



**HEAD OF SCHOOL**  
**July 1, 2012**

**FRIENDS SCHOOL OF WILMINGTON**  
**Wilmington, North Carolina**

**HISTORY AND MISSION**

Members of the Wilmington Friends Meeting founded the Friends School of Wilmington in 1994. Originally only a middle school of less than 50 students, FSW quickly grew to include students from 18 months to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and today enrolls 180 students on two campuses. In less than 20 years, the school has grown into one of the leading independent schools in the Wilmington area, offering a strong academic program in a Quaker context. FSW is committed to relevant, challenging, and engaging education and has created an extraordinary school environment based on respect for the individual and a love of learning.

While the school no longer has any formal connection to the Meeting, it is infused with Quaker values and traditions, as reflected in the school's mission and vision statements:

**Mission:** We prepare independent thinkers in the Quaker tradition for a global, knowledge-based future.

**Vision: Empowering the next generation for global good.**

*Friends School is committed to educating each student intellectually, aesthetically, physically, and spiritually in a culturally diverse community. Guided by the Quaker principles of truth, simplicity, and peaceful resolution of conflict, Friends School offers each student a challenging education that develops intellectual abilities and ethical and social values to support a productive life of leadership and service.*

## SETTING AND CAMPUSES

Wilmington, in New Hanover County, is one of the Atlantic Coast's most attractive and vibrant cities, known for its recreational opportunities and great natural beauty. The city is situated between the Cape Fear River and the Atlantic Ocean. Beaches, boating, fishing, golf courses and cultural arts centers abound in the area, as do a number of coastal communities that are known for the quality of life and agreeable climate. The greater Wilmington area is enriched by workers – for GE and Corning, among others – and retirees from all across the U.S. In addition, the city has a university campus, UNC Wilmington (15,000 students) and Cape Fear Community College (7,500 students). New Hanover Regional Medical Center and Cape Fear Hospital provide first-rate medical services. A diverse group of religious organizations provide fellowship, outreach, and assistance programs to the region.



The two FSW campuses are about 3 miles apart. The larger Peiffer Avenue campus is comprised of 4 modern buildings that house grades 3 – 8 and the main administrative offices. There are playing fields, basketball hoops, open space, and an attractive “Garden House”, an adjacent residence used for a variety of purposes, includes an outdoor performance area on this campus. The Pine Grove Campus is closer to the center of Wilmington and near the University area. The campus was a former pre-school purchased by FSW and it now houses students from 18 months through grade 2. There are playgrounds and outdoor areas appropriate for younger children.

## COMMUNITY OF THE SCHOOL

### Faculty and Staff

The FSW faculty and staff members are extraordinarily committed and loyal to the Quaker mission of the school. They love the values that the school teaches and the experiences afforded the students. They participate in a great number of activities that extend beyond the classroom including field trips, camping, and community service, all activities that complement the core mission of FSW. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds and represent a healthy blend of experience and newcomers. Two current members of the faculty and staff are Quakers.

### Parents

Parents at FSW are involved in a variety of activities, including volunteer work organized via the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), parent/teacher workdays, Annual Appeal, and others. The PTO strongly encourages volunteer help from all FSW families. The parents are welcome at the school and feel that they are an integral part of the community. Parents serve on the Board of Trustees, board committees, and on special or ad hoc committees that are organized from time to time. The parents are largely professionals, with many affiliated with the university and others working in the downtown area of Wilmington.

## Students

The FSW students are extraordinarily open, confident, and self-assured. They are used to participating in classroom organization, rule setting, and their own daily organization and planning. This begins in the Montessori program at the earliest grades. Engagement with their classes, teachers, and one another is the key to the quality of their work at FSW. As in many Friends schools, the students call their teachers by their first names. Graduates attend a wide variety of schools, independent, public and parochial and report great success at the secondary level.

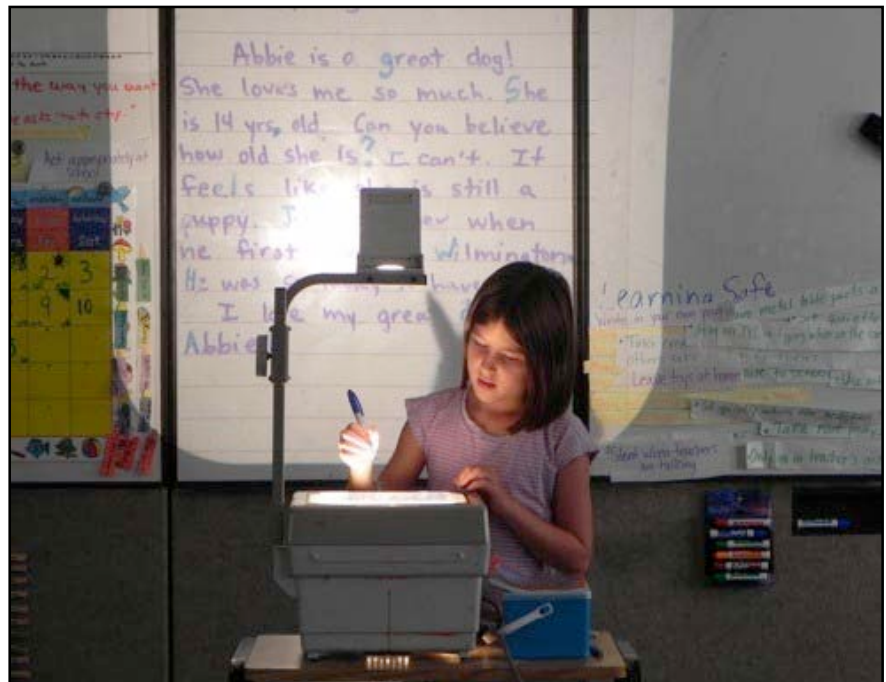


## Administration

In addition to the Head of School, there is a full-time Business Manager, part-time Development Director, full-time Admissions-Marketing Director, and an Elementary Division Head who has significant teaching responsibilities at the Pine Grove Campus. FSW has recently hired a full-time Curriculum Director, based on the Peiffer Campus, who will work on the International Baccalaureate application process and the overall scope and sequence of the program.

## Board

The FSW board currently consists of 15 members who are elected for two successive three-year terms. Ten of the board members are current parents, one is a past parent, and four are friends of the school. Three of these friends are members of the Wilmington Monthly Meeting and are relatively recent additions to the board. Their membership is, in part, in response to recommendations made by the Friends Council on Education regarding increased Quaker presence at the school. Board committees included those usually found in independent schools with the addition of a Quaker Life committee.



## PROGRAM

The academic program at FSW is balanced between the mastery of discrete skills and an inquiry driven approach framed through the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Science and Humanities are at the core of the Inquiry program, with Mathematics and Language Arts classroom instruction following parallel strands and integrated within the IB units of study. Relevant themes in Science and Social Studies provide inquiry topics for the classrooms and work around those themes define the students' experiences. In Math and Language Arts, skills are stressed with problem solving and critical thinking at the forefront in Math and literature, writing, and clear expression stressed in Language Arts. The academic program is enriched via the study of Spanish, Visual Arts, Music/Drama and Physical Education at all grade levels. There are support services for students who demonstrate learning differences.

The early grades, those up to kindergarten, are an integration of IB and Montessori-based, an approach that fits the inquiry-based upper grades very well. Students learn to organize their time and pursue interests in depth throughout the FSW school years. The school has begun the application to become an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, using both the Middle Years Program (MYP) and Primary Years Program



(PYP). The program is well known and recognized throughout the world and FSW is the only school in the Wilmington area, public or independent, which is using this approach. The Curriculum Director is well versed in IB training and pedagogy and is leading the faculty through the early phases of the work. The IB program is highly compatible with both the Friends belief in the Inner Light and worth of each individual and with the inquiry based approach that has distinguished the school since its founding.

An equally powerful and unique aspect of the FSW program is the "Social Curriculum." Parents speak glowingly of the development of character, moral and ethical awareness, and of the whole child. Meeting for Worship is a regular part of the school's activities and the Quaker values are manifest in the school community. FSW has a long history of off-campus work with students, both in community service, and in experiential education and these form a critical part of the social curriculum.

For more information and details about the program, visit [www.fsow.org](http://www.fsow.org).

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Quaker Identity

As a Friends school, FSW has worked hard to remain true to the tenets and traditions of Quaker education. The out-going Head is a birthright Friend who has been part of the school for 15 years. Three Friends have recently joined the Board, however there are no practicing Friends among the parent body and only two on the faculty and staff. As one board member put it, "It's hard to be a Friends school with so few Quakers." In short, the school's Quaker identity needs to be continued and the next Head's connections to, empathy with, and understanding of Friends practice will be an important component of his/her leadership moving forward.

### Enrollment

Through careful management, FSW has maintained a strong financial position and has operated with balanced budgets for a number of years. However, as with many independent schools, the challenge of maintaining a full enrollment is ever present. The rate of attrition in the past few years has been higher than the school would like. Many families have enrolled their children in the Montessori pre-school and then moved students to public schools. The school's visibility in the community needs to be increased and the next Head will work with the board to market and position FSW in greater Wilmington.

### Program Identity

There is a sense that FSW has a great deal on its programmatic plate: it is a Friends school, an inquiry-based school with Montessori roots and programs, and is now set to become an IB school. This has created some questions about precedence and priorities. FSW needs some vision and clarity in discerning how these compatible but complex philosophical strands weave together to form the identity of the school as it moves forward.

### Diversity

There is an unquestioned commitment to diversity among all those who work at and attend Friends School of Wilmington. This is certainly commensurate with Quaker values, history, and tradition. There have been significant efforts in outreach to the community via an evening ESL program and visible participation in a variety of community events in Wilmington. The school also has a scholars program in the middle school that attracts academically strong students. The number of students of color has increased over the years, however compared to other Friends schools and the composition of the community, the number is relatively low and greater efforts need to be made to recruit a diverse faculty, administration, and board.



## THE CANDIDATE

Above all, the successful candidate needs to understand Friends practice. He/she may or may not be a practicing Quaker but must be comfortable and familiar with Friends schools. In addition, his/her professional background and experience should include:

- Teaching and administrative experience at the elementary or middle school level
- Faculty leadership in areas of program development and evaluation, including programs aligned with inquiry-based and/or IB practices
- Educational leadership in his/her community
- An appreciation for an intimate and close school community
- Knowledge of best practices in teaching and school administration
- Evidence of close relationships with students and their families
- Ability to articulate an academic vision
- A gentle but firm leadership style
- Evidence of strong communication skills
- Strong professional character and integrity
- Familiarity with independent school finance and fund-raising

The candidate should possess the personal strength and integrity to lead the Friends School of Wilmington community. These qualities include:

- A love of children
- Warm sense of humor
- A strong spiritual side and the ability to see the Light in each person
- Extraordinary listening skills
- Intellectual energy and stamina
- Thoughtfulness and kindness
- Personal integrity and honesty
- A strong sense of fairness
- The ability to write and speak articulately
- Spontaneity and humility
- A willingness to be a “hands on” leader

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested candidates should send a cover letter, resume, and statement of educational philosophy to:

Clay V. Stites  
Resource Group 175  
Box 104  
Dartmouth, MA 02714  
508-636-4984  
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