



Position Statement
Head of School Search
Wheeling Country Day School
Wheeling, West Virginia
Start Date: July 1, 2024



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INTRO

“Fearless learning” is at the core of Wheeling Country Day School (WCDS.) Here is a progressive, co-ed school for children ages 2 through grade 8 that is infused with curiosity and characterized by individual paths of accomplishment. Established in 1929 in Wheeling, West Virginia, WCDS has a long history of developing strong, independent thinkers. Proudly proclaiming “learn in color” in chalked letters on a central wall, it is a place where learners can try a new skill that could become a life’s passion, are comfortable with vulnerability, connect with adults who will believe in them unconditionally, and grow with confidence.

HISTORY

The School has a rich history with deep roots in Wheeling. It was founded in 1929 and consisted of grades 1 – 8 for girls only. From its inception, the School’s program included off-campus experiences for the students: in the early years, a trip to the International Art Exhibit at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh was an annual excursion. WCDS moved to its current location in 1941. It has undergone several changes in configuration defining the students it serves (e.g. Boys added through grade 4, then through grade 8, addition of a kindergarten and then a 9th grade before settling in as a co-ed independent school for students JK – 5.) Four years ago, WCDS re-established a middle school and now serves students from age 2 through Grade 8.



The Main Campus houses students from age 2 – Grade 5. The Middle School (Grades 6 – 8) is housed on a branch campus at Wheeling Park. There is an additional facility on the campus of West Virginia Northern Community College. Both branch campuses are less than 3 miles from the Main Campus.

Founded as part of the Country Day School movement, outside activities and programming – rain or shine -- are very much part of a student’s daily life. Today, WCDS has a well-developed program rooted in progressive education.

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MISSION

WCDS engages students to think, to create, and to communicate in nurturing environments so resilience builds character and learning remains

VALUES

KINDNESS

Embracing each moment with a generous spirit, modeling kindness and compassion without expectation.

CURIOSITY

Encouraging curiosity to reveal the potential and the possibilities in every learner and every moment.

BELONGING

Offering a sense of belonging and building a community that is part of something bigger.

GROWTH

Infusing growth into each opportunity to learn something new with an eye towards the future and deep respect for our roots.

PURPOSE

Wheeling Country Day School is dedicated to changing the perception of potential so everyone can learn fearlessly.



PLACE

WCDS's main campus sits on 6 acres in the Woodsdale neighborhood of Wheeling. Most of the classrooms are organized around a central quadrangle. There is a gymnasium, playing field, playground and play spaces, an art studio and science lab. Classrooms are spacious with both group and individual meeting areas. The Middle School is the sole occupant of a spacious community building in the 400+ acre Wheeling Park with access to an ice hockey rink, a tennis dome, a central pond, multiple fields, and trails. Finally, a 2,000 sq foot space dedicated to WCDS's use on West Virginia Northern Community College campus serves on a rotating basis as a multi-day "home" for various class projects and is conveniently close to downtown Wheeling.

Wheeling, surrounded by the beautiful rolling hills of West Virginia, is located in a sweet spot with easy access to three major cities: Pittsburgh (1 hour away to the East), Columbus (2 hours away to the West), and Cleveland (2 ½ hours away to the North.)

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THE PROGRAM

The Early Childhood Program serves students from age 2 – 5. The youngest learners (ages 2-3) participate in the “We Two” program twice a week with a parent or caregiver. All of the program levels (We Two, Preschool, Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten) have a centers-based curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on character development. Outdoor play and physical activities are fundamental. The academic components of the program take its cues from students with teachers actively guiding and encouraging curiosity, intellectual strengths and skills. A Reggio Emilia approach and philosophy define this division and is apparent in every classroom. (For additional information on the Early Childhood Program, click here: [Early Childhood - Wheeling Country Day School \(wcdsedu.com\)](https://wcdsedu.com))

WCDS’s Elementary School covers Grades 1 – 5. The student as individual remains at the core of a program which meets each child where s/he is. Reading skills, comprehension, and vocabulary are taught through literature as well as guided, traditional readers. Manipulatives and games are evident in classrooms and fundamental to the School’s approach to the teaching of mathematics. “Deep dive” projects which promote creativity and agency in students of all ages are introduced. One example of a “deep dive” is a much-heralded weather balloon project in Grade 5. Multi-day, focused field trips abound. Additional information on the Elementary School is available here: [Elementary - Wheeling Country Day School \(wcdsedu.com\)](https://wcdsedu.com)

Home to WCDS’s Middle School (Grades 6 – 8) is Wheeling Park, a 400+ acre facility with an ice skating rink, tennis dome, pond, fields and trails. The program for these grades provides foundations in math and language arts while introducing students to project-based learning. “Deep dive” projects, introduced in



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upper elementary, become a feature of every trimester. While the “deep dive” topics evolve with student and faculty interests, recent examples of areas for exploration include: Immigration, Downtown Wheeling, News and Newspapers. Each “deep dive” culminates in an exhibition. Projects and activities in this division intentionally mix students from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade.

Not only is the middle school program notable but so, too, is the camaraderie and respect that students have for each other. It is an open-hearted, curious, inquisitive group. This is a safe place to be oneself and to learn. Please see the School’s website for more information about the middle school program: [Middle School - Wheeling Country Day School \(wcdsedu.com\)](http://wcdsedu.com)

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

WCDS is governed by a 12-member Board of Trustees, most of whom are business leaders, entrepreneurs or professionals. Current and former parents make up the majority of the membership. Alumni are well represented, too. (This year, four alums are on the board.) The Board meets four times a year and committees meet as needed to ensure the smooth running of the School.

Wheeling Country Day School has an operating budget of \$2.64 million, an endowment of \$2 million, and carries modest debt of \$75,000. The School relies on annual fundraising (approximately \$330k last year) and looks to payments from EDGE, an entrepreneurial spin off, to build the endowment and assist in balancing future budgets. Tuition alone is not sufficient to balance the budget.



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WHEELING BY THE NUMBERS

Founded:	1929
Total Enrollment:	229
Lower school enrollment (PS-5th) :	190
Middle School enrollment (6th-8th):	39
Students receiving financial aid or some form of tuition discounts:	59.4%
Tuition range (PS-8th grade):	\$4,650-\$12,515
Faculty Student Ratio:	1:8
Number of teachers and administrators:	36
Operating Budget for WCDS:	\$2,642,369
Endowment:	\$2,046,867
Debt:	\$75,078
Annual Giving 2022-23 Unrestricted:	\$330,543
Annual Giving 2022-23 Restricted:	\$32,963



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NOTABLE STRENGTHS

- Genuine warmth and appreciation of all individuals; a family feel on the campuses.
- An exciting program grounded in progressive education.
- An innovative learning environment characterized by Reggio Emilio in the lower grades and immersive, experiential projects in the upper ones.
- A culture of “I can” for both students and staff.
- Active habit of support of innovation by the entire community.
- A community focused on growth where students are nourished to flourish, not pressured to succeed.
- Exciting and interesting use of multiple campuses.

WCDS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Sustain and nourish a dynamic, innovative, out-of-the-box professional culture that resides in an atmosphere of personal warmth and sense of community as family.
- The Middle School at WCDS is four years young. Enrollment management and growth, program development, facilities, and optimal size of this division need to be both a short- and long-term strategic focus of the School in the years ahead.

- Lead the School in the development and execution of a marketing initiative focused on telling WCDS’s story. There is an opportunity for the next Head to communicate further the value of progression education, why it is important in life-long learning, and how it is highly academic.
- Build a culture of philanthropy and capacity for multi-faceted fundraising that goes beyond special events.
- Ensure and strengthen financial stability to ensure long-term financial sustainability. This may include the need to develop alternate revenue sources.
- Work closely with the Board to ensure the strength of the institution and develop a strategy related to the School’s real estate footprint and facilities.
- Recruit, develop and retain a highly talented faculty and staff.
- Understand the School’s place in Wheeling; build connections and visibility with the town and throughout the region.
- Nurture the current collaborations the School has developed with West Virginia Northern Community College, Bethany College, and Oglebay and seek out additional partnerships to enhance WCDS’s programs.
- Grow the School’s regional and national identity as a place of effective innovation in education.

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QUALIFICATIONS/ CHARACTERISTICS

- Genuine interest and commitment to the emotional and academic growth of students as individuals.
- Comfort with and knowledge of pedagogy to reach a range of learning styles and strengths.
- Strong and effective communicator. The next Head needs to be the chief storyteller of the school.
- Visible, engaged, approachable and interested in being integrated into the WCDS community.
- A sense of warmth and empathy.
- A thought-leader with a track record of innovation
- A strategic thinker.
- Developer of strong teams.
- Experience in admissions and enrollment management.
- Financially savvy: Fluent about and comfortable with the business aspects of school leadership.
- Familiarity with and interest in the development of a strategic vision and implementation strategies for fundraising.

- Skilled recruiter of faculty, staff, administrators, and students.
- Collaborative leader who delegates to his/her team and in so doing grows and develops the next generation of leaders.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested candidates may apply online on the RG175 website: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

To be considered for this exciting leadership opportunity, candidates must submit a cover letter detailing their interest in the school, a resume, and a personal statement. In addition, candidates must provide at least five references with contract information.

Application Deadline: December 13, 2023
Start Date: July 1, 2024

For more information, contact RG175 Consultant Rebecca Upham (Rebecca.upham@rg175.com)