



## Indy At-A-Glance

Founded: April 17, 1978

Grades: Three years—Eighth Grade

Total Enrollment: 427

Student/Teacher Ratio: 11:1

Student/All Staff Ratio:  
6.33:1

Faculty & Staff: 81, 41% of  
Faculty with advanced  
degrees

Operating Budget: \$9.5M

Debt: \$5.6M as of June 30,  
2021

Endowment: \$8.3M as of  
June 30, 2021

Total Donations for FY:  
\$1,065,000

Financial Aid Budget: \$1.8M

Percent of Students receiving  
Financial Assistance: 44%

Average Financial Aid Award:  
\$7,700

Accreditations: Middle States  
Association

Affiliations: NAIS, DAIS,  
NBOA, ADVIS, Beau Biden  
Foundation

# The Independence School Head of School Search

1300 Paper Mill Road | Newark, Delaware 19711

Independent Day School: Co-ed

Applications Due: July 22, 2022

For July 1, 2023

## HISTORY & OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL

The Independence School, is an independent, co-educational day school welcoming students age 3 through 8th grade. It was founded in 1978 by parents seeking a challenging education that would be strong in the academic areas, arts, foreign languages and athletics. Growth was significant, and the school purchased 16 acres of land on Paper Mill Road in January of 1980.

Today, the school occupies a beautiful 90-acre campus in the Pike Creek Valley (near Hockessin, Newark, and Wilmington, DE; and nearby communities in Maryland and Pennsylvania). The building features a 900-seat auditorium, a library/media center, acoustically designed music rooms, science laboratories, a full-size gymnasium, multi-purpose rooms, indoor rock wall, meeting spaces, art rooms and a gallery. In 2021, a 57,000-square-foot Outdoor Classroom opened, with more than a dozen distinct learning areas incorporating materials designed specifically to take advantage of learning outside. The school property features streams, ponds and woods, and is home to the well-preserved ruins of one of the largest and oldest barns in the state.

## MISSION & CORE VALUES

**Mission:** The Independence School inspires students to become independent, intellectually curious individuals who possess an exceptional spirit for learning, leadership and citizenship.

**Core Values:** Respect, Responsibility, Integrity

## INDY SCHOOL PROGRAM INFORMATION

### ACADEMICS

The Independence School website is very robust and informative. Please [visit their site](#) for more information on each program section and to explore what makes the Indy Experience.



#### Early Childhood

The littlest learners thrive within our Early Childhood program. Whether in preschool (age 3) or pre-K (age 4), these naturally curious children are attuned to all the wonders of the world that they encounter. During these formative years, students are given ample time to explore their surroundings, discover, and build meaning through play, resulting in them becoming inspired to delight in the learning process itself.

#### Lower School

As students grow during the Lower School years of Kindergarten through fourth grade, they are transformed to a full-fledged student. The sequential curriculum is rich and engaging, inspiring a love for learning during the important elementary years.



Each year, as children grow and develop, they are given an increasing amount of age-appropriate independence and academic expectations, building a solid foundation for the upcoming transition to Middle School. Learning opportunities such as the Mammal Zoo (first grade), Patriotic Program (third grade) and Economic & Entrepreneurial Education (E3) (fourth grade) are just a few examples of how lessons come alive in meaningful and joyful ways.

## Middle School

Middle School (fifth through eighth grade) at Independence is where students integrate foundational learning with an advanced emphasis on critical thinking and internal motivation. Students are supported as they grow to be self-reliant by managing more – and varied – elements of their educational experience, from classwork to homework to extracurricular activities. Our 8th graders pursue a cross-curricular deep dive into a subject of their interest and present a Capstone project as part of their last semester. Students are prepared to achieve at the highest levels of their capabilities and are ready to excel throughout the remainder of their academic career.



## ARTS

Building an appreciation for the arts begins early at Independence. General music instruction starts in preschool, inspiring young students to participate in the instrumental and choral programs that become available in Lower School. Opportunities to refine skills in the choir, strings orchestra and band continue as students progress through Middle School.



Art class is part of the curriculum at every grade level beginning in preschool, with students exploring a wide variety of fine art methods, including ceramics, in well-equipped art rooms. Students are encouraged to explore and discover through creative expression.

Special field trips to concerts, plays and other cultural venues begin in Early Childhood and continue throughout Middle School, enriching the academic program and adding valuable real-world experiences.



## ATHLETICS

Athletics at Independence serve as an integral component of the school's educational program. The function of our athletic department is to educate the students through their participation in intramural and interscholastic sports. Beyond the development of physical coordination, strength and general athletic skills, our goal is for the student to learn teamwork, sportsmanship and character-building traits inherent in sports and competition.

## SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

There are many aspects of The Independence School that set the school apart, especially the Signature Programs at the heart of the Indy experience:

- Leadership and Character Development
- Center for Wellness, Innovation and Learning (CWIL)
- Writing Excellence
- Mastering STEM
- Outdoor Education



- LeApps (Learning Applications) - A unique research-based curriculum, which utilizes current brain research to help students understand how learning actually happens and gain skills for time management, studying, and mindset.



## SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Independence graduates are known to be well prepared for the transition to high school. A Director of Secondary School Placement manages a multi-step process to help facilitate high school enrollment for each and every student in the grade level. Students are accepted and matriculate to a variety of area independent, parochial, and public schools.

## ADMINISTRATION

### Administrative Team

- Director of Academic Innovation
- Director of Finance & Operations
- Director of Advancement & Enrollment Management
  - Director of Marketing & Communications (currently reports to Advancement but is a member of the administrative team)
  - Head of Lower School (EC1-4th)
  - Head of Middle School (5th-8th)

### Other administrative staff

- Director of Secondary School Placement (part-time responsibility for a full time faculty member)
- Manager of Auxiliary Programs (new position 2022-23)
- Human Resources Manager
- Communications Specialist
- Manager of Admission and Financial Aid
- Advancement Manager
- Advancement Coordinator (part-time)
- Development Manager (part-time)



## ADMISSION ACTIVITY

Academic Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Completed Applications	98	103	139
Accepted	93	93	129
Enrolled (new)	64	66	96
Attrition (not returning)	31	13	24
Total Enrolled	417	408	427

## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We value the contributions of the cultural traditions which form our national heritage and believe that a diverse and inclusive community provides a strong and rich learning environment.

- Encourage and develop cultural empathy and involvement across all areas of school life
- Engage in thoughtful and proactive efforts to encourage and welcome diverse perspectives
- Promote character development and personal integrity to develop sensitive moral citizens
- Create a welcoming environment by integrating our values of integrity, respect, and social responsibility



## FINANCE & FUNDRAISING

The Independence School is financially sound, with an operating budget of approximately \$9.5M. The school's invested endowment funds are \$8.3M and are drawn upon annually at 5% over 12 rolling quarters. Indy also has designated/restricted funds available for use to support school projects, campus improvements, emergencies, etc. Debt of \$5.6M is carried by the school from a building expansion project from less than 20 years ago.

The School exceeded its fundraising goal the past two years. Total funds raised in FY 2020 was \$620,000 and \$1.18M in FY 2021. Annual Fund donations in 2020 were \$234,000 and \$216,000 in 2021. Participation in the Annual Fund is as follows:

Participation	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Trustees	94%	94%	86%
Parents	70%	72%	66%
Faculty/Staff	90%	90%	88%



## GOVERNANCE

The Independence School's Board of Trustees are dedicated volunteers who provide the overall strategic vision and fiduciary oversight that sustains and enhances Independence for current and future students. We are deeply grateful for their leadership, expertise and dedication to our school community.

There are currently 14 Trustees, and a nine-member Advisory Board. The Board of Trustees and Advisory Board are comprised of current and former parents, alumni, and

non-affiliated individuals with specific expertise and an interest in the continued success of The Independence School. The Board of Trustees has six regularly scheduled meetings each year. Trustees are members of at least one of the board committees - Buildings and Grounds, Governance, Finance, Advancement or Head Support.

## FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF THE INDEPENDENCE SCHOOL

The Board of Trustees of The Independence School, a coeducational independent day school located in Newark, Delaware. Founded in 1978, Indy, which has just over 400 students, has launched a national and international search to identify a new Head of School whose tenure will begin July 1, 2023. To assist the Board in this search, Joan Beauregard and Steve Piltch of Educators Collaborative have solicited input from members of the school community during an on-site visit, zoom sessions, and a survey. Those interviewed and surveyed included faculty and staff, students, administrators, current and past parents and trustees, and alumni. The following summary reflects The Independence School's strengths, the emerging challenges and opportunities it faces in the next three to five years, and the personal and professional qualities the trustees and the school seek in the next Head of School.

### Strengths of the School

The following are the most notable strengths of The Independence School:

- A community enriched with faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and students who share a love for and commitment to the core values of respect, responsibility, and integrity, and to the mission: The Independence School inspires students to become independent, intellectually curious individuals who possess an exceptional spirit for learning, leadership, and citizenship.
- Focused on students in early education through middle school years (age 3 through 8th grade), a program rich with offerings in academics, leadership, athletics and the arts.



- A dedicated and experienced faculty and staff who provide a program that inspires excellence, allowing students to discover their passions through a breadth of opportunities both inside and outside the classroom.

- A program that propels students forward to achieve the goals for the most appropriate, and often most competitive, high school placement after Indy. Indy graduates attend a cross-section of the best public, charter, and independent schools in the Greater Wilmington Area and very often are the leaders in these schools.



- A beautiful 90-acre campus featuring a modern and sun-filled facility, including an 900-plus seat performance center, music practice rooms and gymnasium. Classrooms that extend beyond the building and include the property's old stone barn, wetlands and streams, and outstanding new outdoor educational spaces featuring native plantings.
- Hallmark programs in each grade that have become Indy traditions, such as the Patriotic Program and Mini-Society, which create joyous memories endearing the children to this time in their lives.

- The Center for Wellness, Innovation and Learning (CWIL), focused on the social-emotional well-being of students, faculty and staff in the Indy community.
- A learner-centered environment featuring Learning Applications (LeApps), a curriculum which identifies and aids students in developing individual learning strategies.
- A commitment to character, citizenship, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging that revolves around Indy's core values of respect, responsibility and integrity.



- A commitment to creating a sense of school as a safe and welcoming place of learning and growth for students and faculty/staff.
- An investment in continual improvement including a commitment to the Middle States accreditation process.



- A Board of Trustees committed to governing to best practices and serving The Independence School and its community with a range of backgrounds and perspectives.
- A fiscally-sound school with reserves, a growing endowment and the drive and ability to raise funds for continued investment in the school.

### Challenges and Opportunities for the Next Head of School

The responsibilities of the Head of The Independence School, though varied, complicated and numerous, are very rewarding. The following represent the challenges and opportunities that lay in the years ahead.

The next Head of School will consider striving to:

- Provide support for continued program review and evaluation with an eye to align and improve an already strong academic curriculum in all grades and departments.
- Provide support for continued review and evaluation of other programs, including social-emotional and professional practices, to continue to prepare the children for an ever-changing world.



- As faculty retire or transition out of Indy, recruit, hire, onboard and retain exceptionally skilled and dedicated educators who represent a cross-section of backgrounds and experiences.
- Evaluate the administrative structure and staffing to ensure it is sufficiently supportive of the needs of the community, especially relating to internal communication in all areas of the school in an effort to further cultivate understanding and engagement.



- Further develop and implement a marketing, communication, admission and enrollment management plan that will attract and retain an enthusiastic, broad and committed group of families that will find success at Independence.
- Continue to create a community where children, their families and faculty and staff members are welcome, feel valued and truly belong.
- Continue to develop a network of alumni who feel strongly connected to the school.

- Further develop the commitment to outdoor education and provide additional training to educators to maximize the opportunity in all divisions. Leverage the existing on-campus geothermal source of energy and curriculum-based environmental initiatives to deepen the connection to sustainability.
- Determine the best use for current spaces in a cost efficient and mission reinforcing manner.
- Build off of the existing momentum from the current campaign, and develop a plan to maximize fundraising both for operations and special projects and events.



- Continue to focus on financial sustainability: balance tuition adjustments, increase philanthropic support and seek innovative partnerships to grow enrollment keeping in mind the demographic trends in northern New Castle County.



## Characteristics of the Next Head of School

The next Head of The Independence School will be an experienced, approachable, strategic thinker, and visionary leader who will embrace the mission and culture of Indy. They will:

- Be a strong educational leader possessing a natural curiosity, a commitment to academic excellence and pedagogical practice, knowledge about best educational practices, and an open yet discerning view toward innovative approaches that will best serve the students.
- Have a proven record of building diverse, effective teams of outstanding faculty, staff and administrators through exemplary hiring practices, coaching, and mentoring.
- Have strong interpersonal, presentation and communication skills (verbal and written) facilitating work with all constituencies and the ability to manage conversations with sensitivity and discretion.
- Be an approachable, compassionate, steady leader who is able to navigate through challenging times.
- Be a genuinely active learner and listener, striving to understand differing viewpoints and encouraging others to do the same. Have the conviction to be a consensus builder and unifier and the grace and strength to make difficult decisions while following through on the course determined best for the students, the faculty and the School.
- Have an understanding of independent school governance and possess the skills to partner with the Board of Trustees to set priorities and strategy.
- Have an authentic interest and have demonstrated success in interacting with both individual and institutional donors and external communities including the surrounding educational community.
- Be a culturally responsive leader with a strong commitment to nurturing a diverse community that feels a deep sense of belonging.
- Be an engaged, highly visible presence on campus and at school events.
- Have sound financial acumen and working knowledge of school budgeting, fiscal management and facilities management.



## SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

The Independence School is seeking a new Head of School effective July 1, 2023. Ideal candidates will have at least three to five years classroom experience and an advanced degree. People interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials in a single merged Word document by July 22, 2022.

- EC Candidate Summary Sheet and Disclosure Form (request from Joan Beauregard and/or Steve Piltch)
- Letter of Interest addressed to The Independence School Head of School Search Committee
- Current resume
- Statement of Educational Leadership philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information and connection to the candidate (including phone numbers and email addresses)
- Up to three letters of recommendation (optional)

Application materials are to be sent electronically via email to:

Joan Beauregard, Partner, Educators Collaborative, LLC  
jbeau@comcast.net and jbeauregard@educatorscollaborative.com  
206-851-6616

or

Steve Piltch, Partner, Educators Collaborative, LLC  
steve.piltch@gmail.com, spiltch@educatorscollaborative.com  
484-614-6996

Candidates are encouraged to speak personally with Joan Beauregard (206-851-6616) or Steve Piltch (484-614-6996).

The Schedule: The Search Committee plans to identify a preliminary review in mid August. From this group the Search Committee will select finalists for two days of interviews in September. Names of applicants will be kept confidential throughout the process up to the time that the names of finalists are announced to the Indy Community prior to the finalist visits to campus.

The Trustees expect to reach a decision and appoint a Head-Elect in October with the term of office to commence on or about July 1, 2023. Salary and benefits are competitive.

*The Independence School does not discriminate based on race; color; religion; sex; pregnancy; gender identity; sexual orientation; reproductive health decisions; national origin; age (over 40); disability; genetic information; marital status; family responsibilities; past or present military service; status as a volunteer emergency responder; status as a victim of domestic violence, a sexual offense, or stalking; or any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law.*