

Position and Candidate Specification

Village Community School

Head of School

PREPARED BY:

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MISSION STATEMENT

Village Community School develops self-motivated students who value the challenging and rewarding process of learning as an integral part of life. We choose to be a diverse community where equity, creativity and critical thinking are essential to the rigorous education we provide. Our graduates are skilled and confident, able to advocate for themselves and others. They are well prepared for high school and for their futures in an increasingly complex and dynamic world.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Village Community School is strengthened and enriched by the diversity of our students, families and staff. We are committed to cultivating intellectual, social and emotional growth in an inclusive environment where diverse experiences and perspectives are essential to the rigorous education we provide.



VCS is uniquely structured to ignite and nurture a child’s passion for learning. We offer a stimulating environment that immerses children in their education. We provide the pathways and the tools that enable students to stretch to their fullest potential – academically, socially, emotionally and physically. From their first day, our students learn how to interact with and make a difference in the world around them. VCS is a vibrant, inclusive community committed to helping children develop the intellectual curiosity, foundational knowledge and self-confidence needed for a happy, successful life.

Educational Philosophy

At VCS, children are immersed in their studies. We believe classroom education is most effective when students encounter meaningful information through resonant, in-depth experiences. Such experiences enrich their understanding and better their knowledge retention. We are forward-thinking educators who incorporate the latest discoveries in cognitive science into our teaching methods and curricula. We strive to incorporate the best of traditional and progressive pedagogy. Our students are active, inquisitive learners – participating in hands-on, project-based coursework, as well as direct instruction, repetition, review and reinforcement.

Benefits of K-8 Learning Environment

The K-8 years are critically important to a child’s academic and personal development. At VCS, we devote all our resources to helping students establish an unabashed love of learning and a strong sense of self that will serve them well for a lifetime. Our environment allows students to mature socially in keeping with their chronological age, unburdened by the influence of older teenagers. VCS students retain their spontaneity and unselfconscious excitement about the learning process. They flourish emotionally as they look up to a developmentally appropriate standard that bolsters academic confidence and resilience; the K-8 model is key to instilling the skills and qualities our students need for academic success.

Academic Program

Our coursework challenges students to reach their full potential through myriad opportunities for cognitive, social, emotional and physical growth. We teach subject matter in depth, with a strong interdisciplinary focus; children gain a substantial body of knowledge along with the ability to make connections between various areas of learning. VCS students are encouraged to ask profuse and pertinent questions, to express their opinions with confidence and to turn to one another (not just the teacher) as valued sources of information and ideas. They are empowered to take intellectual risks that discipline and stretch their minds. Students begin taking standardized achievement tests in 3rd grade as one of many progress measures. Through their course of study, our students master the tools needed to become skilled readers and writers, critical thinkers and creative problem solvers, respectful leaders and enthusiastic participants. They are well prepared to succeed in high school and beyond.

Inter-Aging

Our mixed-grade Lower School classrooms span two grade levels and serve children with an age spread of 12 to 24 months. This practice allows maximum flexibility in class placement, promoting optimal social and cognitive development for each student. Mixed-grade groups offer children opportunities to experience different group dynamics and roles. This deliberate, thoughtful process ensures that all of our students are doing their best work, making new friendships and achieving intellectual and social milestones. Mixed-grade groups end as VCS students enter 5th grade.

Community

Our goal is to create a diverse and close-knit community of students in every classroom. This positive rapport engenders collaborative problem solving while enhancing students' cognitive growth and reinforcing their learning. Our school is a welcoming, respectful and caring environment, where we strive to model the skills students need to work and live together, both at school and in the world outside our walls. The greater community of New York City (and beyond) also plays an important role in a VCS education. Students participate in VCS partnerships with cultural institutions, parks and museums. Community-service projects focus and mobilize children's altruistic impulses while setting a precedent for a lifetime of civic involvement.

High School Placement

Highly selective high schools seek out VCS graduates. Our students excel in competitive environments that value their adept critical-thinking skills and confident, collaborative approach to learning. VCS helps each student find a high school that is an ideal match for their talents and aspirations. The Class of 2019 matriculated into 17 highly selective secondary schools in NYC and beyond.

Current Facilities

Village Community School's campus spans the entire block of West 10th Street between Washington and Greenwich Streets. Our school is housed in two beautiful, five-story buildings, noteworthy for their high ceilings and abundant sunlight in the classrooms and common areas. Our original building, a historic Victorian structure, is seamlessly joined with a modern addition completed in 2003. In addition to classrooms equipped with the latest technology, we offer a 20,000-volume, sky-lit library, a state-of-the-art computer lab, three well-equipped science centers, two bright, naturally-lit art studios, a woodshop, two music studios with optimal acoustics, a rooftop garden and playground, a large outdoor play yard, a gymnasium, an auditorium and a lunchroom with a full-service kitchen.

New Building

VCS is excited to be constructing a three-story addition, plus a rooftop play yard, on our beloved Greenwich Village campus building, which will provide much needed space for our expanded curriculum emphasizing experiential and collaborative learning, ensuring we will continue to offer the best educational opportunities for student success in the 21st century. Notably, the School is expanding its physical plant by approximately 25,000 square feet without expanding its enrollment, made possible by its excellent financial condition and robust endowment. The completion goal is spring 2021.

This project will also provide a wealth of learning opportunities for students to witness how an ambitious plan moves from blueprint to realization. These lessons will have extra resonance as students participate in creating an even better VCS for themselves and future generations.

AT A GLANCE

- Founded: 1970
- Grades: K-8
- Total Enrollment: 350
- Boys: 173
- Girls: 177
- Ethnic Diversity: 35%
- Accreditation: NYSAIS (2015)
- Total Full-Time Teaching Staff: 48
- Total Part-Time Teaching Staff: 6
- Total Full-Time Non-Teaching Staff: 35
- Total Part-Time Non-Teaching Staff: 5
- Annual Budget: \$16,000,000
- 2019-2020 Tuition: \$49,900
- Endowment: \$7.5 million
- Latest Annual Fund: \$1,101,000
- Annual Giving Participation: 88%
- Current Capital Campaign (VCS2020): \$10.4 million towards \$11.5 million goal
- Students Receiving Aid: 22%
- Total Aid Given: \$2,701,230

For more information, we encourage you to visit <https://www.vcsnyc.org/>.

Village Community School, a joyful and welcoming K-8 school in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York City, seeks to identify its next Head of School. S/he will step into a school with a very intentional learning philosophy, with an emphasis on intellectual curiosity, creativity, risk-taking and academic excellence. Guided by the school's Mission and Diversity Statements, the next Head will be an inspiring, student-centered educator with a visionary approach as VCS continues to advance its position as *The New York leader in K-8 Education* and prepares its students to be leaders in the global community. The Head will preserve the school's traditions and build on its extraordinary foundations. The Head will be committed to the school's focus on the strength and value of a diverse community. The Head will support a culture of lifelong learning among both students and adults, seeking to continually and creatively respond to changes in education and the greater world. S/he will inherit a highly committed and multi-talented staff; a curious, creative and diverse student body; a supportive parent community; and, a dedicated Board.

The next Head will be the successor to the late Eve Kleger, its long-serving and beloved head, and will have the support of a devoted and gifted staff and high-functioning Board. The VCS community enters this transition with optimism, and the next Head of School will arrive at a time of tremendous opportunity. The School's almost 30,000 square-foot building addition is scheduled for completion in 2021, with space dedicated to support both the manner in which students learn and VCS's continually expanding program, including new spaces for STEAM, languages and arts, and athletics. This exceptional opportunity calls for a passionate, student-centered, educational leader to join a caring and thoughtful community that continues to value a forward-thinking academic program, grounded in a K-8 educational model, with a deep commitment to a diverse and inclusive learning environment that is essential to academic excellence.

As the school's leader, the Head, in partnership with the Board, will be responsible for setting VCS's strategic priorities and advancing the school's mission. As an experienced educational leader, the Head will be responsible for the school's curriculum and overall program, enrollment and secondary school placement. As administrative officer, the Head will be responsible for the business operations of the school, leading the staff, and assuring the long-term, financial sustainability of the school through strong fiscal management and ongoing philanthropic cultivation. In addition, the Head will be the face of the school, representing the institution externally within the local and national education community, as well as in the downtown independent school community and beyond.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

The next Head of School will be an accomplished leader with a passion for education. S/he will have demonstrated ability to:

- Develop strong, authentic relationships with students, staff and parents;
- Ensure a global perspective and a commitment to all facets of diversity and inclusion in all forms;
- Motivate and inspire dedicated staff working in an academically rigorous, yet nurturing, community;

- Provide thought leadership, identifying opportunities for innovative changes to an academic program and for the future of education in this dynamic world;
- Understand the financial and operational underpinnings of running a K-8 school, including but not limited to doing so in the midst of construction;
- Foster and inspire a culture of philanthropic support from parents, alumni parents and alumni;
- Effectively collaborate with the Board of Trustees;
- Experience serving as an inspirational public face who can effectively engage and listen to a broad range of constituencies;
- Proactively identify opportunities to continue to enhance the academic program and embrace and execute innovative changes for the 21st century;
- Provide thought leadership for the future of education with a student-centered focus; and,
- Provide inspiring intellectual leadership in a vibrant, joyful and challenging academic environment.

CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

Forward-Thinking Educational Leader

At a school where creativity, intellectual curiosity, rigor and risk-taking enable all in the community to learn and grow, the next Head will:

- Be a voracious learner, strong communicator and the lead advocate in ensuring the curriculum remains forward-thinking;
- Advance the school's focus on the strength and value of a diverse community in fulfilling its educational mission, understanding that academic excellence requires diversity of all kinds;
- Be a passionate, authentic thought leader committed to maintaining high standards and academic excellence within a nurturing K-8 educational setting;
- Encourage a thoughtful and flexible pedagogy that blends the best of traditional and progressive methods;
- Demonstrate an abiding commitment to and an unwavering focus on students, supporting their intellectual, social and emotional development;
- Maintain high standards and rigor for the academic program, understanding that academic excellence requires diversity of all kinds; and,
- Engage in conversations beyond the school with other educational leaders, as well as encourage and enable the school's staff to continue to develop as teachers and learners.

Inspiring and Collaborative Community Builder

At a school whose culture is defined by its welcoming and inclusive community, the next Head will:

- Naturally build rapport and authentic relationships based on empathy and respect with all constituents at the school;
- Serve as a warm, inspiring, engaging communicator, acting as a visible, accessible and approachable leader who communicates a consistent message to all members of the community;
- Pursue opportunities to continue to diversify the school and maintain a culture with a deep commitment to inclusion; and,
- Be a caring educator, energized by the opportunity to engage directly in the life of the school, who can lead a community where all feel welcome and can thrive.

Organizational Capacity Builder

In a school with the ambition to continually evolve, the next Head will:

- Be an operator and a businessperson; a strategic, capable steward of the school's assets, with strong business acumen, smart fiscal management strategies, and the ability to lead the already ongoing expansion of facilities;

- Understand that people are the lifeblood of a school and will attract and retain talented and diverse staff who are committed to rigorous academics, innovation, and the empathetic, caring culture of the school;
- Inform, mentor and support a strong administrative team – delegating, empowering and providing support throughout their tenure for professional and personal growth;
- Encourage a transparent, inclusive culture marked by open communication; and,
- Align ambitions with resources and be prepared to cultivate and secure both annual and capital gifts to support new academic initiatives and facility enhancements.

SEARCH PROCESS

Village Community School does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, gender identification, national or ethnic origin.

The search committee is being assisted in this process by Meg Becker and Michele Haertel of Spencer Stuart. The Committee invites submission of comments, applications and nominations to the confidential mailbox, VCSHead@SpencerStuart.com.