



Solebury School

A college-preparatory boarding and day school for grades 9 through 12



HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

Position starts July 1, 2026

New Hope, Pennsylvania



EDUCATORS COLLABORATIVE
EXPERTS IN SEARCH, TRANSITION & STRATEGY



The Mission of Solebury School

Solebury School's mission is to create an environment of educational excellence that prepares students for success in college and beyond. In the Solebury community, we strongly value intellectual challenge and academic achievement, creative and independent thinking, mutual respect between students and teachers, deep respect for each individual, and diversity.

An Historic Boarding and Day School in Bucolic New Hope, PA

Solebury School is, in some ways, typical of many excellent boarding and day schools in the United States. Celebrating a rich history as it begins its second century, Solebury continues to provide an outstanding educational program on its beautiful, 140 acre campus in the rolling meadows of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, an hour from Philadelphia and a 90-minute drive from New York City.

But Solebury is intentionally different from most other independent schools. For one, it takes great satisfaction in its unpretentious atmosphere. Everyone—students and faculty alike—is on a first-name basis and students proudly display their individualism in their dress and their choice of courses. There seemingly are no cliques at Solebury. When asked to describe their school, students, teachers, and parents repeatedly use the words “inclusive” and “nurturing”. There is a noticeable lack of elitism or entitlement at the School. Students are happy to be at an informal place where they can be who they truly are and Solebury seems to be sought after for that reason amongst others.



AT A GLANCE

- Founded: 1925
- Enrollment: 245 students
 - » 150 day students
 - » 95 boarders
 - » 20 international boarders from 10 different countries
 - » 33% students of color
- Endowment value: approximately \$15 million
- Current year budget: \$16 million
- Annual Giving: approximately \$570,000 per year
- Full-time teaching faculty members: 42 (plus administrators and others who teach part time)
- Last accreditation: 2024/2025

Solebury's small size relative to other independent schools supports its distinct culture. Currently enrolling 245 students in grades 9 through 12, Solebury has always been intentionally small, and its size helps the School deliver on its mission. Plans are underway to increase the boarding population and the most recent construction project at Solebury resulted in the addition of a new dormitory, Hope Hall, which includes the infrastructure to create additional new dorms in the future. Currently, day students outnumber boarders, but future student body expansion is focused on boarders; the School has recently implemented a very successful and highly regarded plan to better support the lives of its residential students. Day students come from the surrounding area both in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Boarders are mostly from other parts of the US and international students make up a small percentage of overall enrollment (less than 10%) and the School has taken intentional steps in recent years to diversify the number (currently, ten) of countries from which it attracts students.

The School serves a wide range of students—from “high flyers” to those who require accommodations and support. In recent years, top students have been offered admission at colleges and universities such as Dartmouth, Duke, the University of Pennsylvania, Wesleyan, Smith, Amherst, William & Mary, and Brown and the academic program provides extensive opportunities for rigor and challenge to those who seek it in the form of electives, numerous honors and AP courses, and a distinctive academic concentration program. In addition, 50 students are currently part of the well-regarded Bridge Program, which provides tailored support to students to strengthen learning skills, improve time management, or support those whose success is hindered by various learning challenges. These classes are taught in a small group setting by an intentionally designated Learning Specialist and are specifically designed to help students build their executive function skills to aid with staying on track, completing assignments, and developing strategies to achieve the success their intelligence merits. For some students, these programs serve as a “bridge” from a different academic environment to Solebury's rigorous, college-preparatory program. For others, these programs help shift a history of good intentions hindered by missed assignments and unfinished work into a future filled with confidence and pride in their achievements.

Solebury has benefited greatly from steady, consistent leadership. Head of School Tom Wilschutz has deftly guided the School since 2008, following the 19-year headship of his predecessor. This steady leadership has helped Solebury maintain and celebrate its distinct culture and ethos. As it begins its second century, Solebury is ready to welcome its next Head of School, who will provide visionary leadership that supports the School's mission.





Core Values

The Core Values of Solebury—Free Inquiry, Discourse and Equity—provide an eloquent description of the School's distinct culture:

Challenging and Inspiring Academics: We believe that all young people love to learn, and that it is our responsibility to develop a challenging and creative curriculum that makes this curiosity a lifelong trait. We teach students to investigate, to question and to make connections between disciplines. Our academically rigorous curriculum, high expectations, and dedicated teachers ensure that every student is prepared for higher learning.

Students and Teachers—A Partnership in Learning: Since our founding in 1925, strong and positive relationships between students and teachers have been central to the Solebury School experience. By disposing of some formalities that traditionally separate students and faculty, we create a culture of mutual respect. At Solebury, learning truly becomes a joint venture. Energized by the close, working relationships they form with teachers, students perform at their highest level in the classroom and the art room, on the stage, and the athletic field. Through this partnership, students learn to take responsibility for their own learning and lives.

Profound Respect for the Individual: We are guided by a profound respect for the individual, as we recognize the need to balance individual freedom with responsibility to the community. Solebury students do not have to fit a mold. All are valued for the talents and traits they bring to the school; all are encouraged to explore their passions and to make the school stronger through their contributions.

The Value of Diversity: At Solebury, there is an inherent respect for differences, and we are dedicated to embracing diversity in an expansive way. The diversity of our community enriches our school and the experiences of our students. Living and working with people of disparate backgrounds and worldviews enables students to value themselves and others, enhancing their ability to learn, grow, and achieve.

A Relevant Education: Solebury School offers an academic program relevant to the lives of students and to the local, national, and global issues of the day. During their years here, Solebury students develop habits of reflection and critical thinking that are crucial to an understanding of self and society. Recognizing that individual success is intertwined with the larger world, we encourage students to engage in improving their community. A Solebury education is a solid foundation for broad and lasting success.



A Vibrant School With a Compelling History and Bright Future

Founded by Laurie Erskine, Julian Lathrop, Robert Shaw, and Arthur Washburn, Solebury opened its doors in rented quarters September 1925 with four boys and four teachers. The School's first Headmaster described Solebury's mission at the time to "start a small school with an informal atmosphere, where the needs of each boy would be attended to, where friendship between teachers and pupils would be encouraged, and where a boy would be prepared not only for college, but for life beyond high school." A year later, the founders purchased its present location, the Michener Farm, and Solebury School has continued to grow ever since.

Just down the road from Solebury was the Holmquist School for Girls, founded in 1917. Miss Karlene Holmquist believed, as did Solebury's founders, that each student should be helped to discover and develop her own talents and capabilities. As Solebury and Holmquist grew, the two schools found themselves sharing theatrical productions, a chorus, proms, informal teas, progressive dinners, and card parties. In 1949, the two schools merged to become Solebury School, one of the first coeducational independent schools in the country.

In 2019, Solebury discontinued its small middle school program due to low enrollment and its desire to focus on upper school education. Despite this change, the School's overall enrollment has grown in recent years (including record enrollment in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024), a clear indication of the strength of the School. The School's long range plan includes a goal of increasing enrollment to approximately 300 students in the coming years.

While the School has evolved through the years, Solebury's mission has remained, to provide a challenging college preparatory curriculum that encourages students to explore and develop their individual skills and talents in an informal educational community.



The Academic Program

Solebury provides a distinctive and dynamic academic program that guides students to pursue their passions and inspires them to set and rise to rigorous expectations. As noted above, the academic program provides a wide range of elective opportunities, made possible by the eclectic intellectual interests of an inspirational faculty together with a trimester calendar that encourages both teachers and students to explore their passions. Most administrators also teach a class, bringing them closer to the day-to-day life of faculty and students. Among the many electives offered by teachers are classes in Microbiology, The Arab World, Digital Illustration, Literature of the Undead, and Fighting “Fake News.” Click [here](#) to learn more about the Academic Program at Solebury.

Students have the ability to explore their passions and focus their academic pursuits by choosing a concentration in one of three areas: Global Education, Social Justice, and STEM, and a fourth in Arts to debut in the fall of 2025. Learn more about academic concentrations at Solebury [here](#).

Ahead of many other schools that have since changed their academic schedule to reflect current research, The School changed its schedule ten years ago to better reflect its values and priorities. Classes begin at 8:30—and 9:00 on Wednesdays—to allow students to have a better chance of getting a full night’s sleep. Students never have more than three academic classes a day, each of which meets for 80 minute periods, which allows for classes to cover topics in greater depth without interruption while limiting the number of courses to prepare for each night. Students have the ability to use their free periods studying in various parts of the campus or further exploring their academic passions by working more, for example, on an art project or lab. The year is divided into trimesters, which allows for a large number of electives to be offered.



A Vibrant and Integral Arts Program

One immediately notices the proliferation of student artwork on display when one visits Solebury. It is everywhere, a reflection of the importance of the arts in the curriculum. The School's location in Bucks County, PA—a nationally recognized hub for artists and artistic expression—is one of the reasons why Solebury has been known for its strong arts program since its founding a century ago. Solebury is one of the only schools in the country to offer a Life Drawing class and the School's daily schedule includes a class period dedicated exclusively to the arts. The Arts Program includes classes and activities in theater, ceramics, photography, painting, bookmaking, dance, music, and film. While all Solebury students leave with an appreciation of the arts, several graduates each year generally go on to study the arts in college. Learn more about the Arts Program at Solebury [here](#).



An Athletics Program That Provides Opportunities for All

The Athletics Program at Solebury is focused on both participation and competition. The size of the School allows for athletes of all levels—those with aspirations to play in college, those who are able to compete intensely in high school, and those who simply want to be part of a team and get some exercise—to participate and flourish. The hub of the program is the School's well-maintained Athletic Center, which houses a 21,500-square-foot gymnasium, a multi-purpose room for wrestling and dance, and a fitness center. Outdoors, the School is nearing the completion of a new baseball field and has plans to resurface its six-lane running track as well as construct new tennis courts. Learn more about Athletics at Solebury [here](#).



FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

Solebury is overseen by a 20-person Board of Trustees, which provides appropriate guidance around strategic initiatives and financial sustainability. The Board includes representatives from alumni and alumni parents; recent efforts to diversify the composition of the Board have been notably successful.

The School's endowment has a current value of approximately \$15 million. As a result, the School is largely dependent on net tuition revenue to fund its operations. The School successfully completed a Capital Campaign to fund, among other priorities, the construction of Hope Hall, the creation of a wastewater treatment facility, and the acquisition of a contiguous property. Solebury is now in the planning stages for its next Capital Campaign.

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Solebury School seeks a leader who enthusiastically embraces and champions the School's mission, which is grounded in providing a rigorous, traditional academic program that prepares students for continued educational success not just in college, but in life.

The successful candidate will be distinguished by a warm, charismatic, and inclusive personal manner, exceptional verbal and written communication skills, a deep commitment to the School's mission, and a passion for high school education and students. They will also bring the vision, skills, fundraising initiative, courage, and drive to help further realize a compelling and sustainable vision for the School.

The Board of Trustees of Solebury School is conducting a national search to identify its next Head of School. Search consultants George Sanderson and André Withers of Educators Collaborative solicited input from all stakeholders during an on-campus visit and gathered additional input from constituents through an online survey. Based on this input, impressions of the consultants, and feedback from the Head of School Search Committee, the following represents a summary of the School's strengths, challenges, and opportunities, and the skills and attributes desired in the next Head of School of Solebury School.



Strengths of the School

- Solebury is clear about what it is as a school. It proudly serves a student body that is diverse in every sense of that word, and it does so without any pretensions. The strong sense of a positive School community is palpable as soon as one steps on campus.
- The School has benefited from the continuity in its leadership, with only two Heads in over three decades. Under the outstanding guidance of Tom Wilschutz, who will retire in 2026 after 18 years of service to the School, Solebury is well positioned for current and future success.
- Solebury has enjoyed an upward trajectory in its overall enrollment over the past five years, even after discontinuing the middle school program in 2019.
- The leadership team at Solebury is seasoned and talented. As individuals and as a group, they have the experience and ability to manage the School effectively when the Head is off campus, and to provide outstanding management support at all times.
- The Board of Trustees of Solebury is talented, generous, and deeply committed to the ongoing success of the School. The Board supports the Head appropriately and the long tenures of Heads at Solebury is in part a reflection of the School's traditions of having strong trustees.
- The School completed a successful campaign to fund the construction of a new dormitory and the creation of a new wastewater treatment facility and is now about to embark on a Capital Campaign that will raise much needed funds for the facilities upgrades, maintenance, and the endowment. It is expected that the first phases of the Campaign will be completed upon the arrival of the next Head.





Opportunities and Challenges

Continue to recruit and retain mission-aligned, passionate, world class faculty, supporting their wellness and professional growth

Committed, talented faculty are at the heart of Solebury School, and continuing to invest in their morale, growth, and development is key to successful teacher recruitment and retention. The next Head of School, together with the highly regarded Dean of Faculty, will lead the School's work in consciously blending professional development with teacher evaluation to support a culture that values job satisfaction, creativity, and autonomy as well as ongoing growth and accountability.

Work closely with the Board of Trustees and School community to refine the vision for the future of Solebury School

As Solebury has evolved over the past decade – increasing enrollment, upgrading facilities, and adding to the campus – the School is now poised to consider its promising future. To do so, the next Head of School will lead an ongoing examination of the School's current state and its future priorities, studying how the School's programs and facilities can best serve its students as it grows its enrollment, and continuing to refine a plan for the best use of its 140-acre campus.

Work closely with the Board on the management of the School's finances and facilities

Solebury's relatively modest endowment means that it is largely dependent on net tuition revenue to fund its operations. The next Head of School will work closely with the Board and Leadership team to support critical enrollment goals and to develop additional sources of non-tuition revenue, including from programs in the summer, to support the ongoing financial sustainability of the School.

Clearly communicate and support the mission and culture of Solebury

Solebury has a clear and distinct culture. While the School's identity is very apparent to visitors, the School sees an opportunity to refine Solebury's mission statement in an inclusive manner so that its wording is unique to its school community. The next Head of School will need to lead this work with both a collaborative approach and with conviction, and in doing so clearly communicate its shared values to the community.

Partner with the Director of Advancement to strengthen Solebury's long term fundraising capabilities and results while bolstering annual giving

As previously noted, Solebury is heavily dependent on tuition revenue to support its operations. The next Head of School will be responsible for building lasting relationships with alumni and parents in order to support annual fundraising and the capital projects. In doing so, the Head will need to deftly balance the competing priorities of overseeing the daily operations of the School while also attending to nurturing of relationships with donors.

Build administrative processes, clarity, and efficiency

While acknowledging the School's culture of informality, the next Head of School will work to refine the administrative structure, systems, and processes in order to minimize inefficiencies and support the continuing development of policies and procedures that provide clarity to the faculty and staff.

Support the work of the School to build a more diverse faculty and support Students of Color

Like many schools, Solebury has found it challenging to build a faculty and staff that reflects its increasingly diverse student body. Working closely with the recently appointed Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the next Head of School will further refine the School's efforts in hiring and student support.

Skills and Attributes of the Next Head of School

Solebury School seeks a visionary leader and passionate educator to step into the challenging role of Head of School. The School takes great pride in nurturing an environment that is compassionate and rigorous, joyful and disciplined, and intentionally develops head, heart, and spirit. An individual who brings energy, humility, integrity, vision, intellect, and an innovative spirit will thrive and experience success in the Solebury School community.

The ideal candidates will possess many of the following skills and attributes:

- A commitment to a confident leadership style that includes empowering and inspiring others, working in partnership, and holding people accountable in ways that support continued professional and personal growth





- Proficient understanding of strategic financial sustainability, budget development, fundraising, student and faculty recruitment and retention, and enrollment management
- Demonstrated success both in the classroom and in leadership roles, preferably in upper school settings, as well as a track record of developing excellence in teaching standards and practices
- The capacity to facilitate inclusive dialogue, make difficult decisions, have courageous conversations, and build trust
- Thoughtful, respectful words and actions that reflect a depth of self-knowledge, humility, and commitment to the mission of the School
- Demonstrated evidence of cultural competency and documented success in recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff
- A deep love for high school students, an earnest belief in rigorous and joyful learning, and unbridled enthusiasm for the School's compelling mission of guiding students to do and be their best
- An understanding of, and appreciation for, the unique characteristics and culture of a school that serves both boarding and day students
- An inspiring verbal and written communicator who is highly visible, warm, personable, transparent, and approachable, and who listens deeply to all community members while taking the time to understand the culture and history of Solebury School
- A visionary builder who can think strategically in partnership with a supportive Board. The next Head of School will be an individual who can identify needed change, develop the vision and supporting plan to achieve such change, and effectively lead and capably execute plans to bring initiatives to fruition, while managing community expectations and the impact of change
- Charismatic and skilled in building relationships within and beyond the Solebury School community, generating excitement about the School's mission





SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials in a single merged pdf file to George Sanderson and André Withers as soon as possible. **The deadline for submission of materials is July 15, 2025.** Dossiers will be reviewed upon receipt.

- EC Summary Sheet (Contact George Sanderson or André Withers for this document)
- Letter of Interest. addressed to the Search Committee, which includes an explanation of why you are ready to lead Solebury at this point in your career.
- Current Résumé
- Statement of Educational Leadership Philosophy
- A list of five references with contact information (name, relationship to candidate, phone and email address); references will not be contacted until a candidate is considered for the finalist round of the search process
- Disclosure Statement (Contact George Sanderson or André Withers for this document)

Send application materials in a single merged pdf file via email to:

George Sanderson, Partner, Educators Collaborative
gsanderson@educatorscollaborative.com

André Withers, Partner, Educators Collaborative
awithers@educatorscollaborative.com



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