



Denver Waldorf Information for Candidates

School Director Search For August 1, 2023



Welcome to The Denver Waldorf School!

Entering the warm, inviting vestibule of the Denver Waldorf School you know immediately there is something unique and intriguing about this school. The comforting smell of fresh bread baking wafts throughout the Early Childhood classrooms. Harmonious notes (sometimes!) can be heard from young musicians playing stringed instruments. Elementary school students may be jumping rope in the hall as they master multiplication. In the Middle School hallway you might find 8th graders engaged in what at first glance looks like cooking but is actually an inorganic chemistry experiment. Turn the corner into the Festival Hall, and High School students are enacting scenes from *Hamlet*, honing public speaking skills as well as their understanding of Shakespeare. Colorful examples of art from every age and grade adorn the walls, and multi-dimensional creations that have been carefully stitched, forged, molded, and chiseled are displayed throughout the campus.

The sense of caring and community is palpable here. Teachers exude a passion for their work and a deep love for their students. Grounded by a penetrating knowledge of Waldorf education and child development, faculty truly see and know every child before them, recognizing the unique potential of each as developing human beings. Collaborative yet independent, traditional yet innovative, teachers at DWS strive to inspire students' critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and artistic expression, preparing them to become capable, compassionate, and contributing global citizens.



This is Waldorf
education.

This is The Denver
Waldorf School.





Nimble and Agile

Reflecting the pioneering, rugged spirit of the surrounding Rocky Mountains and early Western settlers, DWS takes pride in its nimble, agile culture. Described by one faculty member as “scrappy,” the school has grown from its birth as a preschool in the founders’ home to a comprehensive and expansive PS-12 program enrolling nearly 300 students. Over the past 50 years, DWS has demonstrated an enduring capacity to seize opportunities, meet challenges, and respond to an ever changing educational, social, and financial landscape. Entrepreneurial, resilient, and forward thinking while holding the century-old fundamental pillars of Waldorf education at its core, The Denver Waldorf School community continues to chart an exciting path forward.

A leader seeking an opportunity to guide a truly mission-driven, inclusive community that works in respectful partnership with enthusiasm and intentionality will find their home at **The Denver Waldorf School**.

More than Mountains

While best known for its nickname as the ‘Mile High City,’ Denver offers far more than a majestic landscape and unparalleled access to nature. World-class museums, first-rate breweries, and a flourishing artisanal and craft food scene—Denver has it all, including 300 days of sunshine. For the sports enthusiast, you can choose from an array of professional teams as well as find your home on an ultimate frisbee field, a bike trail, or a cliff face.

The largest city in Colorado and home to over 700,000 people, Denver offers both the cosmopolitan feel of a large city and the folksy intimacy of a small-town throughout its distinctive neighborhoods. Located a mile from the University of Denver, the urban campus of DWS encompasses an entire city block and offers not only on-site green space but easy access to expansive open areas and a community garden in nearby Harvard Gulch Park and beyond. Younger students enjoy daily walks exploring nature while older students have only to cross the street to a large field for cross country and ultimate frisbee practice, or take the lightrail to head downtown for a class trip.

Love the outdoors but hate to give up city life? No need to choose at **The Denver Waldorf School**—both are abundant.



At-a-Glance

- Founded: 1974
- Grades: Pre-K - Grade 12
- Total Enrollment: 296
- Student/Teacher Ratio: ECE 1:9, 1st grade 1:11, 2nd-8th 1:18, HS 1:20
- 2022-2023 Tuition:
\$18,685 (K-4) \$19,185 (6-8) \$21,610 (9-12)
- Operating Budget: \$5.5M
- Debt: \$2.8M
- Endowment: \$1M
- Reserves: \$800,000
- Annual Fund: \$270,000
- Financial Assistance Budget: \$977,000
(includes scholarships and remission)
- Percent of Students receiving
Financial Assistance: 35%
- Accreditations & Affiliations: Association of Colorado Independent Schools (ACIS), Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN)



Mission

Founded on Rudolf Steiner's humanitarian curriculum, The Denver Waldorf School awakens and inspires students' critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and artistic expression, preparing them to bring relevant contributions to the world.

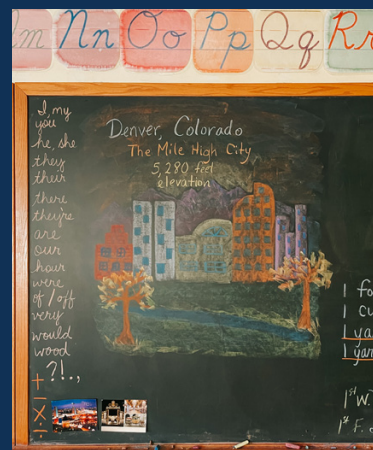
Waldorf Education — 100 Years Young

Often thought of as a century-old movement still ahead of its time, Waldorf education evolves from a keen understanding of human development that responds to the emerging needs of the growing child. Rigorous, interdisciplinary, experiential, and always inspiring, Waldorf education aims to foster joyful life-long learning in all students, enabling them to fully develop their unique capacities.

Professors who have taught Waldorf students across many academic disciplines and a wide range of campuses—from State Universities to Ivy League—note that Waldorf graduates have the ability to integrate thinking; to assimilate information as opposed to memorizing isolated facts; to be flexible, creative and willing to take intellectual risks; and are leaders with high ethical and moral standards who take initiative and are passionate to reach their goals. Waldorf graduates are easily recognized for their integrative skills and highly sought after across all professions and post-high school pursuits.

Spend a day at The Denver Waldorf School and you will see that music and math, dance and drama, science and social studies, literature and language, are not simply subjects to be read about and tested. They are experienced in the classroom, on the playground, on the stage, and in the mountains and forests. Through these hands-on experiences, DWS students cultivate their intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual capacities to be individuals confident in their abilities, certain of their paths, and ready to be of service to the world.

Creative and child-centered, innovative and grounded in research, the educational program at The Denver Waldorf School inspires, challenges, and supports students to discover and develop into their best selves—and to have fun along the way.



A Glimpse into Waldorf Pedagogy

Wonder, reverence, and joy are at the heart of the **Early Childhood** program. A young child's day is grounded in observation, exploration, imagination, and building social connections with teachers and friends. Through creative play, purposeful work, and circle time children are encouraged to imagine and play, both following their own initiative and learning to cooperate with others. Outdoor play leads to a rich understanding of the earth's seasons and provides a foundation for deeper study of plants, animals, weather, geology, and other natural sciences.

In the **Elementary School** years, children learn best when academics are conveyed through painting, drama, music, storytelling, and other hands-on experiences that stir their emotions. Each day follows a familiar cadence — the morning includes a two-hour main lesson where students take time to record insights as art, words, and other creative elements, followed by a chance to relax, play, and process through recess. During the rest of the morning, students dive into special subjects, such as music and Spanish, while the afternoon brings more physical activity with movement or practical arts.

In **Middle School**, the content and quality of subjects expand significantly to meet the needs of pre-adolescents. While deepening the work with previously encountered material, the curriculum introduces new subjects with the goal of guiding students to direct their gaze enthusiastically and sympathetically out into the world. MS students survey literature, history, and science from ancient to modern times while continuing to immerse themselves in art, theater, music, movement, Spanish, and a capstone project celebrating the culmination of the grade school journey.

The **High School** offers a liberal arts education, consciously aimed to nurture and encourage adolescent ideals. The experience aims to balance the students' academic needs with their longing to find meaning in the world. Movement helps spark students' circulation and bring them together. A long, uninterrupted seminar activates their minds. Music classes and elective courses promote the development of healthy emotional expression through creation. Students cultivate their ability to think critically, organize ideas and information, and clearly present thoughts through an academically challenging mix of math, humanities, physics, life sciences, chemistry, world language, practical, industrial and fine arts, music, drama, and movement.





Diversity & Inclusion: A Journey Not a Destination

Waldorf education espouses principles of respect for human dignity and recognizes that diversity, inclusivity and equity is a journey of both moral and educational importance. DWS believes diversity and inclusiveness strengthen education and foster the essential element of respect that prepares students to live and work in a global environment. The school fundamentally recognizes and values the many people and perspectives of the world. It honors the freedom, equality, individuality, and unique capacities of each child and is dedicated to creating an inclusive community that respects and affirms each of its members.

Acting on this commitment, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee endeavors to create an inclusive community of faculty, staff, parents, and students by working to address and dismantle oppression within our DWS community. The committee helps shape The Denver Waldorf School as a place where families, faculty, and staff of all backgrounds feel welcomed and valued, where diversity of identity and thought is embraced, and no form of discrimination is tolerated.

**At The Denver Waldorf School,
this critical work is never done.**

Values

At The Denver Waldorf School, education is a lifelong process for students, families, faculty and staff alike. We value:

- Truth, beauty, and goodness, which foster a healthy emotional and intellectual life.
- Social renewal, which includes service to others, stewardship of our planet, and community partnership
- Organization integrity, which compels us to be thoughtful in the way we organize and run our school.





Governance is Shared and Collaborative

Operating within a modified Head of School model, The Denver Waldorf School distributes governance responsibilities across three distinct groups, offering shared leadership opportunities and governance responsibilities held by the Board, faculty, and the School Director. The result is a high-functioning, respectful, and transparent partnership that holds the mission and future of the school at the center of decision making.

- **The Board of Trustees** is responsible for the financial and legal well-being of the school. The Board of Trustees, made up of teachers, parents, guardians, and community members, is responsible for contributing to the strategic direction of the school. The Board is responsible for hiring, supervising, and evaluating the School Director.
- **The College Leadership Council (CLC)** is accountable for spiritual and meditative studies, educational programing and curriculum, as well as the hiring and evaluation of teachers. The CLC meets weekly throughout the school year, and prior to each meeting, holds a study open to all faculty and staff.
- **The Administrative Staff** provides the infrastructure and logistical support for the activities of the school. The School Director is accountable for the smooth operation of the school. The administrative team and support staff are each involved in the day-to-day operations of the school.

Looking to the Future

Looking to the next 50 years, The Denver Waldorf School is poised to chart a new and exciting path forward. The school seeks a School Director who enthusiastically embraces and champions the school's commitment to Waldorf education and shares its deep belief in the inherent goodness and potential of every human being. The successful candidate will bring a leadership approach distinguished by enthusiasm, resilience, curiosity, and confidence. They will also bring the skills and energy needed to manifest a compelling, sustainable vision for the future of The Denver Waldorf School.

The Board of Trustees is conducting an international search to identify this leader. Engaging in an inclusive process that invites feedback from the entire community, the following represents a summary of the distinctive strengths, the challenges and opportunities, and skills and attributes desired in the next School Director.

Distinctive Qualities of The Denver Waldorf School



- The community's shared understanding of Waldorf education and reverence for the vision of joyful childhood is deeply rooted and unwavering
- All children are seen and celebrated for their unique gifts and unlimited potential as developing human beings
- Members of the DWS community feel cared for and supported, and there is a deep appreciation for both the diversity of individuals and commonality of shared values
- The school embraces a deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion across all areas of work and strives to deepen knowledge, awareness, reflection, and advocacy on issues of racial justice
- A highly talented and dedicated faculty brings a breadth and depth of pedagogical expertise, knowledge of child development, and genuine love for the children before them
- Thoughtful attention to the campus and classrooms ensures peaceful, warm, and nurturing spaces that offer a safe haven for students
- A vibrant culture that both honors tradition and seeks innovation—nimbleness and agility encourage continued self-reflection and improvement
- Fostering healthy social relationships among children and adults alike, DWS develops high emotional intelligence its community members including empathy, compassion, kindness, and respect
- A high-functioning, respectful, and transparent partnership among the Board, the College Leadership Council, and the administrative leadership holds the mission and future of the school and the well being of its students at the center of decision making

Challenges and Opportunities for the Next School Director

- Work in partnership with Board and College Leadership Council to develop a sustainable financial plan in this post-pandemic period that aligns with pedagogical intentions, demographic trends, and fiscal constraints
- Communicate clearly and broadly the distinctive value of Waldorf education and The Denver Waldorf School to recruit and retain mission-aligned students, faculty, and staff
- Provide thoughtful leadership in developing the strategic vision of DWS that generates excitement and shared investment in the school's future
- Foster a professional culture rooted in a shared commitment to Waldorf education, collaboration, and respect that supports a healthy work/life balance
- Utilizing the campus master plan, develop a strategy to generate and allocate the financial resources needed to address issues of deferred building maintenance
- Guide the community through a new and evolving post-pandemic landscape with grace, composure, strength, and enthusiasm
- Continue to develop a shared understanding of the school's commitment to diversity, inclusivity, social justice, and cultural competency that is reflected in faculty hiring, student recruitment, and curriculum design, and nurtures a culture of belonging for all students, faculty, staff, parents, and community members
- Following two years of pandemic-related stresses including student and staff turnover, intentionally strive to rebuild the strong sense of community connection and trust that has long characterized the school
- Continue to examine how the school meets the needs of today's children in the modern world while grounding their educational experience in the enduring foundation of Waldorf education



Desired Skills and Attributes of the New Leader

- A flexible, open-minded, inquiring, and curious educator—taking a genuine interest in the work of the faculty and staff who form the heart of the school
- Innovative, creative, and forward thinking, while honoring a sense of tradition and core values
- Knowledgeable about or with a deep curiosity to understand Waldorf pedagogy and governance philosophy
- An excellent listener who is approachable, invites and facilitates dialogue, values input, and takes action, while communicating with clarity, candor and authenticity.
- A visionary leader who can think strategically in partnership with a hard-working Board and College Leadership Council to capably advance initiatives while managing community expectations and the impact of change
- Commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive community, where all feel valued and welcome
- A passionate advocate for the school in the larger community, skilled in building relationships within and beyond the DWS community, generating excitement about the school's mission and cultivating philanthropic investment in its future
- Courageous and resilient, with a leadership presence of strength and grace that inspires trust and respect
- Demonstrated success in leadership roles, particularly in navigating periods of transition and change, and the capacity to build bridges, find consensus, and make difficult decisions
- Proficient understanding of strategic financial sustainability and its key levers, budget development, facility management, student and faculty recruitment and retention, enrollment management and marketing strategies
- A servant leader who can prioritize, delegate, empower and inspire others, work in partnership, and hold people accountable in ways that support continued growth



Summary of the Search Process

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials by January 3:

- EC Summary Sheet and Disclosure Statement (Contact Tracy Bennett 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:

Tracy Bennett, Educators Collaborative
Email: tbennett@educatorscollaborative.com
Phone: 425-466-4748

Compensation

Compensation and benefits are competitive for this role:

- Annual salary of \$125,000-\$150,000 (dependent on experience)
- Health, dental, and vision benefits
- 100% tuition remission (one child)
- 2% retirement match (after one year)
- 5 weeks of vacation

The Search Schedule

The Search Committee plans to identify a preliminary group of candidates to interview (virtually) in late January. From this group the Search Committee will select finalists for 2-day campus visits in February. The Board expects to reach a decision shortly after finalist visits with the new Director to begin on or about August 1, 2023. The Denver Waldorf School is dedicated to the principles of equal employment opportunity in any term, condition, or privilege of employment.

