

THE STORM KING SCHOOL



The Storm King School At-A-Glance

Founded: 1867

Co-ed, Boarding & Day

Grades: 8th–PG

Enrollment 2022-23:

170 Students
114 Boarding
56 Day
91 Domestic
79 International

23 Nationalities Represented

97 (57%) students on some
form of financial aid

The Storm King School Head of School Search

314 Mountain Road | Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York
Co-ed, Independent Boarding & Day School
Applications Due: August 1, 2023
For July 1, 2024

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

For more than a century and a half, The Storm King School (“SKS”) has stood on the shoulder of Storm King Mountain overlooking the scenic Hudson River in one of the most beautiful and dynamic places in America. Today, The Storm King School ranks among the top boarding schools in New York, serving 170 students in grades 8-12, 114 boarders and 56 day students.

The Storm King School is a place where students create their own path, explore their dreams, and discover their potential in areas they may have never thought possible. As a college preparatory boarding and day school dedicated to a student’s individual success, the school provides a challenging and supportive environment where students discover skills, aptitudes, and talents that prepare them for college and beyond.

The student body, purposefully international and diverse, prepares students from twenty-three nations for a multicultural and multi-dimensional world. Exposure to the many cultures on campus enhances the learning environment and deepens students’ educational experiences. As one student said, “I have lifelong friends who live all over the world. What could be more exciting than that?”

Beginning in 2010 the school has moved forward and grown: larger student body; larger campus; improved curb appeal; more organizational systems in place; more alumni involvement - but there remains opportunity for continued innovation and expansion. The next Head of School will have work to do, but there is a strong foundation and solid community spirit to build from.

MISSION, MOTTO & CORE VALUES

Mission: *The Storm King School, a global community, prepares students by inspiring them toward academic success and confidence in an inclusive and diverse learning environment that embraces character, balance, and trust.*

Motto: Esse Quam Videri - To be, rather than to seem

Core Values: Truth, Respect, Responsibility

THE AREA

The Storm King Mountain area is on the west bank of the [Hudson River](#) just south of [Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York](#). Together with [Breakneck Ridge](#) on the opposite bank of the river it forms "Wey-Gat" or Wind Gate, the picturesque northern narrows of the [Hudson Highlands](#). The area proved a popular subject for early artists of the [Hudson River School](#). Hiking, artist communities, skiing and close proximity to New York City provides year round recreational and cultural opportunities. The Storm King Arts Center offers many events throughout the year and the Autumn colors are a must-see event.



THE CAMPUS

Set above the Hudson River and overlooking the town of Beacon, The Storm King School's bucolic campus instantly embraces you. Spread out over the fifty-five acre campus are dormitories, a full size gym with weight room and athletic training room, a theater, an arts building including digital and ceramic art studios, a learning center and student commons, a dining hall with sweeping views of the Hudson River Valley, two academic classroom buildings, administration building, and an admission and development building, as well as faculty and staff housing. The Head of School's

residence, recently purchased, includes six bedrooms and a large deck overlooking the beautiful views described above. Tennis courts and athletic fields, sculpture installations, an outdoor telescope, a fire pit and multiple seating areas dot the beautiful grounds.

The school has a unique relationship with the neighboring Black Rock Forest, a 3,870 acre forest and biological field station that borders the campus. Though idyllically rural, the School is conveniently located close to rail access to New York City, only an hour away. Students and faculty often travel to the City to experience the art museums and theaters and all that one of the world's great cities has to offer.

THE PROGRAM

The [Academic Program](#), [Athletics](#), and [the Arts](#) combine to provide a well rounded and comprehensive experience for students. For those who need extra support in organizational skills or subject areas, the school offers a



robust [academic support program](#). Faculty share enthusiasm and expertise in all areas, and thereby engage students and deepen their learning. The school's small class size of eight to ten students lends itself to flexibility and meeting the needs of individual students. As one faculty member notes, "We do not mold students to who we are, but rather, we mold our teaching to who is in our classroom while maintaining a strong curriculum."

Students matriculate to a wide range of colleges from highly selective universities to international colleges. There are also opportunities for students to delve deeper into their passions during Q-Term, offering short intensive courses, and by enjoying international travel opportunities.

Weaved throughout the student experience are traditions that bring the community together to celebrate its diverse make-up. Global Community and Earth Days are cited by faculty and students as a special moment each year. The Fall and Spring plays, Arts Festival, Poetry Festival and the end of the year Butterfly Ceremony for Seniors are moments that highlight the creativity and care that permeates The Storm King School. At the start of each year the entire school climbs Storm King Mountain, a bonding experience that unites the tight knit community.

GOVERNANCE

The eleven member Board of Trustees consists primarily of dedicated alumni spanning experiences from the sixties through the nineties. The Head of School is an ex-officio member of the Board. Robert (Bob) Ginsburg '72, the current Board Chair, is co-chairing the seven-person Search Committee with immediate past Chair, Roger Auerbacher '66. Bob's term will extend into the new Head's early years. Standing Committees of the Board include Admissions and Marketing, Buildings and Grounds, By-laws, Development, Finance, and Trustee and Governance. The Board at large meets



four times a year (October, January, April, and June) with committee meetings occurring as necessary throughout the year.



FINANCE

The school's current operating budget is \$9.5 million, and it carries \$4.6 million in debt. The endowment stands at \$2.7 million, and the school raises on average \$250,000 each year for the annual fund. SKS is committed to economic diversity and awards more than \$2.2 million in need based aid each year.

DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

The Advancement Office currently includes the Director of Annual Giving and Development, the Director of Leadership Support and Alumni Relations, and an Alumni Associate. The office has functioned without a Development Director since mid-COVID and the plan is to continue without until the new

Head has an opportunity to work with the Board on shaping the office to support a new strategic plan.

Over the past three years, the school raised just under \$800,000, with 42% coming from alumni, 25% from trustees, 19% friends, 7% parents, 2% faculty and staff, and the rest "in-kind" and from "other." Shortly before COVID Storm King embarked on a capital campaign to fund a new academic center, which was then put on hold through the pandemic. \$1.25 million has been raised to date toward this goal.

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment at Storm King has been fairly consistent over the past three years, with generally slightly more male than female students. Before the pandemic, SKS had an enrollment closer to 200. Based on the past three years, Storm King welcomes about 70 new students each fall, with an average attrition rate of 23%. Attrition is hard to capture, however, as there is always a handful of one-year international students, typically from Mexico, Germany, and other locations whose national education system makes it hard for them to stay through high school if they are returning home for college.

As at many boarding schools, the school experienced a loss of international student enrollment through the COVID years. There has been a concerted effort to rebuild international interest, and this year the school is very pleased to have the twenty-three different countries mentioned earlier represented.

The Admissions Office is staffed with the Assistant Head for Admissions and Marketing, two Associate Directors, and a part-time Admissions Associate who is also an SKS teacher.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Storm King Board of Trustees has launched the search to replace current Head of School, Jonathan Lamb, who will retire in 2024 at the end of a successful ten years at the school. Jon is eager to support new leadership and help his successor understand the school's culture and history.

Eric Temple and Sally Mixsell of Educators Collaborative, LLC are assisting the Board in this search. Based on a community-wide survey and a two-day visit designed to learn about the school and interview many of its key stakeholders, Sally and Eric offer the descriptors below that represent community-wide sentiments about Storm King's strengths, the challenges and opportunities lying ahead, and the skills and attributes desired in the next Head of School.



Strengths of The School

- The international community of the School - the #1 most appreciated aspect of SKS. The diversity of perspectives enhances the depth of discussion in classrooms, club meetings and activities. The annual events focused on multicultural topics underscore the deep appreciation for this aspect of Storm King's community.
- Location and beauty of the campus with its sweeping views of the Hudson River, nestled at the foot of Storm King Mountain but only an hour from New York City.

It is hard to be anywhere on campus and not be inspired by the sweeping panoramic views and natural beauty.

- Deep love for the school. Alumni are proud of and grateful for their SKS experiences; students feel heard and known by the faculty; faculty and staff love working with the students and each other. They appreciate what they have at SKS. Comments we heard included,
 - * "The best place I've ever worked - the kids are good kids, and every teacher has the interest of the students at heart."
 - * "Every teacher has complete agency - if it's working, it will be supported; if not, the person will be supported."
- Dedicated and skilled faculty and staff. This is a good learning environment for students to find themselves and their strengths, particularly students who are self-motivated. Teachers enjoy the autonomy and freedom to design their own curricula in an environment open to creativity and to seeing what works.



- A strong, respected, and collaborative administrative team, eager to support a new leader and guide the school into its next era.
- An impressive array of electives across the board, but particularly in the arts program and curricula. Arts options at SKS are considerable, ranging from a broad array of visual arts to fashion design and graphic design. Digital design choices range from digital photography to broadcasting and film/video production. Students may also study and perform at high levels in music, dance and theater classes.

- A college placement program that has been strengthened over the past few years. The goal of the department is to match student strengths and interests to appropriate colleges. With this in mind, college choices range from culinary schools to Ivy League colleges and universities.
- Its small size allows for everyone to be known and for personalized instruction to be a hallmark of a Storm King education.
- An optimistic culture that looks to the future with energy and enthusiasm.

Challenges and Opportunities



- The Board looks forward to engaging in a strategic planning process once a new Head of School is identified. Plans for such a process were postponed by COVID, and now the Board is ready to take up this exercise. Creating a clear campus master plan, reviewing the overall curriculum and course offerings, exploring options for additional revenue streams, assessing the school's branding and marketing approaches, and taking a deep dive into demographics and potential geographic funnels for admission are some of the questions and issues to be explored. (More detail is addressed below.)

- The school will continue to build enrollment in an ever-changing environment. Projected "right size" is around 230 students, 50 more than are currently on campus. Continuing outreach to international locations and local and domestic populations will be important in order to maintain the intentional diversity found in the SKS culture.

- The opportunity to invite increasing numbers of SKS community members to support the school financially will be a key to future success. The new Head and the Development team will need to continue to steward key stakeholders to become stronger financial supporters of the school.
- In this post-pandemic world, there is room to create and rebuild connections and partnerships in the Cornwall and Hudson River Valley community. This will not only help grow enrollment, but will expand Storm King's visibility in the local area and offer more opportunities for student service projects as well.
- Marketing the school more boldly by identifying distinctive signature programs and the language to talk about them will be important. The arts, the learning support program, and outdoor education come easily to mind, but this is a topic for strategic consideration as a new Head moves into place.
- Much has been done to address deferred maintenance, to the tune of \$11 million over the past few years, but there is more to do. SKS has reserved funds each year for the ongoing projects.

Desired Skills and Attributes

Storm King's next Head of School should:

- Evidence an abundance of characteristics typically found in successful school leaders: present, approachable and responsive, courage with kindness, character above reproach, excellent verbal and written communication skills, relationship builder, data-driven decision-maker, lifelong learner, humility, a sense of humor and the ability to work collaboratively and productively with stakeholders to work through conflict and build consensus.





- Have an entrepreneurial view to the future, thinking about how schools and businesses will need to operate. Be willing and able to preserve the good of the past while moving the school forward.
- Be a visible and charismatic leader who makes themselves accessible to others and comes excited to engage fully in the Storm King community. Someone whose work reflects the commitment to the students and their SKS experience.
- Demonstrate the capacity to build a vision, in collaboration with the Board, and bring it to reality.

- Provide clear expectations and hold others accountable to those expectations through respectful interaction and direction. It can be challenging to hire for boarding schools; therefore, new hires often have to be developed, put in places where they can best serve, and learn to be accountable for the work at hand. Related to this is demonstrating a track record of making good hires and retaining faculty and staff.



- Be knowledgeable about current pedagogies and methodologies. Experience in the classroom is a plus.
- Have the willingness and ability to make tough decisions, holding others to a high bar, caring deeply about community members, and taking on the important task of being THE role model for the school.
- Demonstrate cultural competence and the ability to manage related conversations comfortably and confidently at the school-wide level.
- Be an active listener who seeks opinions with an open mind before (when appropriate) making important decisions.
- Reflect a strong commitment to, and - ideally - experience working in, a boarding environment.

SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

The deadline for applications is August 1, 2023.

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials in a single merged document, in the order listed:

- EC Candidate Summary Sheet (Contact Sally Mixsell and/or Eric Temple for this document)
- Letter of Interest, addressed to the SKS Search Committee
- Current resume
- Statement of Educational Leadership Philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information (including phone numbers and email addresses)
- EC Disclosure Form (Contact Sally Mixsell and/or Eric Temple for this document for this document)

Please Address Inquiries to:

Sally Mixsell, Partner, Educators Collaborative
smixsell@educatorscollaborative.com - (203) 824-3653

and/or

Eric Temple, Partner, Educators Collaborative, LLC
etemple@educatorscollaborative.com - (415) 279-1837

Equal Opportunity Statement

The Storm King School is committed to equal employment opportunity. We will not discriminate against employees or applicants for employment on any legally-recognized basis ["protected class"] including, but not limited to: veteran status, uniform service member status, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information or any other protected class under federal, state, or local law.

