

- There is an undeniable warmth and closeness of the school community. Relationships between students and faculty are supportive and deep. Woodlynde has and continues to serve not only the students but recognize the needs of families as they navigate their own journey.
- While many schools cite getting to know each child and meeting their social emotional, academic, physical, and psychological needs, Woodlynde students themselves are living proof that this school truly does change lives, one individual and celebrated child at a time.
- The vast majority of Woodlynde students go on to college. The school's college counseling program is frequently cited by alumni and families as a top strength of the school's academic program.
- Woodlynde serves a broad range of students who learn differently, often with more than one diagnoses. Woodlynde students each discover how they uniquely learn best. They become advocates for what they know about themselves and what they need to be successful. They are authentic, unapologetic, confident, and equipped for success in learning and in life. It is no accident that the faculty and staff, parents, and Board of Woodlynde proudly count several alumni among their ranks.
- As a community committed to belonging for all students, the unquestioned acceptance of one another leads to elements of kindness and joy throughout the campus. Many students freely describe their difficulties in prior schools and their gratitude that they can be themselves, at Woodlynde.





## Opportunities and Challenges

- It is ongoing work to differentiate Woodlynde in both approach and marketing to achieve satisfactory and sustainable enrollment in the very strong and competitive Greater Philadelphia market and Mainline suburban region.
- It is important to assess the operational structure of the school to assure optimal student experience, utilizing evidence-based practices, all the while making the best use of human and financial resources.
- The school's commitment to being the "market leader" requires that they are always clear about the type of student they can serve best; and pursue continuous improvement in pedagogies, methodologies, colleague training and emerging research to match their practices to the evolving needs of the student population.
- Woodlynde's commitment to knowing and serving each child requires age-appropriately different practices in the three divisions. Nevertheless, there is a desire to have more unity across the entire K-12 school in areas such as curricular alignment, assessment methodologies, SEL programming and philosophies, as well as school spirit and pride.
- The 2026 - 50th anniversary milestone provides an opportunity for enhanced alumni engagement, celebrations and the likely launch of an endowment and related fundraising campaign.
- There is a desire to retain qualified and caring faculty while increasing the representation of various backgrounds within the adult population of the school.
- The school is actively considering launching a diagnostic and related services center to provide guidance to area families of school-aged children as they explore their needs and options for educating students who learn differently.
- The school is in early-stage discussions with several higher institutions about establishing mutually beneficial partnerships. These nascent affiliations will need leadership and support.



## Qualifications and Personal Attributes

- A passionate leader who loves children, has a deep appreciation for the educational needs of neurodiverse students and has an unyielding belief that any child can be a successful learner.
- An experienced educator: both a skilled leader who understands budget levers and has a passion for operational excellence.
- A dynamic ambassador who serves as the face of the school, as well as able to assemble and lead a team, each one of whom is a star in their own right.
- A person who embodies a charismatic and unifying personality to inspire and guide the community behind a common vision of the mission of the school and the student outcomes sought.
- A dedicated life-long learner who possesses an understanding of Learning Differences and LD education in helping to set the vision for the school moving forward.
- An empathetic connector who listens well, exudes compassion, understands the unique nature of families with children with learning differences, and can instill confidence that the school is the kind of partner parents seek.
- An experienced collaborator who is willing to seek input when processing information and can make decisions, even tough ones, when necessary.
- A perpetually curious and innovative thinker who is experienced with maximizing the use of both human and financial assets in a resource-constrained environment, while leading with a passion for continuous improvement.
- A strong recruiter who has demonstrated experience attracting and retaining top colleagues throughout the organization, while holding all members of the school accountable.
- A committed and visible communicator who can clearly articulate goals, set expectations, and provide support, while effectively delegating.
- A person who strongly believes in being an engaged presence in the daily life of the school from the carline to the classroom, and from the playground to the playing fields.



# Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Woodlynde School.

[School Website](#)

[College Matriculation](#)

[Strategic Plan](#)

[About Philadelphia, Pennsylvania](#)

[Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)



## To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultant 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 statement of familiarity with and philosophy of serving capable students who learn differently;
- 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:

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