



HEAD OF SCHOOL
July 1, 2012

NANTUCKET NEW SCHOOL
Nantucket, Massachusetts

THE SCHOOL

The Nantucket New School was established as the Parents Cooperative of Nantucket, Inc. in 1985, when six families and a visionary teacher launched the School in a residential basement, creating an educational alternative that has since served hundreds of Nantucket students and families. The School added grade levels to include pre-kindergarten through eighth grade and moved through several interim locations prior to the purchase of two acres and the construction of the current facility, which became the School's permanent home in 2001. Recognizing an opportunity to expand the mission and further bolster enrollment, the School added a pre-school program in 2007, significantly improving total enrollment.

The School was accredited through the Association of Independent Schools in New England (AISNE) in 2009 and later that year merged with its neighbor, Strong Wings Adventure School. This collaboration proved synergistic, combining the growing school and its strong administration with another island organization noted for its after-school and summer environmental and recreational programming for year-round and summer children. Additionally, the merger filled the increasing need for additional instructional space and provided a strategic opportunity for future growth on the combined six-acre campus.

Today, the School remains true to its original mission and enjoys an outstanding reputation on Nantucket, having reached a number of important milestones and having enjoyed a period of steady progress and stability during the eight-year tenure of the current Head of School. The School now stands poised to move to the next level under skilled, inspired leadership.

MISSION STATEMENT

“Nantucket New School is a co-educational day school serving students in pre-school through grade eight. Within a warm and nurturing school community, our program encourages academic excellence, respects the pace of childhood, and seeks to instill in our students curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning. In creating strong partnerships between school and family, we foster kindness, self-confidence, self-knowledge, and social responsibility.”



The School further expresses its philosophy as follows: “We believe that a small school is uniquely equipped to meet the individual needs of students and their families. A low student/teacher ratio provides opportunities for us consistently to recognize each student as a person and as a learner. Essential to our success are strong student/teacher relationships, as well as partnerships between teachers and parents, creating a family atmosphere where students of different ages are able to interact cooperatively on a regular basis. We believe in and are committed to purposeful involvement in the unique community that is Nantucket and seek to build a student body that reflects the changing diversity of the Island.”

The School identifies these as its Core Values:

- Attention to the individual learner
- Student/teacher partnership
- Active family participation
- Strong ties to the Nantucket community
- Friendship among children of all ages

THE SCHOOL'S PRIORITIES AS IT SEEKS NEW LEADERSHIP

The School is no longer “new,” but it is still a young school in important stages of institutional development. It has gracefully survived the inevitable challenges facing a startup and has secured a permanent place on the educational landscape. It has constructed and acquired its own facilities, achieved accreditation, enjoyed a decade of strong administrative and board leadership, developed a sustainable business model that has successfully weathered the economic storm of the last four years, and put in place a thoughtful strategic plan to guide the School’s growth in the coming years.

The next head will need to build on these gains and take the School to the next level, which will involve qualitative and quantitative challenges. Current economic realities may make increasing enrollment difficult, and the challenge of paying off the debt on the existing facilities is immediate. The long-range plan enumerates strategic priorities, including: completing a facilities master plan, expanding programming with Strong Wings, strengthening the business model and eliminating the debt, working on a variety of programmatic initiatives, developing additional marketing and PR strategies so the School is known and more fully appreciated on the Island, and continuing the commitment to best practices in governance.

The next Head of School will need to be a high energy, high visibility, completely hands-on educational leader able to inspire and lead everyone in “polishing” an excellent program.

SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

Enrollment	146
Pre-School	24
Lower School (K- 4)	85
Upper School (5-8)	37
Teaching Faculty	17 full-time, 2 part-time
Administrators & staff	4 full-time, 1 part-time
Student to Teacher Ratio	Pre-S: 8 to 1 LS: 9.5 to 1 MS: 7 to 1
Campus	3 buildings on 6 acres
Operating Expenses, FY 11	\$2,200,000
Aid in FY 11	\$ 420,810
Full-Day Tuitions for '11-'12	K-8 \$12,600 PS 5-Day \$11,200 PS 4-Day \$10,000 PS 3-Day \$ 8,500
Memberships	AISNE, NAIS, SSATB
Website	www.nantucketnewschool.org

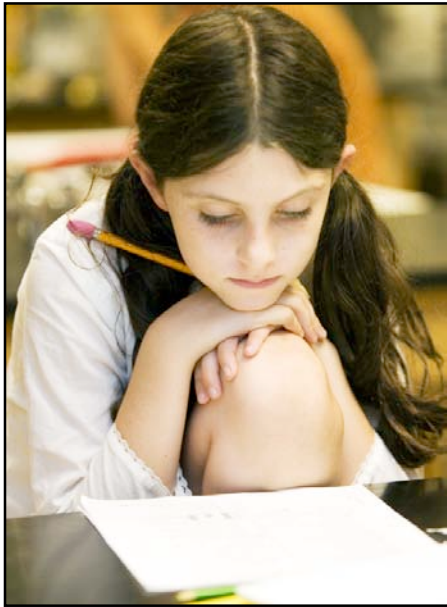
THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Members of the School community use remarkably consistent language when they talk about the school: academically challenging, friendly, relaxed and gracious, open, dynamic, caring, and trusting. Parents repeatedly describe “a phenomenal group of teachers” accorded a great deal of autonomy and trust by their head, resulting in a healthy and appreciated institutional open-mindedness that serves everyone well. In turn, faculty and administrators cite a partnership with the parent community that has none of the overtones of over-involvement so common in day schools. The current Head of School describes the parent community as “extraordinarily well-grounded.” The collaborative spirit in the School is positive, authentic, and unusual. It is intimate without being oppressive.

Parents and teachers echo these attributes and cite qualities that contribute to the School’s ability to be both nurturing and challenging:

- Small classes
- Creative teaching
- Freedom to be flexible and responsive
- Administrators who do not second-guess teachers
- No need to “teach to the test”
- Attention to individual needs





Teachers love what they do, are willing to go “above and beyond,” and able to work in interdisciplinary modes. Parents and faculty share the perception that the tone of the School is positive and the environment joyful.

The School is the opposite of an old school bound by ancient traditions. Its community spirit is derived from the School’s institutional youthfulness and the collective belief in and support for its mission. Exuberance and optimism abound here. There is a can do attitude, a pioneering enthusiasm that has everyone open-minded about giving good ideas a try. Founding parents and trustees are still involved, but they are allowing the School to grow into institutional adulthood with nothing but positive and liberating influences. The School’s founding teacher is warmly welcomed every day as a devoted and admired volunteer, serving as perhaps the best example of the School’s thoughtful and deliberate evolution.

PARENTS AND STUDENTS

The School was founded as a parents’ cooperative, and in its early years every parent agreed contractually not only to pay tuition, but also to commit volunteer service as basic as giving a few evening hours to clean classrooms at the end of the day. This is what was needed to make the School run and to balance the budget. The School outgrew those needs long ago, but the tradition of parent involvement was established and remains in the minds and expectations of most current families.

Overall, the school – parent relationship at NNS is unusually healthy and mutually supportive. Parents volunteer in every way imaginable, including organizing and supporting a wide variety of social and fundraising events. Their many volunteered hours are indispensable to the School’s operating success. All parents belong to P.O.N.N.S. (Parents of Nantucket New School), a parent-governed organization that meets monthly to coordinate volunteer efforts and opportunities for parent education.

The Head and his administrative assistant function as the admissions office, with input and support from the Pre-School, Lower School, and Middle School division heads. Through parent interviews, a child’s visit at the School, and a review of available prior records, the admission process is designed to determine the fit between the child and the School. The School’s program, in a broad way, can best be described as traditional in content, but progressive – or highly personalized – in its delivery. Students work hard and enjoy learning.

The School’s three divisions are not uniform in size. The Pre-School is in demand and enjoys predictable, full enrollment in its own bright, airy, and spacious building. The Lower School is also usually full. The Middle School, however, despite its very strong academic program, wrestles with attrition and the extraordinary power of the peer group in the public school system. Already higher than NAIS norms due to the nature of island living, attrition is of even greater concern as middle schoolers are lured away by the social and athletic opportunities perceived to be greater within the larger public school. The School routinely loses a number of middle school students it would like to keep each year.

The students cannot say enough about their affection for their School, their teachers, and their friends. They describe the School as feeling like a family. They talk about its friendliness, kindness, the absence of bullying, and the impact of the Big Friend/Little Friend program both in school and beyond. They like the fact that the Head teaches music. They appreciate the meaning of Morning Meeting, the creativeness of the physical education program, addressing teachers by their first names, and the security of not having to worry about their personal safety or their possessions. A middle school student who had contemplated moving to the public school but did not talked about how glad she was that she stayed: "People leave because they say the public school is 'cooler.' And when they get there, they say, 'Teachers aren't the same, but I'm with my friends.' Having stayed here, now I realize that I get the best of everything."



ADMINISTRATION

The School's administrative configuration is typical of a small school that expects almost everyone to be able to wear a variety of hats. The Head of School and three division heads, each of whom carries a full teaching load with release time for administrative duties, provide academic and administrative leadership. The Head of School handles admissions tours and visits and makes enrollment decisions in conjunction with the classroom teachers and division heads. The Assistant Head for Development & Communications, in consultation with the Head, is responsible for all of the School's development programs. This is a significant role, given the School's various special events and the coordination of volunteers required to run them. There is a full time Business and Facilities manager, who administers the day-to-day financial operations as well as oversees the maintenance and cleaning services. The Strong Wings program has its own director of programming.



In this lean administration, everyone pitches in as needed to get the work of the School done, governed more by evolved practice and evolving need than by precise job description. Neither faculty nor parents see the administration as hierarchical or top-down in nature. Administrators lead through collaboration and participation, and were described by one teacher as being "overseeing without being overbearing."

GOVERNANCE

The School is effectively and thoughtfully governed by a 14 member Board of Trustees that meets bi-monthly, with the executive committee of the board meeting in the off months. It currently functions with 8 active committees and 3 task forces. Eight of the board members are parents or former parents, but the School has enjoyed a high level of board level participation from non-parent community members whose connections and experience add important perspective to its governance.

The board/ head partnership at the School has been healthy and effective over the years and has played a significant role in the School's growth and success. The board fully understands and demonstrates its responsibility to concentrate on policy and to let the administration run the School on a day-to-day basis. It is attentive to the School's priorities as identified in the AISNE accreditation process, and a year ago it developed a strategic plan that identifies the institutional priorities that will guide the School through the leadership transition. The head and board chair have taken advantage of AISNE and NAIS programs and materials to help board colleagues understand the importance of the best practices in effective governance, and the board has, for the last several years, attended the annual governance conference offered by AISNE.

PROGRAM AND FACULTY

The School's programs are generally described throughout this document, but much more detail is available on the website: www.nantucketnewschool.org. Candidates should visit the site for details about curricular and co-curricular offerings. Several program-related issues are worthy of special note.

The head is widely acknowledged for hiring well. Unlike the public school system that has a tendency to hire from off-island only to see many new hires leave a year or two later, the School has a knack for finding and hiring good people already established on the Island. As a result, faculty turnover is relatively low, enhancing continuity. Faculty are accorded a great deal of autonomy, but they also appreciate the administrative supervision. They respect the Head "who provides leadership when you need it. He has our back and we're never adrift. There's no micro-management, and he allows us to teach." Across the board, faculty express appreciation of "we-can-try-it" support from the administration, reflecting the teachers' belief that they are respected for their professionalism. The faculty characterizes morale as high.



The School does not have a special education department or program, though a learning specialist works with students as needed and advises faculty when instructional modifications are indicated. The School is adept at providing differentiated and personalized instruction not as a specialized program, but rather as the standard approach to teaching in response to students' individual needs.

It is fortuitous that two organizations dealing with children's programming—Nantucket New School and Strong Wings—should end up as abutting neighbors. It was a natural step for the two boards to compare their programming and to realize the synergies that could result from a consolidation of the two entities. The School entered the merger having essentially eliminated the debt for its land and buildings. Following the merger, the Strong Wings board dissolved, and the combined entity (governed by the existing New School board) assumed responsibility for Strong Wings' debt on its property. For the time being, the Strong Wings program operates under its own name, has its own personnel, its own budget, and conducts its own fundraising—all overseen by the New School's administration.

In addition to being the base of the Strong Wings program, the Strong Wings building is now home to the School's Pre-School program from September to June and to the business and development offices throughout the year. Strong Wings provides team building and outdoor education programming in each of the Island's public and independent schools as well as an after-school program open to all Nantucket youth. In addition, Strong Wings now provides



physical education instruction for all New School students in grades K-8. The campus features an outdoor climbing wall and high ropes course; these activities and the Island's natural environment make an indoor physical education facility unnecessary, even in the winter months. During the summer, Strong Wings is a major summer camping operation, enrolling as many as 250 students. Approximately 10% of those are New School students, 25% are public school students, and the balance are children from families vacationing on Nantucket.

TECHNOLOGY

The School lags in its instructional use of technology, knows that it needs to address this, and has included technology as one of the major initiatives of the long-range plan. Currently the School has computers in most classrooms and a "mini-lab" with a half dozen Apple desktop computers. The mobile lab consisting of Apple laptops on a cart is the most utilized technological resource.

Administrative systems are largely the realm of the Head, who has the general expertise but not the time to implement a school-wide administrative software system. This, too, is an initiative of the long-range plan.

The School's website is attractive and engaging, was designed by an outside contractor, and is maintained and updated primarily by the Head.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The School consists of three buildings on six acres of land. The main building (approximately 16,000 square feet) is named in honor of Louise F. Walker and was made possible by a matching gift from the Weezie Foundation, a generous benefactor to a number of Nantucket organizations that serve children. As noted above, the Pre-School now operates in the Strong Wings facility (approximately 3,000 square feet), acquired in the merger. Fraker House was moved to its present site by an anonymous donor and serves as the Head's spacious residence.

The facilities are all well-built, and well-maintained. Deferred maintenance is not a worry, but lest it become one, the matter is a policy priority of the long-range plan, along with the larger issue of facilities master planning. The School could benefit from the provision of more instructional space, and among the programmatic contenders are library, technology, the arts, and general classroom space.

The School's physical location is ideal on the Island and as central as possible. The campus is well outside the downtown and thus largely protected from summer traffic and congestion. There is plenty of parking at the School and a bus stop at the end of the driveway. The public school, the Boys' and Girls' Club, the airport, and the Island's major supermarket are nearby. The campus is readily accessible via the main roads that quickly connect to the Island's various destinations.



FINANCES

The School's annual operating expenses total approximately \$2,200,000. As is typical of a school of its size, 72% is spent on compensation and benefits for faculty and staff. Nantucket is an expensive place to live, and the School has worked to grow faculty and staff salaries to approach applicable AISNE / NAIS compensation levels. Benefits available to full-time faculty and staff include health coverage, disability and life insurance, and participation in a TIAA/CREF savings plan with a match of employee contributions. Outstanding debt totals \$1,400,000, the bulk of which is tax-exempt bonds, and interest and principal payments total about \$151,000 a year. Just over 20% of tuition revenue is currently expended on financial aid to over 40 children.

The School is largely tuition-driven and, excluding depreciation and amortization, has operated in the black for many years. With tight control of expenses and realization of fundraising objectives, the School expects to run a surplus again this year at a somewhat lower level of enrollment.

Fundraising is critical for balancing the budget. The School's annual appeal brings in about \$100,000, and special events gross \$231,000. (These include events geared to summer residents, a school-family oriented Harvest Bash, a Wine Festival raffle, a road race and, this year, a raffle of a Smart Car). In addition, the Strong Wings annual fund generates about \$35,000, and its dinner auction nets about \$25,000. The School has been very effective at



tapping into summer fund-raising opportunities, and one benefit of the merger has been even greater access to summer residents who do not identify with the School but whose children are Strong Wings campers.

The last School capital campaign was wrapped up successfully a few years ago. It funded the development of the campus on Nobadeer Farm Road, including construction of the Louise F. Walker building. A new campaign is in the planning stages.

THE ISLAND OF NANTUCKET

Through much of the 19th century Nantucket was known as the world's whaling capital, a worldwide enterprise that diminished with the Great Fire of 1846, the Civil War, the discovery of oil in Pennsylvania, and the shoaling of Nantucket Harbor during a major storm. Today, the Island's commerce is driven by its reputation as an extraordinarily beautiful and scenic yachting and seaside vacation destination. Summers are busy as visitors from around the world appreciate the Island's historic villages, cobblestone streets, quaint shops, and expansive beaches. The summer population is estimated at over 50,000. Winter, though, is a study in contrasts as the 10,000 year-round residents appreciate a more relaxed pace of life and a close-knit, interdependent community.

Nantucket is connected to the mainland by excellent ferry and commuter airlines service, both of which are occasionally subject to the weather's disruptions. New York and Boston are also directly accessible by air. The Island way of life is unique, and those who take to it love the Island as a special place to live and raise a family.

Google "Nantucket" and that entry alone reveals a wealth of resources providing information about the Island, its culture, and its enterprise. The Town's website www.nantucket-ma.gov is a good source of straightforward facts. Candidates should learn as much about the Island as possible, for vacationing on Nantucket for a month of summer is not at all the same as living on the Island year-round. Similarly, leading a school in a summer and resort community is very different from leading a school in an urban or suburban community where the institution is surrounded by and fueled by the resources of families associated with many and diverse business enterprises.

An unusual aspect of Islanders is that they are known to be very cooperative. (Some say this is not common to many islands but unique to Nantucket.) The School is not seen by the public school as "the competition." The public school welcomes the participation of New School students on their own Middle School athletic teams, both for home and off-island competitions. The schools coordinate schedules accordingly. The public school's special education staff has been cooperative in those cases when there is a need to develop or monitor an IEP, and there are several examples of professional development planned by and including faculty and staff from both organizations.

Though many do not realize this, Nantucket has a significant minority population. Almost 45% of students enrolled in the Nantucket Elementary School speak English as their second language, and they are taught English in as many as eight foreign languages, including Eastern European dialects, Spanish, Chinese, and Portuguese. The allocation of educational resources to this significant array of needs is undoubtedly a factor that leads some families to explore more expensive independent school alternatives.

There is one other non-profit independent school on the Island, a Waldorf-informed program that competes directly for families with students in pre-school through grade eight.



MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Providing Leadership and Vision

For the School as a Whole

- Growth back to peak levels and sustainability
 - Right sizing of enrollment, tuition, aid, staffing, and compensation
- Stem attrition generally, Middle School especially
- Continue implementation of the Strategic Priorities:
 - Facilities master planning
- With Board of Trustees, define and launch capital campaign
- With Board of Trustees, ensure best practices for governance

For the Program & Faculty

- Continued program additions, refinement, and improvement
 - Arts, library, technology
 - Middle School “anchor” programming
 - Strong Wings programming
- Continued professional development

For the Administration

- Refinement of structure; defining roles and responsibilities
- More delegation to ensure that the Head of School is not over-extended
- More formalized periodic evaluation and supervision

Articulating the Message and Raising the Profile

- To ensure that present families understand their school’s uniqueness more fully
- To ensure that prospective families will explore NNS as an option

Managing Plant Resources

- Plan and reserve for deferred maintenance needs

Managing Change and Implementing Plans

- As the School grows, document policies, procedures, and expectations

THE CANDIDATE

Professional Qualities

The School 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. This includes adapting to island life. The next head should possess excellent professional experience and credentials that include the following:

- Masters Degree in Early Childhood or Elementary Education
 - Or other relevant degree
- Classroom teaching experience in the PS to Grade 8 range
 - Willingness (though not a requirement) to teach
- Preschool and/or elementary school administrative experience
- Experience with and/or willingness to cultivate and develop relationships with donors and to participate actively in the School's fund-raising efforts
- Strong business sense and some experience in managing school finances
- Speak and write well
- Familiarity with external affairs, fundraising, admissions, and marketing (advertising and PR)
- Ability to balance the internal and external dimensions of the School
- Current understanding of best practices in teaching and administration
- Ability to guide, lead, and support staff, parents, and governing body
- Appreciation of the potential offered by Strong Wings

Personal Qualities

School constituents identify these attributes they hope to see in the next Head of School:

Openness, warmth, accessibility, and authenticity
Fluidity and flexibility
Open-mindedness
Kindness and compassion
Willingness to be present and visible in the community
Intuitive sense of people
Having a "second side" – musician, writer, artist, etc.
Being a smiling presence at the school door every morning

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Candidates should submit materials electronically. One Word or PDF file should include: a cover letter explaining why the candidate is interested in the New School, a resume, and a statement of educational philosophy or other piece of thoughtful writing that will help the Search Committee better understand the candidate's thinking about schools. A second file should list contact information for five references. Both should be emailed to:

Thomas M. Evans
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For additional information about the School, visit its website: www.nantucketnewschool.org

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