

Position and Candidate Specification



Thayer Academy

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Head of School

PREPARED BY:

Meaghan C. Becker

Mary B. Gorman

Austin D. Crouse

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Talk to students about Thayer, and their first words are most often "I love it here." A 5-12 co-educational day school founded in 1877, the Academy is an exciting and diverse community where students are passionate about their classes, the arts, their teams, and their school. Thayer is an urban/suburban school that has always embraced opportunity and diversity, beginning with its founding class over 140 years ago, which was co-educational, rooted locally, and assembled with a tuition-free mandate to provide for an education to any who sought one. This history of diversity is reflected today with a student body hailing from more than 70 towns in Massachusetts and with a small international student population. With more than 35% of students receiving financial aid, Thayer is socio-economically diverse and looks and feels like the world beyond its doors. Many different voices, from a broad range of perspectives, contribute to Thayer's community.

Thayer Academy's mission is to inspire a diverse community of students to moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and physical excellence so that each may rise to honorable achievement and contribute to the common good. At Thayer, students at both the Middle and Upper School can expect to be challenged and stretched by all their teachers in the myriad of science, math, art, and humanities courses that are offered. With an average class size of 14, a student-faculty ratio of 6:1, and invested faculty advisors, the Academy's classrooms are collaborative spaces, guided by teachers who care deeply for their students.

At Thayer students are challenged by a student-centered curriculum in which teachers meet students where they are while also encouraging them to reach beyond what they thought was possible. Thayer is rooted in the intentionally holistic education of its students, who are viewed not solely as learners, athletes, or artists, but as whole individuals with affinities and talents in many areas. With deliberately coordinated scheduling, it is possible to be both a varsity athlete and sing on stage in the school musical. At Thayer students are not forced to choose one path or another. The resulting community at the Academy is vibrant and affirming--the culmination of students working together in the classroom, on the playing fields, and on the stage. There is a supportive and collaborative camaraderie that pervades the Academy's halls and campus--one where students view their classmates as partners, encouraging one another to discover their hidden talents and develop them into lifelong strengths.

Thayer supports a range of learners and allows them to dive deep into their passions and interests. A new Computer Science and Robotics Center in the Upper School has led to some of the highest enrollments in the sciences, and the integration of the collaborative design lab into the middle school curriculum exposes students to the various intersections between technology and the liberal arts; the Global Scholars Capstone Program and the Academy's robust international travel programs promote greater awareness of and engagement in global issues by combining interdisciplinary academic learning with application to real-world experiences; and the Hale Learning Center (HLC) provides additional support to students who face academic challenges, often rooted in language skill deficits. All in all, Thayer is a place where individuals are encouraged to try things outside of their comfort zones without needless anxieties and pressures to conform.

Following in the philanthropic footsteps of its founder, Thayer graduates are charged with positively impacting the world. Thayer's graduates are prepared to achieve success, and they go on to excel at the top universities and postgraduate schools. Thayer's alumni lead lives of distinction in all areas of society, as leading researchers, CEOs of charitable foundations and global companies, groundbreaking startup entrepreneurs, high ranking officers in the military, professional athletes, musicians, authors, media personalities, and artists. For many graduates, Thayer was the place where they first achieved their personal best, rigorously challenged in a supportive environment. Thayer continues to be a place where tradition and innovation meet. Students form lifelong relationships with one another and with inspiring teachers who care deeply about their students' personal growth and academic success.

KEY THAYER ACADEMY FACTS

- 710 students; 507 in the upper school and 198 in the middle school
- \$35m budget
- \$50m endowment
- 18% students of color
- 35% students on financial aid
- 85 sports teams, including 94 Independent School League and 79 New England sports championships
- 20% of students take part in the fall musical
- 76 cities and towns represented
- 5,800 alumni
- Located in Braintree, MA just up the hill from the MBTA's final Red Line stop

Thayer's next Head of School will inherit a talented and deeply committed faculty, an engaged and well-rounded student body, a supportive and welcoming culture, and a dedicated Board of Trustees. This is an opportunity to take a school with strong programmatic and reputational growth and raise its profile as a distinctive day school and a gem among the independent schools in the greater Boston area. With a passion for the education of the whole child, a deep commitment to students, and a track record of leadership, the next Head of School will look for opportunities to strengthen all aspects of the school. He or she will inspire Thayer graduates to moral, intellectual, and physical excellence so that each may rise to their best and care for others. A person with humility, unquestioned integrity and judgment, and a passion for learning, the head will be energized by the opportunity to lead this institution.

The Head of School is appointed by the Board of Trustees and is responsible for all aspects of the School. The Head appoints all faculty and administrative officers and oversees the School's staff. As chief educational officer, she/he is responsible for the academic and co-curricular programs in collaboration with the faculty and staff; as chief administrative officer, she/he is responsible for the operational effectiveness and for assuring the long-term financial sustainability of the school through strong fiscal management and ongoing philanthropic cultivation. The Head represents the School externally and is charged with promoting all aspects of the School.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

Academic Leadership

Accomplished and passionate independent school leader with experience motivating and inspiring dedicated faculty and staff.

Student-Centric Leadership

Has engaged effectively with adolescents on issues related to their intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development.

Financial and Operational Leadership

An understanding of the financial and operational underpinnings of a school and the levers to secure a fiscally sustainable institution, including the capacity to act as the Academy's principal fundraiser.

Partnering with Board of Trustees

An ability to collaborate effectively and transparently with the Board of Trustees.

Academic Credentials

Strong academic credentials; relevant advanced degree highly desirable.

CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

Strategic and Academic Leader

At a school in a highly competitive market, the Head of School will be eager to engage with the faculty, administrators, and the Board in discussions about the academic, athletic, arts and service programs. A curious, thoughtful educator, the Head of School will be committed to educating students in a demanding, yet supportive, college preparatory environment, and will explore ways to adapt the program to meet the evolving needs of the students. The Head of School will have a strong strategic perspective and the demonstrated ability to develop a plan, set and execute priorities, and communicate clearly. He/she will drive an analytical process that engages stakeholders appropriately, resulting in a strategy that is competitive and financially sustainable while setting clear priorities for the school.

Community Builder

In a tight-knit school community that values strong relationships, the next Head of School will be a warm and engaging educator who sets the tone for a vibrant and supportive community. The Head of School will model and communicate the high educational standards and values of the school and create an environment that enables all to thrive and contribute. A visible, accessible, and approachable leader, the Head will relish the opportunity to know the students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni making time for the informal and formal interactions that strengthen relationships. He/she will demonstrate an abiding commitment to the care and

well-being of the entire community and engender one of the school's core values, "contributing to the common good."

The successful candidate will be a compelling, persuasive spokesperson and advocate of the school to internal and external stakeholders, including prospective families and potential donors, and will take steps to increase awareness of Thayer's accomplishments as a visible and engaged member of the greater Boston community.

Operational Leadership

In a well-run school with high aspirations, the next Head will steward the school's assets (including its tremendous facilities and physical plant) with strong business acumen, a passion for excellence, and strong consideration for equity and inclusion. Understanding the importance of aligning ambitions with resources, the Head in partnership with key stakeholders will establish priorities and lead with engagement, consultation, trust, and decisiveness. The Head will act as the school's principal fundraiser, continuing to cultivate and secure both annual and capital gifts that support both the on-going school operations and strengthening the endowment. He/she will have the ability to attract, inspire, and empower a talented faculty and administrative team, in addition to supporting their on-going professional development, and will create clear organizational structures and an environment marked by a culture of teamwork where people feel challenged, valued, and nurtured. The Head of School will set high standards for all ranks of the school's personnel and will imbue all with a commitment to collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Search Process

Thayer Academy is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages individuals of all backgrounds and cultures to consider this leadership position. The Academy's commitment to inclusivity encompasses, but is not limited to, diversity in nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and disability. The Thayer Academy search committee is being assisted by Spencer Stuart in this search process. The committee welcomes comments, questions, nominations, and expressions of interest.

To contact the committee, please send an email with any supporting materials to the confidential email address below: ThayerHead@spencerstuart.com.