

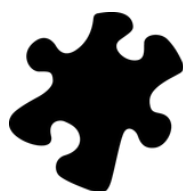


HEAD OF SCHOOL

Start Date: July 2027

The Orchard School

Indianapolis, Indiana



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

MISSION STATEMENT

The Orchard School's mission is to develop and educate the whole child. As a progressive, non-sectarian, independent school, Orchard commits to advancing each student's academic success, self-confidence, open-mindedness, ethical character, leadership, and love of learning.

At a Glance



1922
established



544
total enrollment



24%
students of color



85
total faculty



45%
faculty with
advanced degrees



6:1
student-faculty ratio



OVERVIEW

We are so excited to present this opportunity at The Orchard School in Indianapolis. Orchard is a place where joy abounds in the classroom and across the beautiful 43-acre campus. Students are active, engaged learners who are encouraged to discover, imagine and dream. On any given day, a visitor might find pre-school students operating a pretend kitchen in the woods with mud cakes for sale; elementary students learning about potential vs. kinetic energy on the ropes course or middle school students designing and building tiny houses or electric guitars in The Makerspace. Progressive pedagogy and a commitment to *Nature as Teacher* serve as key pillars for educating the whole child at Orchard. The ideal candidate will be energized by the many experiential and challenging learning opportunities students are afforded at The Orchard School and able to analyze the compensation needed to maintain the excellent faculty.

Orchard has long prioritized the values of dignity, diversity and belonging as central to its mission of educating the whole child and to its founding principles as a progressive school. The school is located near the Meridian Hills neighborhood on the North Side of Indianapolis and attracts families from near-by established neighborhoods, downtown and suburban communities. The families who choose Orchard celebrate the diversity and richness each family brings to the community and their child's educational experience.





In 1922, nine innovative, visionary mothers started The Orchard School to provide an alternative to traditional education, and they embraced the pedagogy of John Dewey. The school, now 100+ years young, stays true to its mission of educating the whole child while pushing innovation. Orchard recently secured a major grant that will enable the school to make significant improvements to its campus. The school will increase the number of spaces that open to the outside and will create a new outdoor recreational area for middle school students. This project has several priorities. It continues the century long commitment to having students work and play outside, it provides new spaces that will promote environmental awareness, and most importantly, the activities that engage the students will help to promote mental health and awareness. Orchard, with the strong support of its Board, continues to move into the future with confidence and energy.

The Orchard community stays connected long past students graduate or teachers retire. Students, parents, grandparents, alumni, parent and faculty emeriti come together every March for the annual tree tapping and Pancake Breakfast. This annual event showcases the loyalty of the Orchard community, a feeling some refer to as “the Orchard way.”

The next head of school will build on the deeply appreciated work that the current Head of School, Ed Hollinger, has done in his time at the school before he retires on June 30, 2027. There is widespread dedication to taking care of the faculty and staff including professional growth opportunities and a culture that supports the individual strengths of the gifted faculty. Orchard’s next leader will play an integral role in its upcoming facility improvements and with the implementation of its strategic plan. Collaboration is treasured at Orchard, and the entire community is poised and ready to engage with its new leader. Central to the next leader’s role is to cultivate and develop the faculty that do a wonderful job of perpetuating the Orchard Way.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Head of School arrives at a moment of genuine promise for The Orchard School. Under current leadership, the school has stabilized during Ed Hollinger's tenure after a period of transition and a renewed commitment to mission is taking hold. Equally important, the ideal candidate will recognize that Orchard's strength is rooted in its faculty and, as such, will prioritize the intentional cultivation, development, support, and retention of faculty as they are essential to sustaining the Orchard way. The incoming Head will inherit meaningful momentum while also being called to address several opportunities that require steady, skilled, and visionary leadership.

Community and Culture

The Orchard community has navigated substantial leadership and organizational change in recent years. The next Head will need to take time to listen deeply, honor school traditions, and continue to foster a trusting and joyful school community. The next Head will have the responsibility to continue to knit the three school divisions into a single, coherent school community that shares a common language, vision, and a culture rooted in Orchard's distinctive mission.



Curriculum Alignment and Academic Clarity

There is a desire to ensure that Orchard's commitment to collaborative, inquiry-based, and interdisciplinary education is realized in practice and aligned across the school while assuring core academic preparation for all students. This includes greater curricular coherence and assessment across all grades.

Organizational Structure

The school is in the midst of meaningful structural change, including the development of an endowment board, and a new organizational leadership structure. The next Head will step into a governance environment that is actively being shaped and will be a key partner in ensuring that structures, roles, and culture reinforce one another effectively.

Financial Sustainability

The next Head will partner actively with the board and advancement team to build upon the school's strong financial footing, make progress toward ambitious fundraising goals, and ensure that operational decisions reflect long-term sustainability.

Communicating Value and Telling Orchard's Story

The school's distinctive approach to education, rooted in hands-on, inquiry-based, and outdoor learning, grounded in progressive values, and committed to the whole child — is a genuine differentiator. The next Head will have the opportunity to serve as a compelling champion for Orchard's mission in the wider Indianapolis community and beyond.



\$2.4M

financial aid awarded



34%

students receiving aid



\$43.3M

endowment



\$14.5M

annual operating budget



43 acres

campus size

QUALITIES & QUALIFICATIONS



The Head of School will be expected to:

- Be grounded in educational practice, with a commitment to strong progressive and academic fundamentals
- Be present and visible across the life of the School
- Build trust through authentic and consistent engagement
- Foster a culture of inclusivity across the school
- Embrace and preserve the values of dignity, diversity and belonging as essential to academic success and community cohesion
- Listen carefully while also identifying patterns and priorities
- Bring greater clarity to roles, expectations, and decision-making
- Strengthen the leadership team and align it around shared goals
- Further a culture where accountability and care coexist
- Position the School to execute its campus master plan with discipline
- Partner with the Advancement team to sustain and build relationships with key constituents
- Possess financial acumen and operational competence
- Be experienced with recruiting, hiring, supporting, retaining, and leading talented, diverse, and mission-aligned faculty and senior leadership



Personal Qualities

The next Head of School will be:

- A unifying presence who leads with warmth, conviction and joy
- An experienced educational leader
- A skilled communicator and transparent decision-maker
- A mission-driven leader who honors tradition
- A strategic and forward-looking thinker
- An inspiring educator who genuinely loves children and develops and maintains an excellent faculty

LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)

- [Progressive Education](#)

- [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

- [About Indianapolis, Indiana](#)





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:

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