



# Community Preparatory School

Head of School

Information for Candidates

Providence, Rhode Island

July 1, 2024



## HISTORY / OVERVIEW

Nearly 40 years ago, Dan Corley sat in his living room with a group of parents and community leaders to create a middle school. He chose the name "Community" to emphasize parent, volunteer, and neighborhood participation – as well as the diversity of the student body. Parents selected "Preparatory" to stress academic commitment. In the fall of 1984, Community Preparatory School opened with 25 students and three teachers in rented classrooms at the John Hope Settlement House.

Community Prep's growth and progress – a constant upward trajectory – reflect its evolving maturity. Today, the school proudly recognizes 930 graduates and a faculty of 13 dedicated educators. Its cherished 'Beloved Community' has been thoughtfully nurtured and continues to provide students with academic rigor and exceptional opportunities.



### ***Mission***

**At Community Preparatory School, we empower our diverse student body to reach full academic and leadership potential while building a Beloved Community.**

Community Preparatory School serves culturally and economically diverse students who are well qualified to benefit from a rigorous academic education in an atmosphere of mutual respect. By engaging with all facets of our students—intellectual curiosity, joyful learning, awareness of their own strengths, the rewards and satisfaction of determination, and a deep connection to our community and the larger world—we prepare our students to thrive in the most competitive high schools and to become community leaders.



Community Prep challenges students to become confident, independent learners and develop a strong sense of public service through community service and stewardship. We engage parents, students, and teachers in goal-setting and planning that ensures academic and social success for each student.

### ***Inclusion***

**At Community Preparatory School, "inclusion" is an umbrella term that includes race, gender, ethnicity, culture, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, social/economic class, physical and learning differences, and religion, as well as other characteristics that contribute to each individual's full identity.**

Our goal is to nurture and sustain an environment in which all—students, alumni, families, faculty, staff, trustees, volunteers, and visitors—are recognized and valued both as members of the school community and as irreplaceable individuals.

The ideal that guides us is Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision of the "Beloved Community": widely different groups of people bound together with love and respect, working toward a just society, and understanding that our differences are our strengths. In pursuit of this goal, we are committed to moving from mere tolerance to active work against discrimination within our community and in the world. We will help students to become leaders in the fight against intolerance and teach them to work toward a just and equitable society. We understand that achieving our goal requires dedication and perseverance. We ask everyone in our community to commit themselves to this goal.



## PROGRAM

### **R.E.S.P.E.C.T.**

Responsible role model  
Enthusiasm  
Support  
Preparedness  
Effort  
Challenge & communication  
Trustworthiness & truthfulness



Education at Community Prep is a partnership between the school and the family. In partnership with families, Community Prep helps students work toward success in every aspect of life. While the school's curriculum focuses primarily on preparing students to meet the high demands of college-preparatory high schools, they also encourage social and emotional learning using the Responsive Classroom™ approach.

Parental interest, involvement, and support of students (as exemplified in the school's core values of RESPECT), are essential. The school's core values of RESPECT (Responsible Role Model, Enthusiasm, Support, Preparedness, Effort, Challenge and Communication, and Trustworthiness & Truthfulness) are outlined in the student-parent-teacher contracts. In these contracts, the promise is made to make the most of the Community Prep educational opportunity and to honor its core values.

### **Community Prep At A Glance**

Founded: 1984

Grades: Grades 4-8

Total Enrollment: 136 Students

45% female

55% male

42% Children of Immigrants or  
immigrants themselves

Typical Class Size: 19

Teaching Faculty: 13

2022-2023 Tuition: \$17,600

Operating Budget: \$3.15M

Endowment: \$34M

Debt: \$4M

Percent of Students receiving substantial  
Financial Assistance: 91%

Average Financial Aid Award: \$15,600

Accreditations & Affiliations: AISNE



## ***Curriculum***

The school is divided into four learning families (4th-5th grade, 6th, 7th, and 8th). Each learning family has a faculty team responsible for teaching the four core disciplines: language arts, math, science and social studies. Students use Chromebooks, which are fully integrated in the curriculum, in their classrooms. In addition, all students have Spanish, health, creative arts, social emotional learning, technology and physical education classes. The overarching goal of the creative arts program (music/dance, visual art) is to help students develop the ability to use skills, media, tools and processes to express themselves in one or more of the creative arts.

At the outset of every marking period, students, parents, and teachers meet to set personal goals for the student. Students regularly review progress toward these goals. All members of the student-parent-teacher team must contribute toward achieving these goals, and the goals are assessed and modified at subsequent meetings.

The math curriculum at Community Prep is rigorous. Students in grades four through six study Math in Focus: Singapore Math. This program is fully aligned with the Common Core, and students apply the big ideas from each unit of study to solve challenging, real-world problems. Community Prep students take pre-algebra in grade seven and Algebra in grade eight.

Community Prep's middle school language arts department recently adopted the Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing from the Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project. These units are Common Core aligned and bring together thirty years of research on best practices. Teachers give students the tools they need to self-assess their writing, so they can write confidently in any genre and craft highly effective arguments.

The school uses the Responsive Classroom™ approach -- a collection of teaching practices designed to enhance the quality of both academic and social skills development. The Responsive Classroom™ includes a balance of teacher-directed instruction and child-initiated learning, and it fosters caring behavior and problem-solving ability both socially and academically. Students begin each day with a 30-minute classroom meeting to build community and learn social skills.

Community service has a special place in Community Prep's curriculum. Many of the community service projects are conducted in the immediate neighborhood - some are local, school-based projects while others reach into the surrounding community. Projects have included: collecting canned goods for needy families, being "guest readers" at a local Head Start program, teaching younger students, supporting a school in Maasai Mara, collecting toiletries for Amos House, participating in the Broad Street Initiative's community clean-up, and a school-wide recycling program.

At Community Prep, there is far more to teaching than reading, writing and arithmetic. Through inspired teaching, their dedicated faculty instills in students a quest for knowledge that lasts a lifetime.

## ATHLETICS

Community Prep's athletics program is all about teamwork, learning skills, and having fun. Students work hard and give their all, and they have the victories to show for it.

Community Prep students in grades 6-8 are encouraged to join any of the athletics programs.

Athletics offered include:

- Soccer
- Volleyball
- Cross Country
- Basketball
- Track
- Baseball





## FUTURE LEADERSHIP PROFILE

### ***Interview Base***

The Board of Trustees of Community Preparatory School is conducting a national search to identify a new Head of School. To that end, Deirdre Ling of Educators Collaborative facilitated a retreat for the Board of Trustees dedicated to outlining the search process. While on campus she met with administrative staff and had phone conversations with others. Subsequently, input was sought from the entire community via an electronic survey. Based on this work the following represents a summary of Community Prep's strengths, the challenges it faces in the next three to five years, and qualities and traits sought after in the next Head of School.

### ***Strengths of Community Preparatory School***

- Community Preparatory School enjoys an outstanding reputation in the Providence community for its academic rigor and its commitment to serving an economically diverse population of students.
- The school offers a student-centered education. Class sizes are small, and students are intellectually challenged. A culture of high expectations encourages them to find their passions.

- The school has retained a dedicated and loyal faculty, many of whom are long-tenured and masters of their respective disciplines.
- A strong curriculum prepares students well for high school and beyond.
- The spirit of community is palpable and is based upon mutual respect and kindness.
- Community Prep is fiscally strong. Highly successful fundraising and prudent stewardship have yielded a sizable endowment.
- CP graduates go on to high school and further education. A few alumni have returned to the school to teach.
- There is ample space for expansion and the school enjoys a harmonious relationship with its neighbors.
- The Board champions the school's mission and is actively and appropriately engaged.

### ***Challenges for the School and the New Head***

- Define and market the value of a CP education in the face of increased competition from other independent and charter schools in the area that have increased their efforts to enroll diverse students
- Consider the costs and benefits of expanding to a K-8 model
- Retain and replenish a dedicated and long-tenured faculty



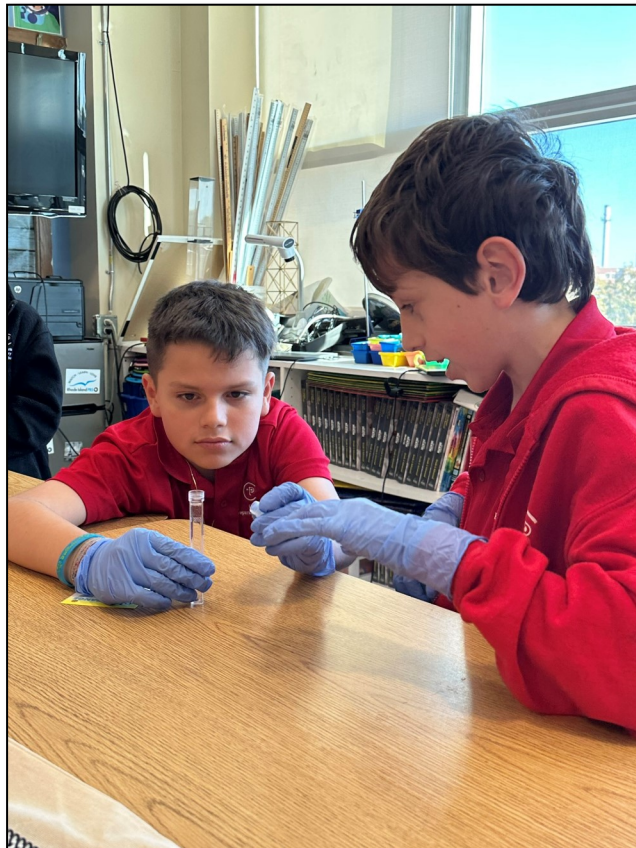




- Promote excellent communication within the school community and community at large
- Attract new sources of revenue and support for strategic priorities—among them additional facilities space and refurbishment
- Consider appropriate size and composition of the Board
- Maintain and enhance outstanding academic and extracurricular programs
- Stay abreast of the evolving educational landscape, bringing best practices to Community Prep that are consistent with the school's foundational underpinnings

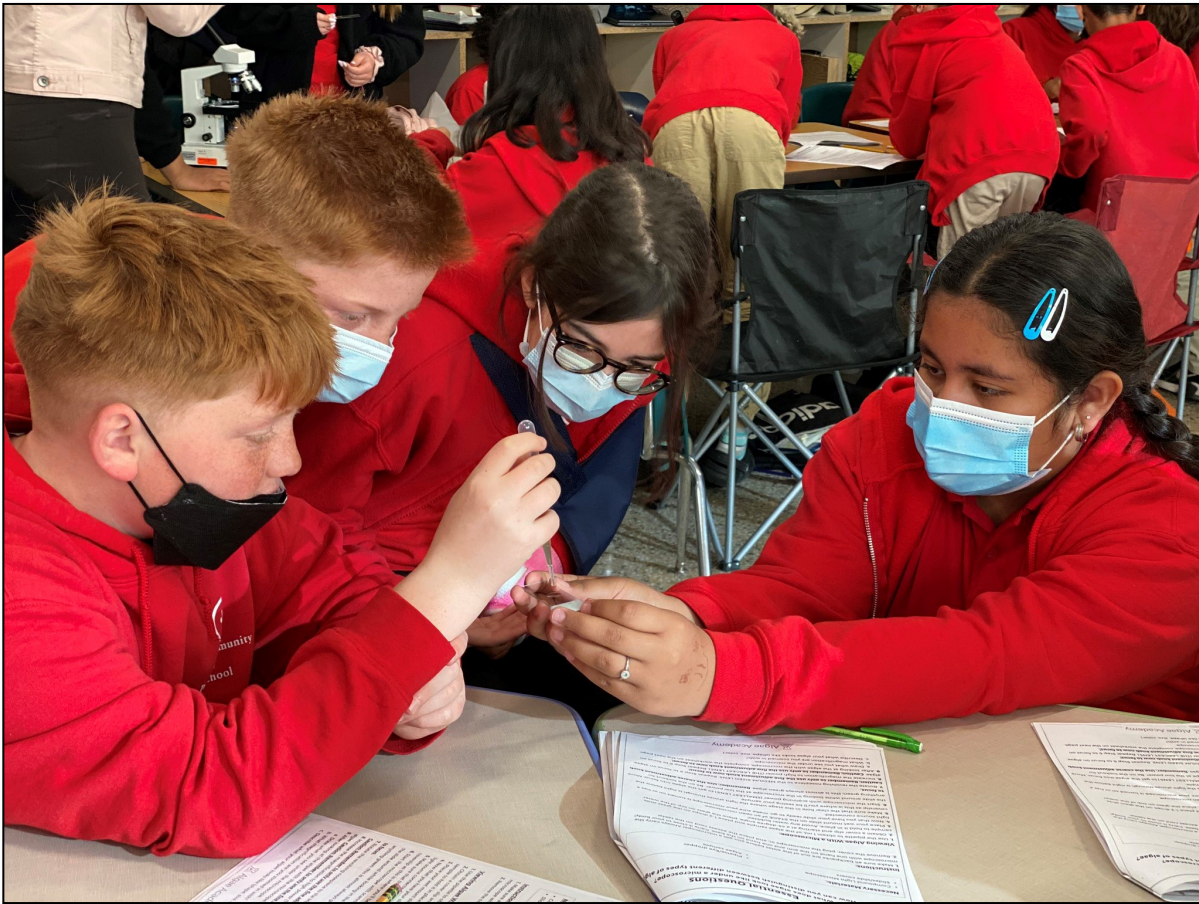
### ***Characteristics of the Next Head of School***

The next leader of Community Preparatory School should:



- Be passionate about the mission and culture of the school, respecting its unique strengths and building upon them
- Understand the demographics of the students the school serves and be committed to the principles of equity, inclusion, social justice and belonging
- Engage actively in the day-to-day life of the school and be visible and accessible to students, faculty and staff
- Be forward thinking about what will best prepare students for high school and beyond
- Be a tone setter, culturally fluent, empathic and emotionally generous
- Have a distributive management style that fosters collaboration

- Mentor teachers and administrators and support them in their professional development
- Model excellent oral and written communication skills
- Demonstrate sound fiscal acumen in the business and operational side of the school
- Serve as the spokesperson for the school, building upon the community engagement initiatives under way--developing new relationships and strengthening existing ones
- Embrace the challenges and opportunities of fundraising in partnership with the board and cultivate a new generation of donors



## **Conclusion**

The ideal Head of School will be a leader who enjoys the day-to-day life of the school, is hands-on and committed to be a presence in the lives of students. S/he will celebrate academic excellence while continuing to strengthen the school's social justice culture and mission. With the completion of a beautiful new athletic facility and property acquisition adjacent to the school allowing for the possibility of programmatic expansion, the new Head will partner with the board to imagine Community Prep's future as it continues to admirably serve the Providence community.

## SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials by February 15, 2023:

- EC Summary Sheet and Disclosure Statement  
(Contact Deirdre Ling for these documents)
- Letter of Interest addressed to the Search Committee
- Current Resume
- Statement of Educational Leadership Philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information  
(name, relationship to candidate, phone and email addresses)

Application materials are to be sent electronically via email to:

Deirdre Ling, Partner, Educators Collaborative  
Email: [daling@comcast.net](mailto:daling@comcast.net)  
Phone: 508-423-1605

