



ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

Start Date: July 2027

University School of Nashville

Nashville, Tennessee | usn.org



Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES

MISSION STATEMENT

University School of Nashville models the best educational practices. In an environment that represents the cultural and ethnic composition of Metropolitan Nashville, USN fosters each student's intellectual, artistic, and athletic potential, valuing and inspiring integrity, creative expression, a love of learning, and the pursuit of excellence.

At a Glance



1,075

total enrollment



38%

students of color



132

teaching faculty



\$5.3M

financial aid awarded



21%

students receiving aid



\$54M

endowment



\$37M

annual operating budget



88 acres

across 2 campuses



OVERVIEW

University School of Nashville is a premier, progressive, all-gender K-12 school of approximately 1,100 students situated in the heart of one of the fastest-growing, most creative, and welcoming cities in the nation. Committed through the years to reflecting the cultural and ethnic diversity of metropolitan Nashville and adjacent to Vanderbilt University, a nationally renowned research university, USN has distinguished itself in cultivating a genuinely equitable and inclusive community of academic excellence. Fostering a deep sense of belonging, independence, and support for all students, faculty enable students to develop their critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and individual talents and passions. Students come first at USN; through the academic and co-curricular programs, they are encouraged to voice their opinions, pursue individual interests, and lead change-making efforts. As one faculty member says, “USN has a very warm soul.”

Founded in 1915 as Peabody Demonstration School, the school quickly established an exceptional reputation for its excellent curriculum, faculty, and early commitment to diversity. Facing a decision by Peabody College (which became part of Vanderbilt University a few years later) to close its demonstration school in 1974, a group of parents, alumni, students, and teachers formed University School of Nashville on the demonstration school campus. USN remains committed to building on the strengths of this exceptional history and reputation and continues to enjoy a close relationship with Vanderbilt University.

An active, visible, and relational presence on campus, the Assistant Head of School will serve as a critical force in University School of Nashville’s continued forward movement and a key partner to USN’s highly experienced Director (Head of School), Rob Hereford, who joined the community in July 2026. The person in this role plays a central role in the academic operations of the school, ensuring the day-to-day functioning of the school—from Kindergarten through 12th grade—is smooth, efficient, and strategically aligned. This leader will also hold specific responsibility for providing vision, coordination, and oversight as they relate to delivering the highest quality academic programming at USN, ensuring structures, strategies, and systems for curricular and co-curricular programs are aligned, adaptive, consistent with current best practices, and fully in synch with USN’s culture of curiosity and collaboration. The successful Assistant Head will be a strategic leader who manages complex operations, leads through empowering others, and fosters unity and excellence throughout the school. This is a newly configured position, and the specific direct reports and responsibilities will be shaped in close consultation between the Director and the Assistant Head.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

University School of Nashville seeks a highly relational and responsive leader who will leverage the tremendous strengths and expertise of the community and align with the school's commitment to centering the student experience. The specific work ahead is likely to include:

- Partnering with faculty, staff, and administrative colleagues to clarify USN's definition of academic excellence and operationalize that definition across departments and grades;
- In partnership with the Director, implementing FORWARD, which was shared with the community in spring 2025;
- Honoring USN's history as a demonstration school and strengthening the relationship with Vanderbilt University and other nearby universities and external partners;
- Partnering with an intellectually curious faculty to balance academic freedom and teacher individuality with increased curricular alignment and unity across divisions; and
- While preserving the strengths of USN's more informal, relationship-driven culture, identifying opportunities to clarify systems, policies, and structures, enabling employees to focus on the critical work of building relationships and delivering on the mission of the school.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Assistant Head of School will work collaboratively with all constituents at University School of Nashville to enhance the school's ability to deliver on its mission to model "the best educational practices [in] an environment that represents the cultural and ethnic composition of Metropolitan Nashville." The Assistant Head will work in close partnership with other senior leaders, serving as a thought partner to the Director, ensuring smooth day-to-day implementation of USN's educational program, and operating as a highly visible presence in the school.

Specific responsibilities and direct reports will be refined in partnership with the Director, evolving based on the current needs of the school. Responsibilities are likely to include:

- Serving as a key thought partner to the Director and participating as a collaborative, curious, and engaged member of the Leadership Team;
- Supporting, refining, and augmenting USN's excellent academic program;
- Providing leadership and support to the Lower School, Middle School, and High School Division Heads, as they administer the curricular and co-curricular programs and personnel in their division, ensuring that structures, strategies, and systems for teaching, learning, and professional development are aligned, adaptive, and consistent with current best practices;
- Supporting the smooth functioning of the school by serving as a liaison for parent, faculty, and student concerns and communication as needed;
- Working collaboratively with the Director of Diversity and Community Life, learning specialists, and counseling team to construct inclusive and healthy learning environments for all students;
- In partnership with Division Heads and Department Chairs, recruiting, hiring, and developing faculty and staff, including strengthening the evaluation program and creating a workplace culture that makes USN a destination of choice for top talent;
- Supporting and nurturing the professional community, including through planning of schoolwide professional development;
- Engaging actively with the Board of Trustees and serving as administrative liaison to Board Committees, as requested by the Director; and
- As necessary, representing the Director at internal and external meetings, presentations, and committees.

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It feels good to be a part of a place that is trying to get better all the time.

- USN teacher

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QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES



Professional Qualifications

- A deep understanding of and appreciation for the joys and compelling qualities of a multidivisional school and experience leading in a large and complex educational organization, preferably with experience that includes serving as a division head;
- Personal and professional alignment with a progressively influenced school that emphasizes student and teacher independence, voice, and personal agency;
- Experience recruiting, hiring, and supporting faculty in a broadly diverse school environment that intentionally strives to mirror the demographics of its city;
- Depth of experience necessary to shepherd the school's academic program, providing instructional leadership in partnership with division heads and continuing to build on USN's excellent academic program;
- 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 build and 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;
- Personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, 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; and
- The relationship-building skill to develop deep trust across all constituents, including students, families, faculty, and staff.



Leadership Style and Personal Qualities

- A capacity to balance a school ethos that prioritizes the agency of the individual while recognizing the importance of school-wide coherence and community;
- 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;
- Courage to make difficult decisions, upholding the highest standards of integrity; and
- A joyful countenance and desire to actively engage with students, parents, and faculty, and the willingness to prioritize presence and visibility.



LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)
- [School History](#)
- [School Profile](#)
- [FORWARD](#)
- [About Nashville, Tennessee](#)





TO APPLY

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

- A cover letter expressing interest in this position
- A current résumé

Selected candidates may be asked to provide:

- Writing samples specific to this search
- 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)

Candidates should submit a résumé and cover letter to:

MARSHA LITTLE

Senior Consultant

marsha.little@carneysandoe.com

KIM PEEPLES

Senior Consultant

kim.peeples@carneysandoe.com



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