



BarrieSchool

Head of School

July 2027



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The Opportunity

Barrie School seeks an inspiring, strategic, and deeply relational leader to serve as its next Head of School. This is an extraordinary opportunity to lead a distinctive independent school whose progressive educational philosophy, commitment to student agency, and culture of belonging have shaped generations of students.

Located on a beautiful 45-acre campus in Silver Spring, Maryland, just outside Washington, DC, Barrie serves students from 3 months through grade 12. The school combines a Montessori foundation in its early childhood and elementary program with a progressive approach throughout the rest of the school. Across divisions, Barrie is united by a belief that students learn best when they are known well, challenged meaningfully, and given the opportunity to take ownership of their education.

The next Head will inherit a school with many significant strengths: a talented and dedicated faculty and staff, engaged families, a distinctive educational program, a diverse and inclusive community, and a strong sense of purpose. At the same time, Barrie is entering an important new chapter. The next leader will have the opportunity to build on these strengths while helping the school sharpen its strategic direction, strengthen enrollment and financial sustainability, deepen its external profile, and ensure that its educational model continues to evolve in a rapidly changing world.

Mission

Barrie School empowers individuals to expand their intellectual abilities, develop their creative talents, and discover their passions to make a positive impact in a rapidly changing world.

Values

Respect for Self, Each Other, and the Environment

Respect is foundational to our community, linking personal dignity with how we treat others and the world around us. We prioritize the well-being of every individual, foster relationships built on trust and fairness, and honor the natural and learning environments we share.

Academic Excellence

We view excellence as an ongoing pursuit, not a static event. By integrating Montessori and project-based learning, we emphasize the process of discovery over rote memorization. This approach cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving, and the essential skills for real-world success—creativity, leadership, and emotional intelligence.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

We celebrate the uniqueness of every individual and actively build a community that reflects a broad definition of diversity, including race, identity, thought, and background. Beyond non-discrimination, we strive to eliminate barriers to participation, ensuring all voices are welcomed, respected, and heard through courageous, inclusive conversation.

Active Learning

Active learning—central to both our Montessori and project-based curricula—empowers students to take ownership of their education from an early age. We embrace mistakes as opportunities for growth and reflection, fostering a lifelong confidence that allows students to apply their knowledge and skills in any context, from the classroom to the wider world.

Student Voice and Responsibility

We believe that authentic student participation is vital to a collaborative culture. By incorporating student input into decisions at all levels—from classroom rules to curriculum design—we teach students the power of their voices and the responsibility that comes with using them. This practice builds self-advocacy, leadership, and a commitment to becoming active global citizens.



About Barrie

Founded in 1932, Barrie School is an unapologetically progressive independent school. Set on a beautifully wooded campus, Barrie offers a unique educational throughline: a Montessori foundation (3 months–grade 5) that seamlessly transitions into an innovative, project-based and experiential learning curriculum (grades 6–12). In a highly collaborative culture, Barrie’s teachers curate experiences and learning paths that honor the interests, identities, and experiences of the individuals in their classes. Relationships between students and teachers are strong. The result is a two-way respect for individuality and diversity that defines the progressive Barrie culture. Students feel accepted for who they are and there is a palpable sense of collaboration in a non-competitive school environment. This commitment is exemplified by their groundbreaking Global Impact Diploma, designed to prepare students to contribute meaningfully to local and global communities. Through strong relationships and experiential rigor, Barrie ensures its students graduate as engaged, compassionate, and courageous citizens.



Quick Facts

ENROLLMENT

260 Students

67% Students of Color

45% Need-Based Financial Aid

FACULTY & STAFF

53 Teachers

16 Administrators

6:1 Student to Teacher Ratio

FINANCES

\$12M Annual Budget

\$2M Endowment

Academic Program

“Critical thought: The key to capability, courage, and confidence.”

Barrie’s educational philosophy centers on cultivating critical, independent thinkers. By employing a human-centered approach that blends early Montessori foundations with later project-based learning, teachers encourage students to explore their interests, solve problems creatively, and take ownership of their education. This active, inquiry-based model fosters the self-motivation, confidence, and resilience necessary to make a meaningful, positive impact throughout their lives.





Lower School (3 months through Grade 5)

Barrie School's Lower School offers an authentic, hands-on Montessori foundation. Focusing on the uniqueness of each child, the program provides individualized attention, a low student-to-teacher ratio, and conscientious, collaborative faculty. Their child-centered approach considers the whole student—social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development. Students experience active, self-directed learning, uninterrupted work periods, and freedom of movement to foster curiosity, self-confidence, and self-discipline.



Middle and Upper Schools (6-12)

Barrie School's Middle and Upper School (MUS) program delivers an experiential, interdisciplinary education focused on developing 21st-century skills, socioemotional growth, and critical engagement with the world. The curriculum emphasizes natural connections across disciplines. By centering diversity, equity, inclusion, and multiple perspectives, the program encourages students to challenge dominant narratives, take intellectual risks, and bridge classroom learning with real-world applications. Students actively explore concepts through collaborative projects and place-based learning, using the school's campus as an outdoor laboratory.

Projects that exemplify this educational approach:

- Algebra II students examine the economic feasibility of healthy living across income levels.
- Science students sample cores from tree species on campus to calculate forest carbon storage.
- Music students create instruments from PVC pipes to investigate the relationship between frequency and wavelength.
- Advanced chemistry students research, design, and 3D-print filters to remove lead from drinking water.



In addition Barrie's distinctive Humanities program combines English language arts, literature, history, and social sciences into a decolonized curriculum. It builds strong skills in reading, writing, research, and public speaking while teaching students to evaluate broad perspectives.

Distinctive Programs

Summer Camp

During the summer months, Barrie's 45-acre campus transforms into home for Barrie Camp, a cherished Washington, D.C. area tradition spanning over nine decades. Serving more than 1,200 campers aged 3½ to 14 each season, the eight-week summer program offers a dynamic array of experiences, including traditional Day Camp, Specialty Camps, Super Camps, and Leadership Training. Barrie Camp provides immersive outdoor discovery, athletic growth, and creative exploration in a safe, supportive environment. Beyond enriching the lives of young campers and building community connections, the camp serves as a vital institutional pillar that reinforces Barrie's lifelong commitment to experiential, active learning.



Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies

Founded in 1980, the Barrie Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies is a nationally recognized center for teacher preparation and innovative curriculum development. As one of the largest school-based Montessori training hubs in the country, the Institute offers American Montessori Society (AMS) teacher certification across instructional tracks from Infant/Toddler through Secondary levels. Educating instructors from around the globe, the Institute plays an integral role in shaping progressive educational practices while maintaining deep ties to Barrie's own faculty. Virtually all Lower School educators are affiliated with or trained through the Institute, ensuring unmatched pedagogical excellence and institutional coherence throughout the school's foundational learning environment.



Global Impact Diploma

Barrie School is the first in the U.S. to offer the full Global Impact Diploma (GID), an innovative, internationally recognized pathway that empowers students to create meaningful global change. The GID blends a rigorous academic foundation with personalized learning pathways, leadership development, and real-world impact experiences like internships and community partnerships. Guided by six core competencies—Drive, Impact Design, Collaborative Impact, Empathetic Impact, Reflection, and Communication—the program fosters student agency, well-being, and resilience. By bridging classroom knowledge with real-world application, the GID ensures graduates are not only prepared for postsecondary success but are equipped to navigate an unpredictable future with confidence and purpose. This commitment reflects Barrie's long-standing dedication to student-centered education, meeting both the individual learner and the demands of a changing world.



Priorities for the next Head of School



1. Financial Sustainability and Operations

- **Financial Health & Sustainability:** Continue momentum toward long-term operational balance and fiscal strength.
- **Operational & Staffing Alignment:** Optimize organizational structures and staffing allocation to support high-quality educational programming efficiently.
- **Financial Governance & Oversight:** Within existing systems, streamline workflows for efficiency, evaluate current reports for effectiveness and gaps.

2. Enrollment and Student Retention

- **Strengthen Retention Pathways:** Enhance student retention across key transition points, particularly surrounding kindergarten entry and middle-to-upper school transitions.
- **Value Proposition & Marketing:** Clearly articulate Barrie's distinctive progressive identity and value proposition in a competitive independent school market.
- **Sustainable Enrollment Model:** Develop strategic admissions initiatives to attract and maintain a balanced, healthy student body composition.

Priorities for the next Head of School

3. Philanthropy & Constituent Engagement

- **Expand Advancement Efforts:** Invigorate annual giving initiatives and grow the school's endowment to secure long-term institutional flexibility.
- **Donor Cultivation & Stewardship:** Build meaningful, long-term relationships with key donors, alumni, and philanthropic partners.
- **Strategic Capital Growth:** Lead development efforts that generate sustainable capital and ongoing operational support for school initiatives.

5. Leadership Stability & Team Building

- **Leadership Continuity & Mentorship:** Support, mentor, and cultivate a stable, highly collaborative administrative team.
- **Cross-Divisional Unity:** Foster strong communication and alignment across the Lower School, Middle/Upper School, Camp, and Administrative teams.
- **Governance Partnership:** Partner effectively with the Board of Trustees to advance strategic vision and institutional goals.

4. Curricular Throughline & Academic Program Identity

- **Seamless Educational Continuum:** Articulate a cohesive educational arc that connects the early Montessori foundation to the project-based Middle/Upper School and the Global Impact Diploma.
- **Academic Rigor & Experiential Learning:** Preserve hands-on, place-based pedagogy while effectively communicating student outcomes and academic excellence to families.
- **Programmatic Momentum:** Champion and refine signature initiatives, such as the Global Impact Diploma, across all school divisions.

6. Community Engagement and Visibility

- **Active Campus Presence:** Serve as an accessible, visible, and engaging presence on campus with students, faculty, and families.
- **Transparent Communication:** Maintain clear and open communication regarding school priorities, decision-making, and long-term planning.
- **Inclusive Culture:** Deepen engagement with diverse constituencies to ensure a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive community.

Candidate Attributes & Experiences



1. Financial Acumen & Fundraising Expertise

- **Business & Fiscal Competency:** Demonstrated experience managing school finances, understanding complex budgets, addressing deficits, and creating sustainable operating systems.
- **Proactive Fundraiser:** Skilled and confident in philanthropy, advancement, and donor cultivation, with the ability to serve as the chief fundraiser for the school.
- **Development & Enrollment Strategy:** Proven track record in growing enrollment, marketing the school's value proposition, and expanding community outreach.

2. Deep Understanding of Barrie's Educational Philosophy

- **Montessori & Progressive Education Knowledge:** Strong grounding in, or commitment to, Montessori principles and progressive PreK–12 education.
- **Support for Key Initiatives:** Enthusiasm for preserving core programs while championing and integrating new offerings like the Global Impact Diploma (GID).
- **Respect for Autonomy & Expertise:** A leader who trusts educators, avoids micromanagement, and empowers staff to innovate within their roles.

Candidate Attributes & Experiences



3. Authentic, Charismatic, and Empathetic Leadership

- **Approachable & Present:** Highly visible presence across lower, middle, and upper schools and engages warmly with students, faculty, staff, and parents.
- **Charismatic Effective Communicator:** Strong public speaking and listening skills; able to articulate a clear, compelling vision of Barrie—both internally and externally—with warmth, transparency, and clarity.
- **Empathetic & Culturally Competent:** Grounded, self-aware, and experienced in diverse, inclusive environments; understands the multicultural nature of the Barrie community.

4. Strategic Vision with Decisiveness & Courage

- **Decisive & Courageous:** Comfortable making tough, necessary decisions (such as budget adjustments or operational changes) while listening before leading.
- **Long-Term Commitment:** Willing to make a multi-year commitment.
- **Strategic Thinker:** Able to see the big picture, handle challenging situations, and communicate effectively with the Board of Trustees and major donors.

5. Community Unifier & Servant Leader

- **Bridge Builder:** A unifier who can bridge the gap between Lower and Middle/Upper School divisions to foster a cohesive "One School" identity.
- **Morale Booster:** An inspiring "cheerleader" who builds trust, boosts morale, and expresses genuine appreciation for the staff and faculty.
- **Hands-on / "Roll Up the Sleeves" Attitude:** A relatable, down-to-earth leader with a "DIY" mindset who is willing to get involved directly in school life.

Application Process and Search Calendar

Application Process

Barrie School's next Head of School will begin on July 1, 2027. The Board of Trustees has appointed a search committee to conduct the search and has engaged the national executive search firm, [Educational Directions](#), to assist the committee.

Please direct all inquiries and nominations in confidence to: Jay Underwood at jay.underwood@edudx.com, Highley Thompson at highley.thompson@edudx.com, and Rachael Beare at rachael.beare@edudx.com.

Interested individuals should speak with the consultants and email a resume *before* submitting other materials. Prospective candidates must contact the consultants and share a resume at least seven days prior to the deadline below in order to be considered as a candidate in this search.

After an initial conversation with the consultants, applicants should submit the following documents, in the following order, in a single PDF via email:

- A letter addressed to Members of the Search Committee explaining their interest in becoming the next Head of Barrie School
- A resume detailing current and previous roles and accomplishments
- A statement of educational leadership philosophy
- The names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers of five references with an explanation of their relationship to the candidate

Search Calendar

November 15

Application Deadline

December 12 & 13

Semifinalist Interviews (in person)

January 7-15, 2027

Finalist interviews (on site, 2 days)

References will not be contacted without the prior agreement of the candidate, and finalists will be expected to furnish five additional references.

The salary range for this position is \$275,000-\$310,000. A competitive benefit package including medical, dental, vacation and sick leave, paid holidays, and retirement contributions. Housing is also provided as part of the compensation package. Eligibility requirements and waiting periods may apply.

Barrie School is an Equal Opportunity employer and seeks qualified candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds and identities.