



SHADY SIDE

ACADEMY

Head of the Junior School Position Statement

Shady Side Academy

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

July 2020



Shady Side Academy seeks an energetic, dynamic, collaborative and skilled leader for the highly successful **Junior School**, its urban PK–5 division located in the middle of the vibrant East End of Pittsburgh, for July of 2020.

ACADEMY OVERVIEW

Shady Side Academy seamlessly blends a joyous, open and positive school tone and culture with exceptionally high expectations for performance and behavior. The complexity of its operations, including four campuses, highly ambitious academic and co-curricular programs, and over 1000 students, is overlaid by operational efficiency and confident optimism about the future. Moreover, a proud history and sense of tradition are provoked by determination to innovate and associate the school with the palpable dynamism and sense of momentum in and around the city of Pittsburgh. With its major universities (Pitt, Carnegie Mellon, and Duquesne), renowned medical institutions, and expanding high-tech firms that now include major installations for Google, Uber, and Ford Motors Argo AI, Pittsburgh is a city on the move. Long known for its sports teams, civic pride, world-class symphony orchestra, and industrial wealth, the city has transcended its “rust belt” past and is innovating its way into the future.



Given the energetic climate that surrounds them, Shady Side students are eager, engaging, bright, kind, and confident with adults, and the faculty is dedicated, talented and devoted to their charges; the salient quality of the school is certainly salutary relationships between students and faculty.

HISTORY

Shady Side Academy was founded in a one-room schoolhouse in the Shadyside section of the city of Pittsburgh. The Junior School was added in 1909, and in 1922 the Senior School, responding to the national country day school movement, was moved to a “country” locale in nearby Fox Chapel. In 1958 Shady Side created the first stand-alone middle school in Western Pennsylvania, also in Fox Chapel. The 2017 merger with Fox Chapel Country Day School gave the Academy a second elementary school campus. The school is in its 136th year of operation.



Throughout its history Shady Side Academy has been highly regarded for the excellence of its academic programs, the breadth and quality of its co- and extra-curricular opportunities, the dedication and talent of its faculty, the marvelous talent and winning manner of its students, its impressive physical facilities, and the beauty of its campuses.



SHADY SIDE ACADEMY FAST FACTS

<i>Junior School</i>	
Total Enrollment:	270 (PK-5)
Male/Female Percentage:	57% Male / 43% Female
Students of Color:	43%
Receive Financial Assistance:	17%
Faculty Members:	41
Hold Advanced Degrees:	41%
Student-teacher ratio:	8:1
Average Class Size:	15-20 per classroom in grades PK-5
Tuition:	\$10,950 - \$22,500 (PK-5)

<i>Shady Side Academy—All Four Campuses</i>	
Total Enrollment:	1,007 (PK-12)
Male/Female Percentage:	54% Male / 46% Female
Students of Color:	37%
Receive Financial Assistance:	33%
Faculty Members:	132
Hold Advanced Degrees:	73%
Student-teacher ratio:	8:1
Financial Aid:	\$3.8 million

MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

Shady Side Academy asserts a simple, clear and poignant **mission** that resonates powerfully with graduates and current students alike, and which is clearly evident in the tone and culture of campus life:

Shady Side Academy's mission is to challenge students to think expansively, act ethically and lead responsibly.

The **philosophy** of the school expands descriptively on that mission:

Shady Side Academy is a vibrant learning community that values intellectual curiosity, personal integrity and diverse perspectives. Through a rigorous and balanced curriculum of academics, arts and athletics, our students are challenged to explore their passions and excel beyond expectations. Supported by active alumni and parents, our unique culture of faculty-student mentorship inspires students to become lifelong learners and engaged, thoughtful citizens of their communities.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Members of the Shady Side Academy community acknowledge and accept five guiding principles, referred to in the Junior School as the "Shady Side Way," that serve as fundamental points of guidance for all adults and students living and working together in the school community:

Honesty, Kindness, Responsibility, Respect and Safety. These principles guide the school's activities and interactions at every level and on all four campuses. The older students in the Junior School can readily recite and explain these five concepts, underscoring the centrality of character education to the overall program in that division.





ADMINISTRATION

The four Shady Side Academy campuses are each led on a daily basis by their own Head of School. While there are distinct identities for each division (Junior School, Country Day School, Middle School and Senior School), the entire Academy functions as a single entity, guided by the same mission, providing students with the opportunity to be part of the Shady Side community from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The executive leadership team consists of the President, Chief Financial Officer, Director of Equity, Inclusion and Community Relations, Director of Alumni & Development, Director of Enrollment Management, Director of Communications and the four Heads of School.

Most of the administrative functions and leadership for the overall Academy are housed on the campus of the Senior School in Fox Chapel. While there are admission directors for the individual campuses, the Director of Enrollment Management for the entire school is located at the Senior School. The same is true for the offices of development, business, technology, and communications.

FOUR CAMPUSES

While thirteen years might seem a long time for a student to remain in one institution, the reality is that the transitions from one campus to the next present exciting opportunities to students as they move from one distinct environment to the next. Students can reinvent themselves in positive ways in each new division. New students join the group, making each class increasingly diverse in every way, and presenting every child with exciting challenges, as one proceeds toward eventual graduation.

THE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Shady Side's **Junior School** is located in the Point Breeze neighborhood of Pittsburgh, across the river from the other campuses in Fox Chapel, and enrolls 270 students. With the city in the throes of a significant economic and cultural renaissance, this campus is caught up in the excitement of the times. Filled to capacity, the Junior School is urban education at its best, reflecting the pride of the surrounding neighborhoods, the school's commitment to the city, and its connectedness to the world beyond. Able to attract a diversity of students from across the city, the Junior School's curriculum is emblematic of the dynamism that is Pittsburgh today. At the same time, the feel in the hallways is warm, joyful, genuine and friendly, and the faculty is ebullient and proud of the community they have built.

The Junior School strives to develop confidence, character, creativity and a love of learning that will prepare children for the challenges in life ahead of them. Play is valued as a critical mode through which children learn, and classwork and other activities are structured to be inspiring and fun. Students acquire essential skills and practices that will carry them into the future, including listening, teamwork, inquiry and completion of challenges, and they are actively encouraged to develop their individual strengths and interests.



The academic program focuses on the development of a strong set of core skills that will help children to excel in the years to come, including building vocabulary and general communication, comprehension, creativity, computation, analytical thinking and organization. The curriculum is engaging, challenging and interdisciplinary in nature, with an emphasis on collective and project-based endeavors. Language arts is a strong focus and Singapore Math provides the guiding philosophy of mathematics instruction.

The balanced programmatic approach includes extensive exposure to the visual and performing arts. From expressing their creativity through drawing, painting, ceramics and multimedia, to learning about music as it relates to diverse cultures, children discover the impact of the arts on the world around them. Physical education is also an integral part of the program with time set aside every day for movement and athletic activity.

Located on seven acres, the Junior School's outdoor spaces include an athletic field and three age-specific playgrounds. Bordering the city's 500-acre Frick Park, the Junior School takes advantage of this special access to the natural world in the midst of its urban environment. The campus boasts a farm garden that students take part in maintaining. Service to the broader Pittsburgh community is a part of the program of every grade level.



Housed in a **historic mansion**, the building has charm and character that warm the experiences of children and adults. Yet it is also a modern campus, with ample access to and utilization of the latest technologies and a computer lab, exciting spaces for science and robotics, and appropriate facilities for visual art, Spanish and music instruction.

The Junior School employs two **learning specialists** who make their expertise readily available to students, classroom teachers and parents. There is a full time **counselor** on the staff, who works closely with other members of the leadership team and faculty to ensure an attentive, supportive social-emotional learning climate. Classes are small and, with an emphasis on differentiated instruction, relationships between teachers and students are close, genuine and warm; as one teacher expressed it, "Every student is known well here by every teacher." Parents similarly feel closely connected to the faculty and express great confidence in

both the school's staff and general climate and program; they are welcome partners with teachers and administrators in developing the culture and positive environment of the school.

One of the special opportunities at the Junior School is the **After School Explorers** program. Students who enroll in this program receive an all-inclusive experience that can be customized to fit their individual needs and interests, without ever having to leave the Junior School campus. Options include enrichment classes, music lessons, access to a study center, unstructured play, organized games, and more. Rates and attendance options are flexible, according to the needs of families and students, and it is reasonably priced in comparison to other day care, babysitting and program options. Parents and students alike view After School Explorers as one of the special differentiators of the Shady Side Junior School from other schools in the area.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are several challenges for the next Head of the Junior School at Shady Side Academy over the next several years. These challenges, however, also represent opportunities for leadership. In the broadest sense, both the challenge and opportunity at the Junior School is to take full advantage of its current strong assets – especially its talented faculty, remarkable location, marvelous relational culture, wonderful students, supportive parents, integral connection to a larger well-resourced institution, and senses of both innovation and tradition – to achieve the promise of its mission and core beliefs. More specifically, these challenges and opportunities include:

- Forging a positive working relationship with Shady Side’s dynamic new President, Bart Griffith, and serving as an effective collaborator with the entire senior leadership team of the Academy;
- More clearly establishing the identity and future direction of the Junior School within the overall institution of Shady Side Academy, while also more clearly establishing the same within the competitive Pittsburgh school market;
- Fostering a more deliberate, forward-thinking emphasis on professional development and the evolution of curriculum for the excellent faculty;
- Assuming an active, engaged role in admissions and marketing for the Junior School, and developing a productive team effort with the admission team;
- With a physical plant that is wonderful yet also stretched by both age and
- burgeoning enrollment, assuming a leadership role in addressing such challenges both as a partner in the overall Academy and as a thoughtful problem-solver for the existing space;
- Continuing to advance the diversity, equity and inclusion efforts of the Junior School, both in terms of the composition of the school community and the overall culture and climate;
- Continuing to foster close connections with the surrounding community in Pittsburgh, and enhancing the degree to which the Junior School serves as a model in this regard for the entire Academy;
- Although there is a nearly 90% retention rate, encouraging and reassuring parents about, and supporting students through, the transition from the urban Junior School to the Middle School experience in suburban Fox Chapel as a priority; and
- Representing in word and deed both the joy and the excellence of the Junior School experience, while also serving as a model of the mission and the “Shady Side Way.”



THE CANDIDATE

The successful candidate for the position of Head of the Junior School for Shady Side Academy will likely exhibit, in addition to the desire to lead an outstanding PK-5 school with a commitment to excellence and steady improvement, the following personal and professional characteristics, qualities and experience:

- Love of children, and a sophisticated understanding of their developmental and differentiated needs;
- Successful record in previous positions of sound judgment and demonstrated skill as a leader, manager and team player;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills;
- Approachability, high “EQ” and outstanding “people skills” along with the ability to listen to, understand, synthesize, and act upon differing points of view;
- Desire and energy to be a visible, active, engaged, spirited and positive presence on the campus, along with the capacity to consistently articulate and uphold the structure and systems of the school;
- Desire and energy to understand, connect with and participate in the culture and opportunities in the local neighborhood and in the city of Pittsburgh;
- Commitment to leading, in collaboration with others, the next appropriate steps in regard to diversity, equity and inclusion for the Junior School;
- Enthusiasm and skill to work effectively, inspirationally, candidly and collaboratively with teachers and other professional staff, and demonstrated ability as an effective developer and mentor of professional talent;
- Capacity and commitment to functioning effectively and cooperatively as a member of a senior leadership team for a large, complex organization;
- Desire and talent to serve as a part of ongoing admission and marketing efforts;
- Knowledge of and experience with curriculum development and implementation;
- Commitment to advancing the school’s success with differentiated instruction, as well as with utilization of learning specialist and counseling services; and
- Alignment of personal values with the mission, philosophy and guiding principles of the school, and desire to model and represent the “Shady Side Way.”



It should be noted that campus housing is an available possibility as part of the compensation package for the successful candidate.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Shady Side Academy has retained the firm Resource Group 175 to support its search for the next Head of the Junior School. Candidates may apply at

<https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

If you have any questions about the search or would like to nominate candidates for this position, please email:

Robert P. Henderson, Jr.
rhenderson@rg175.com

AND

Jerrold I. Katz
jkatz@rg175.com

APPLICATION DEADLINE

JANUARY 20, 2020

Non-Discrimination Statement

Shady Side Academy is an equal-opportunity employer and encourages individuals of all backgrounds and cultures to consider this important leadership position. The School's policies rest on inclusivity, including but not limited to diversity in nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability and economic status.

