



**CONSULTANTS FOR LEADERSHIP
AND GOVERNANCE**

Resource Group 175, LLC
www.rg175.com

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PORTER'S
FARMINGTON

ASSOCIATE HEAD OF SCHOOL

July 1, 2011

**MISS PORTER'S SCHOOL
Farmington, Connecticut**

THE SCHOOL AND THE POSITION

Miss Porter's School educates young women to become informed, bold, resourceful and ethical global citizens. We expect our graduates to shape a changing world.

Porter's is seeking an exceptional individual to provide leadership for the academic and internal programs of the school. The Associate Head of School reports to the Head of School and leads a team of six professionals responsible for academic programs, athletics, student life, college counseling, and information technology. Porter's seeks an accomplished, experienced, and creative thinker who will embrace the mission and advance the vision and goals of the school.

Since 1843, Miss Porter's School has partnered tradition with innovation to provide a superior education to young women. Miss Porter's School advocates intellectual curiosity, champions personal excellence, and prioritizes the relationships between students, faculty and Ancients. Our community of scholars, artists, athletes and friends flourishes within an environment of mutual respect, understanding and encouragement.

Porter's is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages applications from women and candidates of color. It is a non-smoking campus. Porter's is a rigorous college preparatory school, committed to excellence in the classroom. The salary and benefit package is competitive with other NAIS schools and is commensurate with the qualifications and experience of the candidates.

For more information, please visit www.porters.org

THE BROADER CONTEXT

Members of the Porter's community were asked to respond to several questions, the answers to which could assist both the school and potential candidates in understanding what the job entails, and what professional and personal attributes are seen as supporting success in the position. Here are those questions, and a summary of the community's responses.

1. The Head of School must count on her Associate Head to understand and preserve the qualities of the school that truly distinguish it; that make it unique. What are those qualities as you see them?

There is a sense of community from top to bottom. It is not hierarchical. Every member of the community is important. It is a very cohesive community.

Relationships are very important and valued. Students are truly known. No one feels like an island.

The school has a lot of girls' traditions, some "goofy," but all important and part of the unique school experience.

The school hires and mentors well. It is time intensive but worth it. The faculty are a great group: cohesive, intellectually curious, exceptionally conscientious.

Overall, the school functions as a very intentional place in leadership, transparency, and respect for ideas. There is also great clarity; people know who to go to, for what, even if it is not in the formal job description.

2. Likewise, the Head of School will depend on her Associate's support in addressing significant challenges as all schools work through what the "new normal" means for them. What are those challenges as you see them here at Miss Porter's?

Help maintain the important sense of community in general. Specifically, help the community understand and accept continuing leadership transitions. The school is still adjusting to the leadership transition from Burch Ford to Kate Windsor, and now there is transition in this important Associate Head of School position as well - two significant positions in this time of "new normal."

Provide and/or support academic oversight, evaluation, and innovation. Maintain progress in professional development. Assist in recruiting more faculty of color and increasing the adult diversity within the school to match the student diversity.

Provide faculty and administrative leadership, building on a strong academic program which is seen by some as having been left somewhat on its own in a time of transition. Build more room for positive criticism, be aware of and address the risk of complacency (as that can exist in any excellent school), and take advantage of abundant positive spirit as a great opportunity to build momentum.

Help faculty understand and then celebrate what is different and special about a girls' school. Some faculty get "itchy" around this discussion and need to develop both confidence and pride in the school's uniqueness.

3. What are the professional qualifications the Associate Head will need to be successful?

Candidates for this position should:

- *Have experience “in the trenches” as independent schoolteacher, dorm parent, and coach. All three are important.*
 - *(Boarding experience is critical to understanding expectations held of adults.)*
 - *(Independent school experience helps appreciate MPS in context.)*
- *Come not necessarily from a girls’ school, but have a true understanding and appreciation of girls’ schools.*
 - *(The issues are gender understanding and adolescence understanding.)*
- *Have experience as a senior administrator, ideally including faculty leadership.*
 - *(It helps to have managed a lot of people, including difficult ones.)*
 - *(Formal HR experience in managing effective teams would be a plus.)*
- *Be “IT attuned.”*
- *Model lifelong learning.*

There is strong feeling that while out of the box candidates might be appealing on some levels; e.g., a college administrator or other non-profit executive, this is a critical position that cannot be learned on the fly. Kate needs a pro from the start; not someone that she or others will train. This is a senior position requiring senior, comparable, relevant, and successful experience from the first day on the job.

4. What are the personal qualities that will be important for the new Associate Head to have?

Because relationships are so valued at MPS, “relational qualities” sought include:

- *Connect well with all constituents and colleagues.*
- *Understand that sometimes adolescents do dumb things. Have a high EQ for navigating the personal messiness of relationships while attending to the business of running an orderly and professional school.*
- *Be the day-to-day operations “face of the school” at events and functions.*
- *Be an approachable, effective listener with faculty.*
- *Know how to build up and be honest at the same time.*
- *If needed, be willing to push back respectfully.*
- *Be willing to have the tough conversations (and emerge with respect).*
- *Be interested in faculty stories, goals, and aspirations.*
- *Understand and maintain boundaries and confidentiality.*
- *Argue if necessary behind closed doors, but support publicly.*
- *When faculty are experts in their field, trust them as such.*

In relationship to the Head of School:

- *Be loyal to the Head and the school.*
- *Understand chain of command and layered leadership.*
- *Be clear in understanding of foreground and background issues and roles.*
- *Be a background person, but able to be “the leader in the room.”*
- *Be foreground for faculty; perhaps background otherwise.*
- *Be attentive to balancing and complementing the Head of School role and style.*
- *Be a strong leader in the Head’s absence.*
- *Echo the Head in advocating for girls’ schools.*

Personal qualities and leadership styles the school will appreciate:

- *Do the job so it’s about the school; not the person or the position.*
- *Do the job so it meets school needs; not personal needs.*
- *Find satisfaction in school gains; not personal ones.*
- *Don’t be office-bound. Be highly visible.*
- *Be comfortable in the spotlight, but don’t need it.*
- *Prefer being respected to being liked.*
- *Be able to separate personal life from professional life.*
- *Be able to experience failure and grow from it.*
- *Be charismatic, but don’t let it wear people out.*
- *Be empowering.*
- *Be good with extremes – from big picture vision, to the smallest detail.*
- *Be consistent in attitude and mood; model professionalism every single day.*
- *Lead by offering and processing ideas before offering solutions.*

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and list of three references to:

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Miss Porter’s School does not discriminate in its policies based on race, religion, national origin, sexual preference, or age.