



DANA HALL
SCHOOL
Audacious since 1881

Position Statement Director of the Middle School Search

MIDDLE
SCHOOL

Dana Hall School
Wellesley, Massachusetts
Start Date: July 1, 2024



DIRECTOR, MIDDLE SCHOOL

POSITION STATEMENT



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Overview

Dana Hall School, one of the premier girls day and boarding schools in the country, seeks a new Director of the Middle School to serve as the leader of the school's division serving grades 5-8. The Director of the Middle School will lead and work in close collaboration with other members of the Senior Administrative Team and more than 20 members of the Middle School faculty and staff. This position reports to the Head of School, Katherine Bradley, and the start date is July 1, 2024.

Since its founding as a preparatory school for Wellesley College in 1881, Dana Hall School has been committed to the education of girls and young women. It has always been an institution with a distinctive mission and a powerful sense of purpose. This mission has inspired generations of Dana Hall educators to devise and deliver bold academic programs, to appreciate the unique possibilities facing girls and young women inside and outside the classroom, and to attract students from across the world. For nearly 145 years, Dana Hall has graduated curious, confident, and courageous women who are well prepared to meet the challenges and choices that they will face as women and global citizens.

Today, Dana Hall is still an institution with a distinctive mission and sense of purpose, offering extensive and wide-ranging curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs while remaining intensely focused on the individual student. The School enrolls 462 students in grades 5-12, 351 of whom are day students and 111 of whom are boarding students from 8 countries/regions providing the School with a diverse culture that enriches the educational experience for all. There are 137 Middle School (grades 5-8) day students. The average class size is 16 students and there is a 6:1 student-teacher ratio in keeping with the School's commitment to promoting the opportunity for authentic relationships between teachers and students.

Located 12 miles west of Boston in Wellesley, Massachusetts, Dana Hall rests on a beautiful 55-acre

campus. The facilities include a new Upper School classroom building, a spacious library, a modern science center, an impressive athletics, health and wellness center and a recently renovated student center. Athletic fields, art facilities, dormitories, administrative offices, faculty housing and bucolic open spaces fill out the rest of this welcoming campus.

Under the leadership of Head of School Katherine Bradley and her close collaboration with the outgoing Director of the Middle School, Dana Hall is well positioned to maintain its position as a premier girls independent school. The new Director of the Middle of School will be a critical leader in this work, engaged in both the further articulation of the School's strategic vision and the effective implementation of its initiatives and priorities.

If this opportunity sparks your interest, please visit the Dana Hall website at www.danahall.org to learn more about the School. There you will discover detailed explanations of the School's history, vision, strategic plan, curricular, co-curricular (athletics, arts) and signature programs, residential experience, and commitment to equity and inclusion.



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Mission

Through a commitment to fostering excellence, an educational program that intentionally meets the needs of individual students, and a culture that supports high expectations with reservoirs of resources, Dana Hall students graduate as confident, audacious women who are well prepared to make contributions in the communities in which they find themselves and the world they will inherit. Dana Hall's mission is clear and concise:

Dana Hall is committed to fostering excellence in academics, the arts and athletics within a vibrant, caring and inclusive community. With an emphasis on integrity, leadership, diversity and service as well as on respect for self and others. Dana Hall provides its students with a unique opportunity to prepare themselves for the challenges and choices they will face as women and citizens of the world.

Motto

The school's motto Amor Caritas (Love and Caring) reflects the central role relationships play in fostering the growth of Dana Hall students. From the close bonds between students and teachers to its highly regarded Forum program focusing on the personal and social-emotional development of students, Dana Hall believes in the power of human connection to help young women become their best selves. Indeed, what makes Dana Hall special is that it uses positive and caring relationships in service to student excellence. Students are unafraid to try something new, and failure is an opportunity to learn, not to be judged. The special balance of nurture and challenge is the lens through which the school makes decisions.



Community, Equity and Inclusion

Dana Hall has a strong commitment to community, equity and inclusion as outlined in its Vision 2025 Strategic Plan. The Director of the Middle School will work in close collaboration with the Directory of Community, Equity, and Inclusion (a fellow member of the Senior Administrative Team) to achieve the initiatives laid out in the School's 2018 climate assessment and 2020 Anti-Racist Action Plan. Currently, 38% of Dana Hall's domestic students identify as BIPOC, 10% are international. More important than these numbers is the School's goal that each student feels a strong sense of belonging.

Dana Hall's Inclusion and Diversity Statement reads: Dana Hall is committed to building an inclusive community that respects and affirms each of its members, honoring their diversity of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. The school is committed to building an educational program that recognizes and values the many peoples and perspectives of its community and the world. While conflicts may arise in the creation of such a community, Dana Hall views these possible conflicts as opportunities for growth, for open and honest communication and for learning. Through its commitment to diversity, the school and the Dana Hall community prepares students for the challenges and choices they will face as women and citizens of the world.

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Middle School Program

The Dana Hall Middle School (Grades 5-8) provides students with a rigorous and relevant educational program in a small intimate community where students are known and know each other, all the while being supported by a dedicated staff who share a particular understanding of middle school aged children. That said, Dana Hall students benefit from being a part of a larger school (Grades 9-12) and all that a larger school can offer. The Middle School's philosophy reflects the belief that girls at this age should be exposed to a wide variety of programs from academics to athletics to arts to clubs to community service, and more. The girls have opportunities to discover their talents and interests and learn about themselves in ways that would not be possible in many other schools.

The Middle School curriculum is well articulated, sequential, engaging, and designed to prepare students for a successful transition to the Upper School. Students meet in their core classes seven out of every ten class days for fifty minutes each. The curriculum is also interdisciplinary as teachers look for the integration of skills and content to make learning more meaningful. Teachers meet weekly, specifically focused on ways they can coordinate their efforts and create relevance by seeking out those connections across disciplines. In all classes teachers emphasize the development of essential skills for success in the Upper School while providing opportunities for students to use their imaginations and creativity.

The Middle School provides students with a rich and varied co-curricular experience, myriad opportunities in athletics, arts and beyond for girls to try—and then succeed at—something new. A safe and supportive environment for new student experiences extends beyond simply handing them an unfamiliar instrument or establishing open tryouts for sports teams. It is to create a situation in which the young

musician, or athlete is able to receive the support and guidance she needs to be successful in the new endeavor. Interscholastic athletic options available to Middle School students include soccer, field hockey, volleyball, cross country, basketball, squash, swimming, fencing, ice hockey, lacrosse, softball, tennis and equestrian. Students also have access to a robust arts program and opportunities to participate in theater productions or take music lessons at the Dana Hall School of Music.

Middle School advisors meet with their students regularly. Each serves as a guide, supporter, and champion of the students they serve. Students also benefit from the renowned Forum program, that addresses a variety of topics relevant to the girls' social and emotional growth. Through regular meetings led by teachers, students learn how to build self-confidence and strong relationships by exploring core themes of community, communication, identity, and self-care.



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The Role

The Director of the Middle School will serve as a strategic thought partner for the Head of School and other members of the Senior Administrative Team and collaborate closely with the Assistant Director of the Middle School, the faculty and staff, and the Director of the Upper School. The Director will be responsible for the oversight of the Middle School's educational program, including the mission, culture, traditions, and commitment to community, equity, and inclusion. The Director must have an inspiring vision for educating girls in an evolving world and the administrative skills to enact that vision. The Director of the Middle School must also establish and uphold clear standards, high expectations, and effective means for execution while forming positive and trusting relationships with students, colleagues and parents.



Duties and Responsibilities

In addition to other responsibilities that might be assigned as needed by the Head of School, the next Director of Middle School's primary duties and responsibilities will include the following:

- Serving as the educational leader of the Middle School;
- Ensuring the smooth operation of the Middle School, including academic advising and support services, special programs and activities, student progress, and discipline;
- Overseeing the Middle School curriculum and academic policies in collaboration with the Director of the Upper School, and Department Heads;
- Interviewing and recommending the employment and responsibilities of the Middle School faculty;
- Determining faculty staffing needs in conjunction with Senior Administrative team, Department Heads, and the Head of School;
- Guiding, supporting, evaluating faculty, and provide faculty development in coordination with Department Heads, the Director of the Upper School, and the Head of School;
- Overseeing communication with Middle School parents;
- Facilitating effective communication and coordination with the Head of School, Director of the Upper School, and other members of the administrative staff.

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Challenges and Opportunities



The Middle School is in a healthy state and is poised to continue to build on the excellent foundation established over the last several years by the work of a faculty that is committed and dedicated to middle school students. The challenges and opportunities for new leadership are both clear and exciting. The next Director of the Middle School should be prepared to lead and work in effective collaboration with the faculty, Head of School and other colleagues to:

- Further develop and strengthen the connections between the Middle and Upper School programs, students, and teachers to promote alignment of the overall student experience grades 5-12;
- Clarify both what distinguishes and what is distinctive about the Middle School and also its position in the grade 5 through 12 arc of educational programming;
- Champion the Middle School to ensure that its people and programs are understood, recognized, and seen as part of the larger mission of Dana Hall;
- Commit to the formation of authentic, collaborative relationships with colleagues and involve them in the development and clarification of policies and procedures;

- Continue the development of ongoing initiatives and adopting innovative practices e.g., restorative accountability practices, programming for Forum, differentiation of the academic program, etc. in order to be a beacon for forward-thinking girls' education;
- Advance, in conjunction with the Director of Community, Equity, and Inclusion, and in partnership with all members of the community, the School's commitment to community, equity and inclusion;
- Partner with the Assistant Head of Admissions and Strategic Initiatives to fortify and enhance enrollment and collaborate with the Director of the Upper School to promote retention;
- Review and consider revisions to the system for faculty evaluation with the goal of ensuring high standards are articulated and met;
- Communicate effectively with and serve as a resource for parents who are committed to their child's education.



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Key Qualities of the Ideal Candidate

The successful candidate to be Director of the Middle School will demonstrate most, if not all, of the following qualities, competencies, characteristics, and experiences:

- A knowledge of and passion for the value of middle school girls education and an ability to communicate that passion to both internal and external audiences;
- A joyful presence with genuine affection for this particular age group, from who they are upon arrival in Grade 5 to who they become by the end of Grade 8;
- Demonstrated success as a clear-eyed confident leader who sets clear expectations for students and consistently hold them accountable, when necessary;
- Experience supervising teachers and the capacity to articulate and address strengths and challenges evident through observation and other feedback;
- Familiarity with the latest research on brain science, metacognition, and neurodiversity and champions the need to meet the needs of a range of students;
- Strength to be resolute in support of Dana Hall's values but at the same time listen empathetically to the concerns of various constituents;
- Handle the relentless daily functions of the job and be responsive, well-organized, and detail oriented;
- An openness and curiosity about the merits of an upper school residential program on campus and willingness to participate and play a part in it;
- High levels of emotional intelligence and sound judgment and the ability to navigate the complexities of leading and inspiring others;
- Courage to wade into challenging conversations with conviction while making every member of the community feel valued, important, and heard;
- Cross-cultural competencies, significant training in and experience with building diverse, equitable and inclusive communities;

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- Relationship oriented with the skills to work collaboratively and transparently with senior administrators, direct reports, and faculty and staff;
- Superb communicator, in writing, in front of groups, in relationships with others, and as a team leader;
- Omnipresent with the capacity to invest full days including periodic evenings and weekends; yet also with the ability to establish, uphold, and model appropriate boundaries;
- Forge partnerships with a wide variety of invested parents and engender confidence in the excellent work of the Middle School faculty;
- Warmth, character, a strong ethical compass consistent with the mission and culture of Dana Hall, and a sense of humor.



To Apply

Candidates interested in applying for the position of Director of the Middle School at Dana Hall should do so online at: <https://rg175.com/candidates/signup>

Application includes:

- Letter of interest (cover letter)
- Resume or CV
- Personal statement (educational/leadership philosophy)
- Name of four current references and contact information (optional)

The Dana Hall search committee intends to interview candidates on Wednesday, April 3 and invite finalists to campus during the week of April 8-12. Please plan accordingly.

For any questions or further information about the position, please contact:

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The deadline for receipt of full application materials is **Monday, March 15, 2024.**