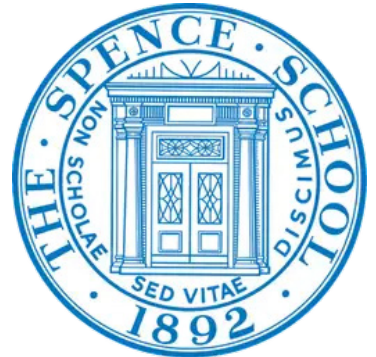


DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SEARCH

THE SPENCE SCHOOL

New York, New York
spenceschool.org

Start Date: July 2026



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission Statement

With a commitment to **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE** and personal integrity, The Spence School prepares a diverse community of girls and young women for the **LIFELONG TRANSFORMATION OF SELF** and the world with **PURPOSE, PASSION, AND PERSPECTIVE**.

Philosophy

Offering a rigorous, liberal arts study, The Spence School develops high standards and character while creating an environment that fosters **SELF-CONFIDENCE** and the **JOY OF LEARNING**. Charging our students to meet the demands of academic excellence and responsible citizenship in a changing world, we teach that **DIVERSE POINTS OF VIEW FUEL INQUIRY**, engagement, and deeper **UNDERSTANDINGS OF COMPLEX TRUTHS. WE BELIEVE IN THE STRENGTH, INTELLECT AND VITALITY OF WOMEN.**

At a Glance



Established
1892



Total enrollment
804



Financial aid awarded
\$8.6M



Students of color
52%



Student-faculty ratio
6:1



Total faculty
136



Faculty with advanced degrees
80%

Lower School enrollment: 277
Middle School enrollment: 244
Upper School enrollment: 284
Faculty of color: 39%
Students receiving aid: 20%
Clubs and organizations: 92
Athletic teams: 32

Endowment as of 6/30/2025: \$163,485,778
Annual operating budget: \$59,905,719
Campus:
93rd Street – Lower School
91st – Middle and Upper School
412 – Athletic and Educational Facility
The 412 Squash Center, with state-of-the-art squash courts, is one of the premier facilities in the city.



Overview

A premier New York City institution, The Spence School is a K-12 independent school for girls located on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Spence enrolls a diverse group of students who enjoy a rich and challenging academic and co-curricular program rooted in deep inquiry and intellectual discovery in the service of engaging with the world. It is a place of joy and spirited adventure where girls find their voices and develop confidence that sets them up for a life of purpose. Inspired by outstanding teachers who often stay at Spence for decades, students engage enthusiastically in school while also utilizing the wealth of resources New York offers. Along with an outstanding program and an exceptional faculty and staff, the school has impressive facilities, operating across three-plus locations in the East '90s including a state-of-the-art athletic and education center that houses a gymnasium, nine squash courts, and the Brizendine Center for Ecology, which includes a greenhouse and rooftop garden.

Clara Spence, a visionary educator, founded Miss Spence's School in 1892. In addition to strong academics, Spence ensured that her students took advantage of the city, taking them on "sightseeing trips." She developed relationships with universities and invited the likes of Helen Keller and Booker T. Washington to speak. A rooftop terrace provided outdoor space. Most importantly, Spence's progressive curriculum insisted on the utility of education for the purpose of service to the community. While she characterized life as "a splendid struggle," she also believed in having fun, encouraging play and joy among her students. All these characteristics – including the rooftop play area and impressive speakers – remain integral to the school today. The school moved to its current location on 91st Street in 1929. Having outgrown that building, the Lower School moved into a renovated historic mansion on 93rd Street in 2003; the purchase of an adjacent townhouse added significant additional space to the 91st building in 2008; the athletic and education center referred to as 412 was completed in 2021. This year, Spence acquired new property adjacent to its Lower School on Madison Avenue and is currently considering potential plans for the space.



In 2022, Felicia A. Wilks assumed the leadership of the school as the 15th Head of school, ushering in a new chapter in the school's distinguished history. Since 2023 the school has engaged in a thoughtful and inclusive Strategic Planning process that has brought the school's community of students, parents, faculty, and alumnae together in townhalls, focus group meetings and enlisted their input through surveys. In March 2025, the school launched its Strategic Plan, *The Spark of Spence*, with a community celebration.

Spence seeks an experienced and mission-driven communications professional to serve as its next Director of Communications and Public Relations, beginning July 2026. The Director will lead a strategic and comprehensive communications program that builds upon a solid foundation and advances the school's mission. With a new strategic plan in place and the prospect of a capital project on the horizon, this is an exciting moment in the life of the school. The appointee will bring vision, creativity, and leadership to a talented team, serving as a trusted partner to the Head of School, Board of Trustees, and administrative colleagues.

Ideal candidates will demonstrate considerable experience in communications strategy, team leadership, public relations and crisis management. They will possess a deep appreciation for the mission of girls' education and a commitment to storytelling that reflects the intellect, integrity, and joy that define The Spence School.

Opportunities and Challenges

Spence's next Director of Communications and Public Relations will join the community at a dynamic and defining moment in the school's evolution. Now in her fourth year as Head of School, Felicia Wilks continues to inspire deep confidence and enthusiasm across the Spence community. A warm, strategic, and collaborative leader, Felicia will be an active partner with the Director of Communications and Public Relations in shaping and sharing the school's story, celebrating the spirit of inquiry, intellectual ambition, and joyful engagement that define the Spence experience.



Under Felicia's leadership, Spence has entered a period of reflection and renewal with the launch of a new [strategic plan](#) that will guide priorities leading up to the school's next chapter, including a pivotal facilities expansion that positions the School for the future. Communications will play a central role in this process, ensuring that the school's voice is clear, inclusive, and consistent across every platform, and that its messages inspire confidence among families, alumnae, and the broader community.

Spence's communications function has developed meaningfully in recent years under the thoughtful direction of the long-serving current Director, whose calm, steady leadership has built trust across the community and established essential systems, protocols, and tone. With well-earned credibility among faculty, parents, and senior leadership alike, the Communications Office is recognized as both a strategic partner and a vital hub of coordination for a wide range of school activities, from crisis response and public relations to event messaging and community storytelling.

The Director of Communications and Public Relations will lead and mentor a talented team responsible for all aspects of the school's internal and external communications, branding, media relations, social media, and digital content. The team works closely with the Head of School, Director of Development, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, and other senior administrators to ensure a cohesive and forward-looking communications strategy. In partnership with the Parents' Association and other key constituencies, the Director will also guide the school's public narrative, balancing transparency and discretion, care, and authority, to maintain Spence's trusted reputation as a leader among independent schools.

As the School continues to advance, Spence seeks a master communicator who brings emotional intelligence, strategic insight, and a sophisticated understanding of how to tell stories that resonate. The successful candidate will be an adept writer and editor, a collaborative manager, and a creative thinker who can move seamlessly between high-level planning and hands-on execution.

The priorities, challenges, and opportunities ahead for the Director of Communications and Public Relations include:

- Partnering with the Head of School and senior leadership to advance Spence's mission through clear, authentic, and consistent communications
- Serving as the School's chief storyteller and brand steward, ensuring that all messaging reflects Spence's values and voice



- Managing and mentoring the Communications team, clarifying roles, establishing strong workflows, and cultivating a culture of collaboration and trust
- Leading crisis communications as a member of the Crisis Response Team and managing media relations in close coordination with outside PR counsel
- Partnering with the Director of Technology to streamline data systems and digital tools, ensuring efficient, tech-forward communications practices
- Collaborating closely with the Development and Admissions teams, serving as an active contributor and strategic partner on key publications—both print and digital—including the Bulletin, Annual Report, Viewbooks, appeals, invitations, other donor and outreach materials
- Overseeing content strategy across platforms including the website, newsletters, publications, and social media to strengthen engagement and visibility
- Developing and implementing institutional protocols that support the School's privacy and confidentiality guidelines
- Working closely with the Parents' Association to align communications around community events and initiatives, including the biennial Benefit
- Providing strategic counsel on key institutional initiatives including the strategic plan, admissions marketing, facilities expansion, and institutional equity work
- Continuing to build proactive, inclusive communications that celebrate Spence's diverse community and advance its commitment to equity and belonging
- Nurturing strong relationships across divisions and departments to ensure clarity, transparency, and connection throughout the school community

Qualifications and Personal Attributes

The most competitive candidates will offer most or all of the following qualifications and qualities

- Substantial experience in leading communications, media relations and marketing, preferably in academic settings;
- Meaningful exposure to and experience in managing crisis communications;
- Excellent editing and writing skills, as well multi-media production experience;



- Strong understanding of message segmentation and scaffolding for the various constituent groups in an independent school;
- The ability to articulate vision and strategy: the tactical skills to deftly manage the systems and processes necessary to implement strategy, and the organizational fluency to manage multiple streams of information and respond to situations as they emerge;
- Expertise in digital marketing, website design, podcasts and social media and an understanding of trends and evolving best practices in these areas;
- An understanding of how cross-cultural competencies relate to communications strategies and an ability to work across constituencies, deploying assorted styles in communication based upon intended goals and audiences;
- A flexible mindset and a desire to learn, build energy, and create opportunities for an institutional shared vision and message;
- Drive cross-functional collaboration to develop and execute integrated communication strategies that advance organizational priorities;
- A collaborative leader who works across teams to develop and implement integrated communications strategies that advance institutional priorities;
- Experience hiring, supporting, and leading other professionals, providing feedback with an eye towards continuous improvement, and operating within the broader framework of a learning community committed to talent management and career advancement;
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate with inspiration and clarity across a wide range of audiences;
- Evidence of utilizing data for strategic planning, creative problem solving, and exploration of innovative opportunities;
- The curiosity, confidence, and humility to advocate for innovative ideas, invite disagreement, and welcome feedback, engaging in challenging conversations with grace;
- Interest in engaging in a lively and dynamic school environment;
- A joyful spirit and fine sense of humor.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about The Spence School.

[School Website](#)

[School History](#)

[Core Values](#)

[Diversity and Equity](#)

[Long Range Plan](#)

[College Matriculation](#)

[About New York, New York](#)



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;
- Samples of professional writing: newsletter, articles, communication to school community;
- 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:

Sara Shulman

Practice Leader – Development and Finance
sara.shulman@carneysandoe.com

Jonathan Ball

Senior Consultant
jonathan.ball@carneysandoe.com

The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$215,000-\$250,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors that include years of experience, education level, and expertise.