



**Position Statement
Head of School
Charles River School
Start Date: July 1, 2023
Dover, MA**



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Head of School Position Statement

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CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL



OVERVIEW

Founded to offer strong academic programs, lead innovation in teaching, and instill in its students a love of learning, **Charles River School** has been a fixture of progressive education in Boston's western suburbs for more than a century. Purposefully small and wonderfully intimate, CRS seeks a new head of school who will ensure that it continues to live its mission to balance academic excellence and the joy of childhood in a community in which everyone is known and faculty work to develop the strengths of each child.

Located less than 20 miles from downtown Boston, in Dover, Massachusetts, Charles River School occupies a bucolic 16-acre campus. 191 students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 are inspired by an outstanding faculty who engage each student with in-depth, interrelated experiences

that nourish their enthusiasm for learning. Using a thematic approach to teaching and learning, faculty deliver an active, experiential curriculum that develops students' academic skills and confidence. CRS graduates are known as leaders in their high schools, having learned how they learn best and to self-advocate to ensure they get the most out of their education.

The sense of community at CRS is acknowledged by many as a differentiating strength of the school, and it is due to more than just its small size. Since its founding, CRS has been a place where faculty and parents partner to foster and support children's engagement as students and citizens. The campus - organized around a single playground where all students PK through 8th grade have recess together - has been thoughtfully constructed over the years to foster connection. The four main buildings house classrooms, art studios,

science labs, technology spaces, a library, cafeteria, auditorium, and gym. Students move about campus freely but with purpose. Learning is not neatly contained in classrooms. It happens everywhere! A prime example is the Wetlands laboratory which serves as a wonderful outdoor learning environment.

Charles River School's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is core to delivering on its mission. The curriculum offers multiple and daily opportunities for students to engage in this mission-critical work in meaningful and developmentally appropriate ways. Through their time at the CRS, students explore issues of identity, culture, and bias as they seek to "know themselves, understand others, and shape the future of our diverse world with confidence and compassion."

Charles River School

Head of School Position Statement

START DATE: JULY 1, 2023



CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL

MISSION

Charles River School honors the pursuit of academic excellence and the joy of childhood. We nurture each child by igniting curiosity, encouraging creativity, and cultivating intellectual engagement. Our graduates know themselves, understand others, and shape the future of our diverse world with confidence and compassion.



COMMUNITY

Working at Charles River School is an all-in endeavor, and this is led by the outstanding, dedicated, inspirational faculty. Their commitment to student growth and to the school's mission drives all that they do. Relationships are at the center of the CRS experience and often endure well past graduation. Students appreciate being truly known by the adults in the community. Knowing students so well allows the faculty to support and challenge students to grow and stretch both as learners and as people. An 8th grader noted, "My teachers have helped me understand how I learn and to find my own path." A mix of long-tenured and newer faculty bring a balance of skills and interests to their work at CRS. They are encouraged to share their passions with their students and each other and to stretch and grow themselves. All faculty, staff, and administrators - including the head of school - pitch in when and wherever needed. This feeling of shared purpose and commitment is a defining characteristic of CRS and is critical to its sense of community.

Parents are active partners at Charles River School. With families from 32 cities and towns, the school acts as a nexus of social connection for many in the community. The Parent Association is a thriving organization committed to providing opportunities for parents to meet each other, learn new things, and support the school. Annual PA events include Fall Fiesta, Trivia Night, group hikes, and book group. Parents are also welcome to participate in many school events, although that has been curtailed somewhat due to COVID. CRS has worked hard over the years to become more diverse and inclusive. In a town with limited racial diversity, this work has been intentional, thoughtful, and successful. Currently, 27% of students identify as Black, indigenous, or people of color. A commitment to socioeconomic diversity has led to 28% of students receiving financial aid.

QUICK FACTS

Founded:	1911
Enrollment:	191
Faculty/Staff:	56
Students of Color:	27%
Students Receiving Financial Aid:	28%
Budget:	\$8,500,000
Endowment:	\$10,400,000

Charles River School

Head of School Position Statement

START DATE: JULY 1, 2023



CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL

Students share a special bond that is developed both structurally and organically. While they spend most of their time with their grades, CRS students have frequent interaction with older and younger peers. The Buddy Program pairs younger students with older students—PreKindergarten and Kindergarten with 7th and 8th grade, 1st grade with 4th grade, for example—and they participate in activities together throughout the school year. The older students serve as excellent role models and both the big and little buddies benefit from the interactions and friendships. Weekly assemblies happen on Friday mornings, but monthly Sharing Assemblies are seen as the epitome of community at CRS. Here students showcase something they've been working on as a class, individually, or with friends; performances include projects related to classroom curricula, musical pieces, duets, or even original speeches or poems. No matter the skill level, all who attend—faculty, staff, students, and parents—cheer enthusiastically.

PROGRAM

Charles River School was founded as a progressive school and remains committed to that ideal through an innovative, experiential academic program that engages students through discovery and instills in them a love of learning. The co-teaching model employed at CRS (two full-time teachers dedicated to each classroom) enables teachers to engage and challenge all students appropriately. Curriculum is designed and delivered using a thematic approach, delving deeply into subjects and linking disciplines through broad themes. Ranging from the study of The Silk Road in Grade 3/4 to Perspectives on Justice in Grades 7 & 8, teachers integrate Language Arts, Social Studies, World Languages, Science, Mathematics, and the Arts around the themes. Students experience simulations of historical events, employ primary sources and authentic artifacts, reflect, hypothesize, and discuss, and document their learning through writing and art. Thematic



Charles River School

Head of School Position Statement

START DATE: JULY 1, 2023



CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL

classrooms at CRS invite learners with different styles to learn from one another and challenge them to extract and apply patterns in their own learning. The skills, confidence, and self-knowledge developed by CRS graduates serve them well in secondary school and beyond. A Learning Support Team provides appropriate resources to support students' different learning needs. Learn more about the curriculum on the school's [website](#).

In addition to the academic program, CRS offers robust extracurricular offerings. Interscholastic sports start in 4th grade and include soccer, field hockey, basketball, cross country, flag football, tennis, track and lacrosse. The emphasis of the athletic program is on the development of skills, teamwork, sportsmanship, and risk-taking. Other extracurricular activities include chorus, MathCounts, Model United Nations, and Speech Team. Summer is also a busy time at CRS. Charles River School Summer (formerly Charles River Creative Arts Program) has been a mainstay for children in the area for many years. Other summer options include Nature and STEM, Summer Launchpad: Innovation and Entrepreneurship Institute, and the CIT Leadership Program.



Charles River School

Head of School Position Statement

START DATE: JULY 1, 2023



CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL

STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES

Charles River School has many strengths on which the next head of school will be able to build—among them are a compelling mission, a palpable sense of warmth and community that is cherished by all, faculty who are as committed to progressive education as they are to their students, a campus purpose-built to support the needs of children, the whole-child approach, the curriculum, and a spirit of innovation that has driven the school forward throughout its history.

At the same time, CRS faces challenges, some of which are common to small independent schools (including the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic) and others that are unique to the school, its history, and place in the market. In working with the Board, Administration, Faculty, and Staff, the next Head of School should be prepared to:

- Develop and articulate a vision for the near-term and long-term future of the school;
- Set goals, marshal resources, and deploy them appropriate to the school's strategic priorities;
- Articulate a clear identity in the market in which families have excellent public, parochial, and independent school options;
- Solidify Charles River School's position as the premier PreK-8 day school for progressive education in Boston/Metro West;
- Build on mission-driven diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts that endeavor to foster a sense of belonging, ensuring the ability to thrive for all members of the CRS community;
- Plan for long-term financial sustainability that includes a continued commitment to financial aid, paying down debt, and addressing deferred maintenance;
- Deliver on ambitious goals with limited resources and a lean administration;
- Evaluate, measure, and articulate the effectiveness of CRS's program;
- Balance autonomy of the faculty to develop and deliver curricula that serve students with the need for accountability to an overall scope and sequence, ensuring measurable outcomes;
- Support faculty, staff, and administrators to ensure excellence, sense of community, shared purpose, and healthy morale.



Charles River School

Head of School Position Statement

START DATE: JULY 1, 2023



CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL



THE POSITION

The Search Committee encourages both current heads of school and other school leaders to consider this opportunity. Charles River School is committed to providing competitive compensation, including on-campus housing for the next head of school and their family.

A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate the following skills, values, and experiences:

- Hands-on leadership: the head of CRS thrives on wearing many hats within the school;
- Collaborative leadership style characterized by being available to all in the community, seeking input from others, willingness to delegate, and the ability to make difficult decisions;
- Proven record of demonstrated leadership skill in a complex organization;
- High emotional intelligence; enjoys bringing people together in common cause;
- Innovative and entrepreneurial with a desire to identify opportunities for the school and the skill and drive to go after them;

- An effective oral and written communicator across all constituencies and in terms of both tone and clarity;
- Demonstrated commitment and skill to lead a diverse and inclusive community;
- Capacity and excitement to be an effective fundraiser;
- Experience with both admissions and secondary school placement and the desire to understand the Boston/Metro West independent school market;
- Ability to manage difficult conversations with sensitivity and conviction;
- Experience with progressive pedagogy;
- Appreciation for the value of the PreK through grade 8 model;
- Approachable, relatable, and inclusive.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Charles River School has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next Head of School. To apply, interested candidates should prepare a cover letter, a current resume, and a personal statement. Candidates are requested to submit these materials online at: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

For an initial inquiry or to nominate a potential candidate for this exciting leadership position, please contact RG175 consultants, Jerry Katz jkatz@RG175.com and/or Tony Featherston tfeatherston@RG175.com.

Application Deadline: **March 1, 2022**

Start Date: **July 1, 2023**