



# INTERIM HEAD OF SCHOOL

2026–2028 | Start Date: August 2026

William Penn Charter School  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania | [penncharter.com](http://penncharter.com)



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

# MISSION STATEMENT

Within a school community that honors difference, we seek that of God in each person. We value scholarship and inquiry. With excellence as our standard, we challenge students in a vigorous program of academics, arts and athletics. Through global connections, civic engagement and a focus on environmental sustainability, we inspire students to be thinkers, collaborators, innovators and leaders. We educate students to live lives that make a difference.

## At a Glance



**1689**

established  
*the oldest Quaker school in the world*



**1,021**

total enrollment  
Pre-K through Grade 12



**37%**

students of color



**156**

total faculty



**86%**

faculty with  
advanced degrees



**5:1**

student-faculty ratio



# OVERVIEW

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William Penn Charter School, enrolling 1,021 students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12, is an independent, coeducational Quaker day school located on a 47-acre campus in the East Falls neighborhood of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Founded in 1689 at the direct urging of William Penn, Penn Charter is the oldest Quaker school in the world and stands among the oldest schools of any kind in the United States — a distinction that gives the school a rare degree of institutional depth, history, and continuity. For 337 years, Penn Charter has remained guided by its founding charter and by the Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship, even as the school itself has evolved considerably in size, scope, and ambition.

The school's mission — to challenge students in a vigorous program of academics, arts, and athletics; to inspire thinkers, collaborators, innovators, and leaders through global connections, civic engagement, and environmental sustainability; and to educate students to live lives that make a difference — is inseparable from its identity as a Friends school. While Penn Charter is not under the care of a formal Monthly Meeting, it continues to be governed through Quaker principles and practices by a 21-member Board of Trustees, a structure established by William Penn himself and still in active use today. The community gathers weekly for Meeting for Worship, and many faculty meetings, assemblies, and classes open in silence — practices that root the daily rhythm of school life in Quaker tradition even as Penn Charter operates as a thoroughly modern, college-preparatory institution.





That modern ambition is evident across Penn Charter's campus, which has undergone a significant, multi-year transformation. Anchored by the historic Main Building, constructed when the school relocated to East Falls in 1925, the campus now also includes the David L. Kurtz Center for the Performing Arts, a LEED-certified facility with a 650-seat theater; the William A. Graham IV OPC '58 Athletics & Wellness Center, an 88,000-square-foot hub for athletics and wellness completed in 2021; and the newly opened Richard A. Balderston Lower School, an 80,000-square-foot facility completed in 2025 that together with the completion of the Academic Village represent the culmination of the school's campus transformation plan — itself conceived to be substantially complete by the school's 100th anniversary in East Falls. The result is a campus that combines the scale and suburban character of a much larger institution with the accessibility of a Center City-adjacent location, drawing families from more than 100 zip codes across the greater Philadelphia region.

Penn Charter's three divisions — Lower School (Pre-K–5), Middle School (6–8), and Upper School (9–12) — share a fully integrated curriculum designed to develop students' minds, bodies, hearts, and spirits at every stage of growth. The school's guiding educational framework, the Portrait of a Penn Charter Learner, organizes this work around four core commitments: Courageous Learners, Compassionate Friends, Constructive Communicators, and Change Cultivators. The Upper School, in particular, has distinguished itself by moving away from Advanced Placement coursework in favor of its own rigorous advanced courses — a shift that has allowed faculty greater pedagogical creativity and has deepened student engagement through more collaborative, project-based learning. This is complemented by a Certificate Program for juniors and seniors, opportunities for independent study and global exchange, and a required service-learning component, the "A40," that embeds civic engagement directly into the Upper School experience.

It is this combination — a profound and unbroken Quaker history and dedication to ongoing revelation, a financially substantial and physically transformed campus, and an academic program willing to innovate beyond convention — that defines William Penn Charter School today, and that will shape the context in which its next Interim Head of School will lead.

# OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Interim Head of School will serve for two school years and will join a community of extraordinary depth — one with a 337-year history, a passionate and committed faculty and staff, and a student body that embodies the Quaker ideals of scholarship, service, and community. Following a period of significant leadership transition, the school has identified a set of priorities for the Interim Head of School:

## **Strengthening Trust and Community**

Penn Charter has experienced considerable leadership transition and organizational change over the past several years, creating a need for steadiness, transparency, and meaningful connection. The Interim Head will be expected to be visible and present throughout the schoolhouse, to listen carefully and authentically, to empower faculty and staff to engage deeply, and to communicate with clarity and consistency. Restoring the relationship between leadership and the broader Penn Charter community will be foundational to the work of the Interim Head of School.



## Reaffirming Quaker Identity and Values

Penn Charter's identity as a Quaker school is both its greatest distinguishing characteristic and an area in need of renewed attention. There is a strong desire for a leader with genuine fluency in Quaker values, practice, and community-building — someone who not only understands the principles of simplicity, integrity, and the recognition of the light in every person, but who models them daily. The Interim Head will be called upon to reground the school in its Quaker roots and to ensure that the culture, traditions, and practices that define Penn Charter's identity are actively stewarded during this transition.

## Navigating Financial Sustainability

The Interim Head will need to partner closely with the Board and the Chief Financial Officer to understand the sustainable financial landscape of Penn Charter, communicate honestly with constituents about challenges and shared responsibilities, and exercise sound judgment in managing resources strategically.

## Supporting Faculty and Staff

The people of Penn Charter are the school's most important asset. The Interim Head will need to prioritize meaningful engagement with faculty and staff, continue efforts to recruit and retain a talented and diverse faculty, and support and mentor a newly established senior leadership team.

## Stewarding the Transition to a Permanent Head of School

The Interim Head arrives at a pivotal moment. While the role is, by design, a period of transition, there is a strong desire for the school to move forward with purpose. Managing day-to-day operations with confidence and competence, supporting the Board and leadership team as they plan for the future, and helping the community develop a clearer sense of identity and direction will be among the Interim Head's most important priorities — work that will help make Penn Charter an attractive destination for an outstanding permanent Head. The Interim Head will support and engage the community in ways that build toward that work, ensuring that when the permanent Head arrives, they inherit a community that is focused and ready.



**\$12.1M**

financial aid  
awarded



**\$131M**

endowment



**\$48M**

annual operating  
budget



**47 acres**

in the city of Philadelphia  
campus size

# QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES



## Professional Qualifications

Penn Charter seeks an experienced and capable school leader. The strongest candidates will bring:

- Proven experience with and understanding of the full range of Head of School responsibilities, both academic and administrative, including board relations;
- A deep understanding of, and appreciation for, the joys and compelling qualities of a Quaker school;
- Experience recruiting, hiring, supporting, and retaining talented, broadly diverse, and mission-aligned faculty;
- Financial acumen, including experience managing institutional budgets and cost pressures with transparency and sound judgment, and the ability to partner effectively with a Board and finance team;
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate with inspiration and clarity, both orally and in writing; and
- The ability to articulate vision and strategy, along with the tactical skills necessary to manage the systems and processes required to implement it.



## Leadership Style and Personal Qualities

Penn Charter's community is seeking a leader of presence, warmth, and genuine engagement. The strongest candidates will demonstrate:

- The ability to empower and support faculty and build a cohesive team — a warm, welcoming, approachable, and enthusiastic approach to leadership;
- A commitment to honoring multiple perspectives in order to maintain an authentic, inclusive community;
- Alignment with Penn Charter's Quaker mission and vision;
- Honesty, trustworthiness, and transparency, with the consistent follow-through needed to rebuild and sustain the community's confidence;
- Desire to engage actively with students, parents, faculty, and staff and willingness to prioritize visibility amidst the demands of a busy professional schedule;
- Eagerness to embrace the culture, community, and lifestyle of Philadelphia and the surrounding area; and
- An ability to lead growth and continuous improvement while honoring Penn Charter's mission, culture, and Quaker values.

# LEARN MORE

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- [School Website](#)

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- [School History](#)

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

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- [School Profile](#)

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- [About Philadelphia, Pennsylvania](#)





## 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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