



DIRECTOR OF LOWER SCHOOL  
July 1, 2012

BUCKINGHAM BROWNE & NICHOLS  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

## HISTORY and MISSION

Buckingham Browne & Nichols, a coeducational, Beginners – Grade 12, day school in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was established in 1974 by the merger of two independent schools, the Buckingham School and the Browne & Nichols School, founded respectively in 1889 and 1883. BB&N is an extraordinarily strong school, known for academic breadth and depth, excellent arts and athletics programs, and a diverse and highly engaged community. The school fosters intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and deep concern and respect for others. The educational program, coordinated throughout the grades, provides a rigorous core curriculum, taught in flexible and innovative ways. The connections between faculty and students are at the heart of the School. BB&N asks members of the community to be engaged learners, compassionate individuals, and productive citizens who live our School's motto: "Honor, Scholarship, and Kindness".

*BB&N's mission is to promote scholarship, integrity, and kindness in diverse, curious, and motivated students. The School prepares students for lives of principled engagement in their communities and the world.*



## SCHOOL CULTURE

BB&N reflects the larger Cambridge and Boston communities, and the school attracts students from over 40 cities and towns around Boston. Honesty, intellect, diversity, and compassion are valued; debate, discourse, and creativity are encouraged. The school is intellectually rigorous, socially inclusive, and morally and ethically centered. While the separate campuses create unique identities for the three divisions of the school, BB&N is indisputably one institution with a common set of values and a single mission.



The BB&N Lower School is inclusive and diverse and supports the intellectual inquiry and development of both its students and faculty. The school's culture encourages exploration in a nurturing, warm, and close-knit setting. The adults in the Lower School community know every child and the community is safe, comfortable, and accommodating. Children are treated with intelligence, compassion, and humor and supported in their intellectual, artistic, and physical development as well as in their social and emotional lives.

## CAMPUS

The Lower School is located on the former Buckingham School campus on Buckingham Street in Cambridge. The eight separate buildings range from the original brick school building, to converted homes that house the library, art studios, classrooms, and offices, to a Science and Technology Center. As with the other two campuses, the setting is urban but residential. There



are three distinct academic clusters supplemented by art, music, technology, and physical education facilities. The Beginners, Kindergarten and Grade One are housed in the Morse building. Grades Two, Three, and Four are housed in their own new wing of the original building, and grades Five and Six are in the original brick school building. There is a gymnasium, library, performance space, and an artificial-turf playing field.

## COMMUNITY OF THE SCHOOL

### Students

The 340 BB&N Lower School students come from a wide variety of geographic, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Nearly 30 percent are minorities (US Census standards) and many are siblings of older students. While the school screens all applicants, siblings and alumni children are given preference. Most of the Lower School students enter BB&N in the Beginners class in one of the two sections that are maintained until grade Six when another full section is admitted.

### Faculty

The 50+ faculty members are committed to their students and the school. They are collaborative and warm and take great pride in their work and success. The Lower School faculty is well trained, stable, and a good mix of veteran and relatively new teachers is represented. They exhibit Classes are relatively self-contained up through the Fourth grade with specialist offerings in foreign language, science, art, music, physical education, and woodshop. Grades Five and Six are more departmentalized, a pattern that continues in the Middle School, which is located a few blocks away. The school has a long-standing relationship with the Lesley University Graduate Teaching program and many classrooms enjoy the benefit of interns who work closely with the core teachers.



### Administration

In this leadership transition, the next Director, in conjunction with Rebecca Upham, Head of School, will have the chance to redefine the administrative structure of the division. In addition to the Director, there has been one Curriculum Coordinator and three Cluster Leaders, one for each academic building. This structure is under review and the next Director's input and proclivities will have significant influence on how the division is lead and managed and offers a significant opportunity to shape its overall direction. The Lower School Director reports directly to the Head of School and also serves on the Administrative Council. There is an admissions officer who works exclusively with Lower School applicants, a Director of After School Program, a consulting psychologist, lower school nurse, and two administrative assistants. Each of the three academic buildings has a Cluster Coordinator who is in charge of logistical issues unique to that part of the complex.

### Parents

The parents form an integral part of the BB&N experience. Parents are respected and valued and they are expected to participate in the life of the school. There is an active Parents' Association, organized via academic classes and the three divisions. A sense of partnership is important at BB&N and the parents are very involved – though appropriately so – in their children's school. There are several committees on which parents serve that help meet the needs of families of diversity and those of color at BB&N.

## PROGRAM

The academic program in the BB&N Lower School is modern, developmental, and comprehensive. The aim of the program is to provide a solid foundation of skills for students. The academic core subjects are stressed including language skills, writing, math, social studies, and science. Most classes are divided in half for math, with both grade-level teachers and math specialists working with students. The approach to reading can best be described as eclectic,



with a healthy mix of phonics, literature, and whole-language combined to meet the needs of individual students. The science program is highly experiential and “hands on”, as is appropriate for the age level of the students.

The curriculum is integrated and students draw, act, write, and sing about that which they learn. Multi-cultural themes are stressed in the Lower School and reinforced in the arts and reading classes. The program has a deliberate balance of academics,

athletics, and the arts and, therefore, focuses on development of the “whole child”. There are specialists who assist with math, reading, technology, and language resources who complement the core program. Science is an important part of the BB&N program and an experiential and hands-on approach is used. Specialists also work in foreign language, art, music, drama, and shop.

BB&N is duly proud of the sense of community throughout the school. This is reinforced by the inclusive and active stance that the school has taken. Internally, many Lower School students begin the day by gathering in a circle and end the day shaking hands with their teacher. The school builds close relationships within classes via active learning exercises and experiential

education including outdoor and community education programs. The opportunities for bringing the school together, as a whole or in smaller groups, are plentiful. The Lower School is active in the greater Boston community and utilizes the resources of the many local museums, universities, libraries, and cultural and historical institutions. BB&N emphasizes “learning from the landscape”.





The academic demands of the Lower School program are significant and, by the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, students are well prepared for the increased challenges of Middle and Upper School. Virtually all the Lower School matriculates to grade seven at BB&N.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The next Director of the Lower School should be the undisputed expert on elementary education at the school – as well as effective administrator and key player on the Administrative Council, representing the interests of the Lower School to the Head of School and to colleagues throughout BB&N. He/she will be asked to deal effectively with parents, faculty, and students and to manage a number of challenges at the school.



### Administrative

The Director must be an adept administrator and able to:

- Deal with the wide age range (4 – 12) of students and the needs they present
- Organize, delegate, and/or subdivide the administrative load via a plan that will meet the needs of the Lower School students
- Continue to lead, inspire, evaluate and manage the faculty
- Approach scheduling with creativity and fairness to all but with the best interests of the students uppermost in his/her mind
- Represent the Lower School's interests to the whole school
- Create a sense of team-work among parents, faculty, and administration
- Deal with the administrative details of a large division in a large school
- Maintain a warm and collegial faculty culture
- Guide the development and articulation of a philosophy that will unify the Lower School program

## Educational and Program

The next Lower School Director will be the educational leader of the division and should:

- Be expert and experienced in faculty leadership and evaluation
- Ensure that students are both appropriately supported and challenged
- Deal with the issues that a very strong, competitive college-preparatory program raises in a developmentally oriented Lower School
- Unite the Lower School faculty and create a sense of community among them
- Help the Lower School sort out the scheduling and time-allocation issues that are inherent in an enriched curriculum
- Continue the work of creating a coherent scope of sequence of the curriculum
- Lead and educate the committed and high-powered parents in the Lower School



## Strategic

The Lower School Director needs to be sensitive to the BB&N culture and to be strong enough to:

- Encourage the nurturing, inclusive atmosphere while being an effective manager and confident leader
- Make clear, guided decisions with tact and back them up with logic
- Be comfortable with and continue to encourage participation and dialogue
- Be decisive in a culture of consensus
- Be comfortable and secure in a high-powered environment
- Be able to both adapt to and help to shape the BB&N culture



## THE CANDIDATE

### Professional Qualifications

The successful candidate will:

- Have strong experience elementary teaching and in leading elementary teachers
- Be a highly effective communicator, both in person and in writing
- Be a persuasive and authoritative advocate for elementary education
- Have a record of effectively leading changes in a school setting
- Possess a demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion
- Have a record of timely response and follow-through to parents and faculty
- Be well-versed in child development
- Be an experienced practitioner grounded in research and theory
- Demonstrate and share a national vision and outreach
- Be a strong and experienced Lower School administrator and manager
- Have a sense of presence that inspires confidence
- Be visible and accessible
- Have connected with his/her current faculty
- Be able to maintain and reinforce collaborative faculty culture
- Be accessible to and make connections with the BB&N parents
- Promote and support both faculty and parent education
- Be able to support faculty while also holding them accountable
- Come to know every child

### Personal Qualities

The next Director should be someone who:

- Has a fine sense of humor
- Possesses great personal warmth
- Is energetic, dynamic and responsive
- Is comfortable with the Cambridge community
- Shows balance in his/her personal and professional life
- Is bright, thoughtful, and wise
- Can be both assertive and diplomatic
- Knows how to follow through
- Is articulate and well-spoken
- Is secure, strong, and fair
- Possesses unquestioned personal integrity

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Resumes, complete with a cover letter, list of references, and statement of educational philosophy should be sent electronically to:

### Clay V. Stites

Resource Group 175

508-636-4984

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