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HEAD OF SCHOOL

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**HOOSAC SCHOOL
Hoosick, New York**

THE SCHOOL

Hoosac School is a small school with long history and deep traditions. It was founded in 1889 by Dr. Edward Dudley Tibbits as an Episcopal Church school for boys and operated on land owned by his family. Dr. Tibbits' two core beliefs were that the school should strive to educate the whole student – academically, athletically, socially, and spiritually – and that the school should remain of such a size that every student would receive full care and attention. His vision was so compelling that Father Sill, the revered founder of the Kent School in Kent, CT, left Hoosac in 1906 to start another school modeled after Hoosac.

Hoosac is now a coeducational, college preparatory school enrolling boarders and a small number of day students in Forms II-VI (Grades 8-12) and a postgraduate program. It is located in Hoosick, NY, a hamlet of 350 residents in the Hudson Valley near the borders of Massachusetts and Vermont. Bennington and Williams Colleges are within a 20-minute drive, and Albany and Troy are 45 minutes away.

Its student body of 115 students includes approximately 110 boarding students from 12 states and 8 different countries, and 5 day students from its surrounding communities. The school's size and cultural diversity provide a supportive environment to help students develop intellectually, physically, socially, and morally. In addition to the strong core curriculum designed to prepare students for college, there is a range of electives, challenging AP and honors courses, and one-on-one tutorial services. The school's talented and dedicated faculty teach, coach, serve as advisors and dorm parents, and demonstrate an abiding commitment to helping students develop both academically and personally.

THE SCHOOL'S MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

Today, the school's essential mission remains true to Dr. Tibbits' philosophy: to develop the character, spirit, mind, and body of its students, to foster independence and self discipline, and to motivate them to develop to their full potential for success in college and for full, productive, and intelligent lives. The school retains its ties to the Episcopal Church through the daily chapel program while welcoming young men and women from many religious backgrounds.

Hoosac seeks to set and maintain high standards of literacy and competency in all its academic and extracurricular fields while recognizing that each individual has unique abilities, hopes, dreams, and drives. It defines its educational advantage as its ability, throughout the school, to establish and encourage an intensive competition between the student that is, and the student that might be. This education of the individual, this recognition of the importance of discovering and developing the unique best each student has to offer, represents the highest goal of a Hoosac School education and leads to more success in a student's preparation--not only for college but for life--than any other approach.

HISTORICAL NOTES OF INTEREST

Dr. Tibbits' mansion, built in 1860 and pictured here, is the school's main administration building. Legend acknowledges haunting by a friendly ghost, and the mansion has a tunnel leading beneath the campus down to the Hoosic River. It was sealed at both ends in 1952. The tunnel is rumored to have been used as an escape route when the Tibbits estate was a stop on the Underground Railroad.



Grandma Moses, the American painter, lived nearby and was a friend to the school. She asked Dr. Tibbits to perform her daughter's marriage ceremony.

Tibbits Hall

The school's Annual Boar's Head and Yule Log Celebration, done first on the grounds in 1866, came to fruition at school in 1890. It was the first complete presentation done in America, it continues to this day, and it is now copied nationwide.

The Tibbits family claims that Thomas Edison got the idea for his incandescent light bulb from George Mortimer Tibbits, the founder's grandfather.

SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

Enrollment	115
Teaching Staff	17 full-time and 1 part-time
Hold Advanced Degrees	9
Student to Teacher Ratio	Approximately 6 to 1
Campus	15 buildings on approximately 350 acres
Operating Budget FY 10 Projected	\$3.5 million
Aid FY 10	\$525,000 to 31 students, average: \$17,000
Annual Giving FY 10 Projected	\$300,000
Special Capital FY 10 Projected	\$100,000
Tuition	\$31,300 boarding; \$15,300 day
Special Fees	\$3,500 ESL; \$7,000 OASIS
Endowment	\$1.5 million
Memberships	NAIS, NYSAIS, SSATB, Middles States Association of Colleges & Schools, New York State Board of Regents, National Association of Episcopal Schools
Website	www.hoosac.com

COMMUNITY OF THE SCHOOL

When asked to identify the school's enduring strengths, constituents use remarkably consistent language. First and foremost are the small classes, individual attention, and professional, but deeply caring and personal relationships established among faculty and students. Virtually all use the word "family" to describe the school's culture, even though the school's majority of international students clearly define Hoosac as a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and truly global family. Choosing deliberately to be a small school allows faculty and students alike to use and value every talent, large or small.

Adults cite a very good "safety net" for students and believe that Hoosac is special in its ability to get students into activities they'd never have imagined they could do, and bringing them out in ways they'd not have imagined possible. Key to these qualities is the safety the students feel in trying out new activities, even if they struggle at first. One faculty member said simply, "The school is a jewel."

Traditions are important at Hoosac and play an important role even for international students whose own cultural traditions may be very different. All students participate in daily chapel that while ecumenical, is clearly based in the Episcopal tradition. In December, the school orchestrates the Annual Boar's Head and Yule Log Celebration, a major event not just for the school, but for the entire region. All students participate in a work program as part of taking care of the school and each other, and dress attire for classes dignifies the importance of academic achievement as serious work.

STUDENTS

Enrollment has recently been as high as 125, and has generally averaged around 110. There is agreement that the size that “works best” is in the range of 110 to 115. Fall of '09 enrollment stands at 115. There are 110 boarders and 5-day students, 82 boys and 33 girls, and 77 international students. Fifteen of those are Canadian, and the majority of the rest are Asian students from Korea and China. Classes start small and get bigger. There are 3 students in the 8th grade; there are 37 seniors, three of whom are PGs. There are typically 40 to 50 new students enrolling each fall.

There are three student groups that are of note not just for their differing needs, but also for the school's remarkable ability to meld them together harmoniously. There are the international students, many of whom use the school's ESL (English as a Second Language) instructional services. There are at least 8 students who, in addition to their core academic work, take advantage of the school's one-on-one learning skills program, OASIS (Open Access Skills Improvement Site). Then there are students who benefit from the traditional college prep program, without any ESL instruction or learning support.



The school is well-known and highly regarded within the community of domestic and international educational consultants, whose referrals account for a substantial proportion of the boarding population. Hoosac will normally not admit students known to need therapeutic services, but it is both appreciated and praised for its ability to give bright but underperforming students a fresh new start.

The school appears to enjoy favorable word-of-mouth PR that sustains two student groups in particular: international students in general, and then specifically, Canadian students, who come to Hoosac on the strength of its hockey program. Even without the luxury of a home rink, the team plays over 30 games a season, in almost every case taking on teams from much larger schools. The team's success and stature in the independent school hockey world is a source of great school pride and spirit.

Students are quick to describe their school community as a big, happy family both socially and academically. They appreciate teachers who are interested, interesting, kind, and hard-working. Friendships are formed across grade levels as well as across cultures. When asked about things they wish were different, students express a desire for more course choices, especially at the AP level. They are also aware that in their small school there must be trade-offs, and when there was offered the idea that the school should be bigger, there often was the qualifier, “but let's be sure we keep our small school benefits and traditions!”

PARENTS (DAY)

Day parents are effusive in praising the school for its challenging academics and creating a climate that fosters the development of self-confidence. "They teach to mastery and nobody hides," said one. Discipline is reported to be fast and fair. Parents of day students wish their children had more day peers, but understand that the school's very rural location, far from any major town center, makes this difficult.

FACULTY

Faculty are consistently described as highly experienced, deeply committed, and very stable. There is a sizable core group who have been at Hoosac for many years, who have seen the school through earlier good times and lean times, and who epitomize the venerable notion of the "triple threat" teacher-coach-dorm master. Three of these veterans are Hoosac alumni. In addition to this seasoned group, there is also a younger cadre who bring new energy and perspectives to their work. Twelve faculty live in the school's nine dormitories, and faculty members who live off campus are worked into rotation duties to provide some measure of relief to resident dorm parents.

In general, there is genuine faculty enthusiasm for the school's ability to meet the needs of the students in a manner consistent with the school's stated mission. Several areas were repeatedly identified, however, as needing attention in the years ahead and are included in the "Challenges and Opportunities" section of this document.

ADMINISTRATION

In many small schools that struggle with economies of scale, administrations are often under-sized and therefore over-stretched. At Hoosac there appears to be a talented complement of both administrators and support staff taking good care of meeting the school's administrative needs. The inevitable ebb and flow of school life surely finds someone short-handed from time to time, but all bases seem to be adequately covered.



Memorial Hall

That Hoosac's administrative culture is decidedly "head-centric" is completely understandable and even necessary. One, Hoosac is very small and the head should know almost everything that is going on. Two, smallness means that every job requires wearing multiple hats, so when openings develop, the candidate market might not quickly produce applicants with perfectly matched skill sets. A lot of appointing, promoting, or re-assigning goes on from within, and the head has to be able to play constant back-up. Three, the head will be completing 22 years in this position, meaning that he has appointed, trained, mentored, advised, or otherwise supervised every administrator on campus. Everything at Hoosac has a way of going back to the head. He is widely appreciated as being totally present; a man of his word who has his thumb on every aspect of the school.

While this is one of the school's great strengths, it will also be a great challenge going forward. A new leadership playbook, in its chapters both explicit and implicit, will take getting used to by all parties. The outgoing head gets huge praise for accomplishments there for all to see; the incoming head must gain the community's trust by defining a vision of the school Hoosac is still to become. Constituents' willingness to follow new leadership will be a leap of faith for a school entering a new chapter. Several constituents offered the notion that while the school has understandably been recently preoccupied with "surviving," new leadership will want to shift to a new mindset: that of "thriving." And for that to take hold, the tireless planning and advocacy may have to be steps ahead of the reality.

GOVERNANCE

Hoosac School is a nonprofit corporation governed by a 20-member Board of Trustees. It is chartered by the New York State Board of Regents and accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Thirteen alumni currently serve on the Board, as do six teachers (four retired, two active) with service at Hoosac or other independent schools. It is worth noting that the current Board Chair has served in that role for 25 years, bringing unusual continuity to the Board and its relationship to the long-serving head.



The Board meets three times a year. The board appears to understand its primary obligations of hiring, supporting, and evaluating the head, setting major policy, and ensuring the financial resources required by the school's mission and policies. It has relied heavily on the head for its guidance and direction. As the school's leadership changes, there is an opportunity for the board to consider a more typical committee or task force structure that increases board participation in planning and fund raising issues.

ALUMNI/ALUMNAE

Many of the 1700 living graduates support the school through the Annual Giving. The school does not yet have a fully supported, formal alumni and alumnae organization, so there is real potential to nurture the involvement and loyalty of this constituent group.

TOWN OF HOOSICK

Parents and faculty feel that some local residents see the school as a place apart up on the hill, a perception perhaps exacerbated by the fact that there are so few day students. The Town Supervisor reports that there area good town-gown relationships. The school actively participates in some community events (a local parade given as an example), and school personnel are involved significantly in a number of local schools and other organizations. Hoosac is praised for its ability to "keep its kids on campus." It does this only in part through weekend programming. The reality is that there is no handy town center nearby where students can go to hang out on a weekend. They either stay at school, or they take advantage of longer, organized trips that take them into Williamstown or Albany for movies, other shows, or shopping.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

The campus is classically beautiful. Traditional signage from the highway leads to the entry driveway that winds past a pond, under a stand of massive white pines, and up a long hill crowned notably by Tibbits Hall, the original mansion of the school's founder.

Functional buildings and expansive grounds support all aspects of the school community. The school owns and operates 15 buildings situated on its 350 acres that adjoin the 850-acre Tibbits State Forest. The facilities

include everything a good boarding school needs: classrooms, dormitories, a 10,000-volume library, an elegant grand hall serving as dining room, a spacious and multi-functional gymnasium including a recreational pool, the arts center, and administrative offices.



Home Farm – Head's Residence



Harry Dickie Sports Complex

Home Farm, the head's residence, also serves well for entertaining and housing alumni and special guests when they visit the school. The mix of more recent and lower-maintenance buildings with the older and higher-maintenance facilities tilts to old and expensive. The grounds are well maintained and create a very favorable first impression. There is concern that deferred maintenance is a growing liability that must be addressed for the school to remain truly competitive.

FINANCES

Hoosac School is almost completely dependent on tuition revenues. Annual giving, while generously underwritten by a few loyal donors, accounts for less than 10% of operating revenue. Endowment at \$1.2 million does not generate significant non-tuition revenue. The head and his administrative staff work hard to be sure that expenses do not exceed the year's anticipated revenue, and the school enjoys a history of balanced budgets. There is no debt. Over the years, the head has been able to match donor interest with specific significant maintenance or capital needs as they have arisen.

PROGRAM

Hoosac School's curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs are fully described in full on the school's robust web site, www.hoosac.com. Candidates should become completely familiar with this resource as it describes every aspect of the school.

It is noteworthy that Hoosac is able to do so much, so well, for such a diverse student population. On one hand the school offers EFL and one-on-one tutoring to many students, and on the other it is offering AP courses. Arts programs flourish and athletic opportunities are numerous. The hockey program is outstanding for such a small school. Graduates attend leading colleges in large numbers - proof of the school's good work.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Several common themes unfolded as constituents were asked about the challenges and opportunities facing Hoosac School in the next decade. They include:

Enrollment / Revenue

- Define and achieve full enrollment
- Explore ways to even the boy-girl balance
- Find the right balance between international and domestic students

Program

- Sustain and inspire an academic program that meets a broad range of needs
- Explore various ways to overcome the school's isolation
- Integrate technology fully throughout curriculum and administration
- Examine/improve residential life: program, facilities, supervision
- Examine the athletic offerings and re-balance if indicated

Traditions

- Examine / adjust traditions in view of current and projected population

Resources

- Continue the practice of prudent financial management
- Achieve predictable tuition revenue through full enrollment and right-pricing
- Examine the development function and possibilities for expansion
 - Pursue additional sources of non-tuition revenue
 - Explore ways to increase endowment
- Initiate the development of a master facilities plan
 - Establish priorities for deferred maintenance and new construction

Articulating the School's Message and Raising Its Profile

- Take the school from relatively passive PR to highly active PR
- Cultivate the alumni and alumnae constituency more actively

Documenting Practice and Managing Change

- Document and standardize policies, procedures, expectations
- Engage the Board and school in a formalized strategic planning process

THE CANDIDATE

Professional Qualities

Hoosac School is excited to welcome a visionary head of school who “loves small” but is able to “think big” and lead and inspire the community to remain small but still to be great. A deep appreciation of the boarding school experience is preferred. The Board hopes to attract someone who will treat the school not as a stepping stone to the next bigger school, but as a special place in its own right, worthy of a long stay. The next head should possess excellent professional experience and credentials that include the following:

- Advanced degree
- Substantive independent school experience at the secondary level, including:
 - Teaching and coaching
 - Involvement in residential life
 - Familiarity with external affairs, fund-raising, admissions, and PR
- Familiarity with both instructional and management technology
- Familiarity with international students and their and their parents’ needs
- Appreciation of the Episcopal heritage and traditions at Hoosac School

Personal Qualities

The next head of school should possess the following personal qualities:

- Be hands on, likeable, approachable, and visible.
- Have a genuine desire to know all students and faculty well.
- Appreciate the importance of traditions in school and community life.
- Listen, reflect, and act thoughtfully and decisively, with firmness and fairness.
- Base decisions consistently on principle, policy, and the mission of the school.
- Know when to take light things seriously and serious things lightly.
- Be a person of integrity, able to be a moral compass for the school.
- Articulate a clear and enthusiastic vision.
- Communicate easily and comfortably with all constituents.
- Have a sense of humor.
- Have a good sense of process.
- Be enthusiastic about the out-of-doors.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Candidates should send a cover letter, resume, statement of educational philosophy, and a list of references to:

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For additional information about the school, visit its website: www.hoosac.com

Hoosac School does not discriminate in its policies based on race, religion, national origin, sexual preference, or age.