



Position Statement Upper Division Head The Park School



Brookline, Massachusetts
Start Date: July 1, 2024



Upper Division Head Position Statement



Overview

Long recognized as a leader locally, regionally, and nationally among PreK through 8th grade schools, The Park School is an institution with a balanced mission celebrating the interdependence of academic excellence, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and social emotional learning. Park seeks a new Upper Division Head to lead the School's division serving 232 students in grades 5 through 8. This senior administrative position reports directly to the Head of School and is responsible for leading all aspects of Park's program in the upper division.

Founded in 1888, The Park School has been a fixture on the independent school landscape in the Boston area ever since. Known for the warmth of the community and strength of its academic program, the motto, simplicity and sincerity, speaks to the School's approach to centering childhood. In all aspects of the academic program, students' developmental needs are centered. Beginning with a play-based approach in the youngest grades and building toward the rigorous application of knowledge and skill in the upper grades, Park teachers challenge and support student growth in an inquiry-based program that engages students, inspires collaboration and community building, and emphasizes personal reflection and metacognition.

Community is a hallmark value at Park. Faculty, staff, students, and parents all note the importance of relationships that are formed within the School among the aspects of Park they most treasure. Diverse by any measure, Park families hail from Brookline, Boston, and many of the surrounding cities and towns. Believing that strong social-emotional skills are critical to a child's success in school and in life, the adults at Park endeavor to create community where children feel seen, understood, comfortable, and empowered to take intellectual risks. Park is a family school and professional connections to parents and guardians are seen as integral to the mission of the School and success of the child.



Understanding that the physical environment has great impact on students learning, Park's 34-acre campus in suburban Brookline, MA has been developed over the years to serve the specific needs of students 4-14 years old and their families. The Main, West and North buildings house Kindergarten through Grade 8 and include large flexible classrooms and well-equipped science labs, beautiful performing and visual arts spaces, a state-of-the-art Maker Space, and ample gyms for physical education and athletics. The Pre-Kindergarten is housed in a separate building on campus. The outdoor spaces include one competition turf field, three natural playing fields, three playgrounds, an Outdoor Learning Garden, and new high ropes course. The thoughtfully designed campus provides a fantastic learning environment and welcoming place for family and community gatherings throughout the year. The Library is in many ways the beating heart of the School community, supporting students, teachers, and families as well as Park's work toward becoming an equitable and inclusive community.

If this opportunity sparks your interest, please visit the Park School website [The Park School](https://www.theparkschool.org/) to learn more about the School. There you will find comprehensive information about the School's vision, educational philosophy, Lower and Upper Division programs, strategic and campus plans, and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

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Mission

The Park School is dedicated to excellence in education.

The cornerstone of Park's program is academic excellence, combining both high standards of scholarship and the encouragement of each child to develop to his or her greatest potential. Our school community fosters a nurturing environment in which children develop curiosity, express creativity, appreciate the value of hard work and discipline, and experience the joy of learning. Park's faculty encourages each student to strive for intellectual, physical, and moral growth and to become contributing members of the community.

Park is committed to being a metropolitan, coeducational, day school of diverse races, religions, cultures, and backgrounds. Central to its mission is an appreciation of similarities and differences of perspective and the interdependence of all people. As a family school, Park is a community in which the dignity of each child, teacher, and parent is respected.

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Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

At Park, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) are understood as critical to both the mission of the School and, more importantly, the cognitive and character development of each and every child. DEIB is one of Park's core values, and the School's approach to it has been thorough, thoughtful, and comprehensive.

In September 2020 Park formally adopted its [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Implementation Plan](#) (DEIIP), the result of a yearlong collaboration amongst trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and families. The Plan is an active, living document, providing the School community with a roadmap and an accountability measure as DEIB goals continue to move from aspiration to reality. The DEIIP engages every segment of life at Park, including governance and leadership, curriculum and program, classroom and instructional practice, community and culture, and systems and policies. Through this action-based plan, the School works to ensure that all members of the community – students, families, employees, alumni, and trustees – feel a deep sense of belonging.

Since launching the plan in Fall 2020, a majority of initiatives undertaken have been completed and established as part of Park's core practices in each of the four defined areas of work. Of the 37 initiatives launched in 2020, 21 are now consider "In Practice." Four initiatives are "Immediate Priorities" for the 2023-24 academic year and 12 initiatives remain in the "Rising" and "Future" categories.



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Program

Park provides an exciting education for early childhood through eighth grade by promoting programs that are centered on the development of the whole child. The School has identified six intellectual and social-emotional competencies that define the educational journey and prepare students for lives beyond Park. These competencies, names The Park Portrait, serve as a Northstar for Park educators in their examination and definition of curriculum and instructional practice and come to life in the Portrait who are: joyful learners, mindful leaders, skillful communicators, compassionate collaborators, creative problem solvers, and practiced advocates.

The School is divided into two divisions: Lower (PreK through grade 4) and Upper (grade 5 through grade 8). Each division is orchestrated to meet the developmental needs of the students it serves. Grades 5 through 8, years of emerging adolescent identity, are a time when students get ample opportunity to excel academically and socially, to hone their skills, and discover their passions. Park's Upper Division intentionally strikes a balance between academic rigor and creative exploration; high expectations and emotional support; becoming future-ready while preserving the simplicity and sincerity of childhood.

Cognitive science underlies the programming for this division. Children ages 10-15 are motivated by four dominant needs: competence, relationship, autonomy, and fun. When these needs are met, adolescents, who are developing independence and a sense of self, engage with rigorous learning, and thrive.

While the structure of Park's academic program has traditional roots, the context is anything but. Students in the Upper Division have classes in Humanities, Math, Science, World Languages, Art, Music, and PE. A busy makerspace is home to teacher-initiated projects from different disciplines.

This year, 7th graders will create a monument when they return from their trip to Washington, DC. Eighth graders are building earthquake resistance structures as part of their course work in science. Because connections with adults are important, each student has a formal check in with their advisor 4 days a week. A robust elective program kicks in at Grade 6. (Grade 6 offers 16 electives; Grades 7 and 8 have 18 offerings.) Students can choose to be part of 14 affinity/alliance groups. Each grade participates in a travel program: trips at each grade level culminate with an international language trip in May. The cost of these trips is built into tuition, as are all the offerings of afterschool activities, a rich array of robotics, sports, and arts.

Please go to the School's website for more information about its programs: www.parkschool.org



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By The Numbers

Student enrollment:	560
Students in grades 5 through 8:	232
Faculty in grades 5 through 8:	30
Students of Color:	42%
Faculty and Staff of Color:	28%
Students receiving financial aid:	22%
Families with 1+ parents born outside the US:	37%

Affinity/Alliance Groups

- Asian & Pacific Islander Heritage
- Black/African Heritage
- Feminism Alliance
- Gender & Sexuality Alliance
- Hispanic/Latinx/Latine Heritage
- Jewish Heritage
- Middle Eastern Heritage
- Multiracial Heritage
- Students Impacted by Adoption
- Students Impacted by Learning Differences
- White Anti-Racist Alliance



Sample Clubs

- First Take Sports Debate
- Newspaper
- Prop Club
- Jewelry Making Club
- Magic the Gathering
- Dungeons and Dragons Club
- Rubik and Puzzle Club
- The Art & Craft of Storytelling!
- Rock Climbing Club
- Trivia Club
- Creative Writing Club
- Model Building Club
- One Stitch at a Time (Crochet Club)
- Debate Club
- Board/Card Game Club
- Acts of Service Club
- Campus Clean Up Club
- Students Take Action



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The Successful Candidate

The successful candidate for the Upper Division Head has the opportunity to shape and lead an extraordinary Grade 5 through Grade 8 division that believes joy is a crucial ingredient in childhood education and has a robust program committed to academic excellence, DEIB, and SEL. In leading the division wisely and confidently, the next Upper Division Head will embody and have demonstrated the following attributes, skills, qualities, and leadership capabilities.

- A strong commitment to, knowledge of, and deep experience with middle school (grades 5 through 8) education and middle-schoolers.
- An experienced leader of students and teachers who is visible and actively oversees, guides, and participates in the life of the division.
- Knowledgeable about and committed to both child and adult development, a professional who listens to understand and can be both a consensus builder and clear decision maker.
- A highly relational collaborator with teachers and other administrators who sees and implements ways to support the School's commitment to being "one school, two divisions." In the context of a holistic school lens, this person is the champion and voice of the upper division.
- A community builder who engenders trust and confidence in all constituencies—students, faculty and staff, fellow administrators, and parents—and bolsters the spirit of joy and connection among all.
- An effective communicator who proactively delivers information, is responsive to concerns, and demonstrates follow-through.



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The Successful Candidate, continued

- An academic leader with years of experience in classroom and years of experience direction, facilitation, and supporting curricular and pedagogical change.
- A leader of teachers who understands the art and craft of teaching honoring and effectively balancing teacher autonomy, support, and accountability.
- A leader committed to partnering with Park's office of DEIB to address strategic initiatives which shape community and program norms. This commitment includes supporting a diverse student body and includes a firmly held conviction that DEIB is integral to the cognitive and personal development of all students.
- A contributing member of the School's Program Leadership Team (PLT) with the ability to help lead Park's next steps in the development of curriculum, program, and integration between the lower and upper divisions.
- A skilled recruiter of talented faculty and staff, committed to thorough onboarding, ongoing support and mentorship, professional feedback, and honest assessment and evaluation.
- A relationship builder who forms and enjoys an active partnership with parents, guardians, and families.

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Application Process

The Park School has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next Upper Division Head. Interested candidates may apply online at: <https://rg175.com/candidate/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 application deadline is **Friday, March 15, 2024** for a start date of July 1, 2024.

For an initial inquiry or to nominate a potential candidate for this exciting leadership position, please contact the following RG175 consultant:

Rebecca Upham
rebecca.upham@rg175.com
857-998-7479

To learn more about The Park School, visit the school's website at: <https://www.parkschool.org/>

