



ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

Start Date: July 2027

Durham Academy

Durham, North Carolina | da.org



Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES

MISSION

“to prepare each student to live a moral, happy and productive life.”

At a Glance



1933
established



1,272
enrollment



50%
students of color



283
total faculty and staff



18 years average faculty experience
10 years average faculty tenure at DA



\$5.5M
financial aid awarded



\$50M
annual operating budget



86 acres, 2 campuses
campus size



OVERVIEW

Durham Academy is an independent, all-gender day school in Durham, North Carolina, serving 1,272 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Here, a culture of continuous improvement and forward momentum makes DA the ideal environment for curious, driven, creative leaders and students. With an unapologetic commitment to purpose, joy and excellence in an inclusive community, DA's mission compels it to "prepare each student to live a moral, happy and productive life." Diversity, Equity, and Belonging (DEB) is the seedbed in which the DA experience takes root and grows. Throughout its history, Durham Academy has recognized that both personal flourishing and academic excellence require belonging and that students grow fastest toward their best selves as happy, successful learners when they feel welcomed, empowered, responsible, and safe. Diverse and caring, curious and striving, authentic and intellectual, innovative and "all-in," Durham Academy has the momentum, enthusiasm, leadership, and drive necessary to reimagine school — with a research-based, innovative approach to education.





An active, visible, and relational presence on campus, the Assistant Head of School will serve as a critical force in Durham Academy's continued forward movement and a key partner to DA's highly strategic Head of School Michael Ulku-Steiner, who has served the school as Head since July 2013. The person in this role will serve as Durham Academy's chief academic officer – providing vision, coordination, and oversight of DA's exceptional teaching and learning programs and ensuring that structures, strategies, and systems for curricular and co-curricular programs are aligned, adaptive, and consistent with current best practices. They will also collaborate with fellow Leadership Team members to ensure the day-to-day functioning of the school is efficient and strategically aligned. The Assistant Head will be a strategic leader who manages complex operations, leads through others, and fosters unity and excellence throughout the school. They will play a central role in operationalizing the school's Strategic Vision (in process) and working towards Durham Academy's bold aspirations for its second century. The Assistant Head will supervise and support direct reports including the Directors of the Preschool, Lower School, Middle School, Upper School, Extended Day, Student Support and Wellness, Digital Learning and Innovation, and the Chief of Staff (shared with Head of School).

With an understanding that more is not necessarily better, the Assistant Head will focus on the assets of time, talent, and treasure to ensure that Durham Academy preserves a sense of joyful play alongside its commitment to purpose-driven learning and improvement for all members of the Durham Academy community.

About Durham Academy's Leadership Team

Durham Academy's Leadership Team is guided by the following Core Habits:

- **Serve humbly**, remembering that teacher-student interactions remain the heart of our school
- **Strengthen our team** with honest, courageous and vulnerable communication
- **Protect** confidentiality
- **Balance**
 - transparency and trust
 - conflict and consensus
 - patient reflection with the responsibility to make timely decisions
 - active representation of our specific constituencies with the responsibility to serve Durham Academy as a whole school and community
 - the daily work of the school with our long-range goals and large-scale purpose
 - service to our many constituents and respect for personal time
- **Inspire, communicate and collaborate** - keeping our moral, happy, productive mission at the core
- **Work hard** - with dedication, optimism, generosity and joy

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In collaboration with the Head of School, division heads, and other senior leaders, the Assistant Head of School will shape the day-to-day implementation of Durham Academy's mission, vision, and strategic initiatives to advance the school's mission and achieve operational, curricular, and co-curricular goals. The Assistant Head is ultimately responsible for the supervision, evaluation, and support of all teaching faculty.

Specific responsibilities will be refined in partnership with the Head of School, evolving based on the current needs of the school, and are likely to include:

- Serving as a key thought partner to the Head of School and participating as a collaborative, curious, and engaged member of the Leadership Team
- Leading the execution of various projects and initiatives identified as part of the school's Strategic Vision (in development)
- Providing leadership and support to the Preschool, Lower School, Middle School, and Upper School Directors, as they administer the curriculum and co-curricular programs and personnel in their divisions, ensuring that structures, strategies, and systems for teaching, learning, and professional development are aligned, adaptive, and consistent with current best practices
- Nurturing a culture of listening and feedback across all constituent groups to ensure that Durham Academy's programs and priorities derive from the mission, are understood and supported throughout the entire community, and are fully communicated both internally and externally



- Working collaboratively with the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging and the Student Support and Wellness Team to construct inclusive and healthy learning environments for all students
- In partnership with Division and Department Directors and the Director of Human Resources, recruiting, hiring, and developing faculty and staff, including strengthening the evaluation program and creating a workplace culture that makes DA a destination of choice for top talent
- Building relationships and partnerships with non-profit organizations, schools, universities, research institutions, and businesses throughout the region in support of the school's mission
- Partnering with the Director of Enrollment Management, Director of Marketing & Communications, and Director of Philanthropy to support external functions of the school and with the Chief Financial Officer and Operations Officer to oversee day-to-day operations.
- Supporting the smooth functioning of the school by serving as a liaison for parent, faculty/staff, and student concerns and communication as needed
- Collaborating with the Chief of Staff to support and guide the professional learning of all faculty and staff through whole-school initiatives, individual growth plans, and the development of current and aspiring leaders across the school
- Serving as a thought leader within the community and nationally, sharing expertise and best practices, speaking and presenting on school initiatives, and helping to elevate the visibility of successes
- Engaging actively with the Board of Trustees and serving as administrative liaison to relevant Board Committees
- As necessary, representing the Head of School at internal and external meetings, presentations, and committees



QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

The Assistant Head will be an educator and community builder who has previously served in roles of considerable responsibility. Competitive candidates will have classroom experience and deep familiarity with strategic planning; faculty hiring, evaluation, and support; curriculum development; student life; and management of complex processes. The most competitive candidates will offer most or all of the following qualifications and qualities:



Professional Qualifications:

- Understanding of current best practices and innovation in curriculum, progressive pedagogy, authentic assessment (preferably including competency-based learning), and student life, ideally across multiple school divisions
- Documented history of transforming organizational practice and culture in a sustainable manner, informed by research and data, and moderated by a skillful and sensitive approach to change
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate orally and in writing with inspiration and clarity to both internal and external audiences
- 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
- An institutional perspective – seeing the school and its mission as larger than any single constituency, division or department, as both a learning community and a vital business
- Experience recruiting, hiring, supporting, retaining, and leading talented, diverse, and mission- aligned faculty, staff and senior leadership
- Personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, and belonging and the requisite skillfulness to support student and faculty growth in this area and to facilitate critical conversations in the design of ever-more inclusive curriculum and programs
- A commitment to lifelong learning



Leadership Style and Personal Qualities:

- A spirit of curiosity that fuels the pursuit of evolving best practices and current research on curriculum, pedagogy, and the future of education
- A motivated, energetic, and collaborative colleague who takes joy in team success
- A commitment to hard work and creative problem solving, while demonstrating humility and the willingness to learn from and with one's colleagues
- The ability to navigate complexity and adopt a lens of systems thinking, recognizing the interplay of internal and external systems and prioritizing and delegating as necessary
- A commitment to distributed leadership, ensuring that the student experience and school identity benefit from the full use of the talents, skills, and experience of a wide variety of professionals
- An unusually high level of professional and personal maturity that provide the courage, confidence, and humility to advocate for new ideas, invite disagreement, welcome feedback, and engage in challenging conversations with grace
- An eagerness to engage actively with the full DA community and willingness to prioritize visibility amidst the demands of a busy professional schedule
- An action orientation, including exceptional organizational skills, attention to detail, and a willingness to model and enforce high professional standards
- A willingness to lean into hard conversations when necessary, balanced with a fundamental sense of optimism and hope
- A style grounded in principles, relationships, integrity, and a radiant love of children
- An appreciation of the unique culture of Durham and the role that Durham Academy plays within the city and beyond
- A sense of humor, enthusiasm for schools, and genuine excitement for serving as an Assistant Head of School

LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)
- [School History](#)
- [Academics](#)
- [Strategic Vision 2021](#)
- [Diversity, Equity, and Belonging](#)
- [School Leadership](#)
- [Admission/Virtual Campus Tour](#)
- [School Profile](#)
- [About Durham, North Carolina](#)





TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates are invited to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter tailored to express interest in this position
- A current and comprehensive résumé

Selected candidates may also be asked to provide:

- Writing samples specific to this search
- 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)

Materials should be sent to:

CHRIS BOYLE

Consultant

chris.boyle@carneysandoe.com

MARSHA LITTLE

Senior Consultant

marsha.little@carneysandoe.com



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