The Opportunity

Southern Teachers is assisting Friends School of Wilmington in the search for its next Head of School. Founded in 1994, FSW continues a 350-year Quaker educational tradition of fostering intellectual and spiritual integrity, consensus-based decision making, exploration of diverse viewpoints, peaceful conflict resolution, environmental stewardship, and affirmation of the value of each individual.

MISSION: We believe the world needs passionate, lifelong learners who act with courage, integrity, and love. Inspired by that need, and the Quaker values of peace, equality, and care for the earth, Friends School of Wilmington is a vigorous academic community committed to educating the whole child.

Simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and service (SPICES) are foundational FSW principles that shape the cultivation of a vibrant educational community. Teachers design learning to meet individual needs; to include collaboration and both academic and non-academic experiences; and to empower students so that, as the primary architects of their own destiny, they take direct responsibility for their learning.

Believing that young people convinced of their own value will, in turn, seek and speak to the good in others, FSW works to assure students of their individual worth and helps them polish gifts that are evident and discover gifts not yet revealed. The school celebrates inclusivity and promotes diversity of students, faculty, and staff and, through curricula and intentional programming that advocates for social justice, prepares students to engage in the world with curiosity and respect for all people.

Friends School of Wilmington’s strategic plan includes recently added division heads and an expanding vision for environmental education programs on recently acquired adjacent property. It also includes plans for a new gym and performing arts space and additional classrooms. FSW is a member of Friends Council on Education, NCAIS, and SAIS, which also accredits the school.

The school seeks a leader who understands the importance of nurturing community, who sets clear expectations and has strong follow-through, and who mentors with empathy, care, and an open heart. Although the Head of School does not need to be Quaker, experience in Quaker schools is highly preferred.

Friends School of Wilmington is a coeducational Quaker school serving 185 students age 18 months through grade eight.

To Apply

Please complete the online Application to become a Southern Teachers Candidate and submit a cover letter explaining your interest in and qualifications for this position.
Performance Objectives

Preserve Quaker Culture
Quakerism informs all activities and decisions at Friends School. Teachers deepen their understanding of Quakerism through workshops led by the Friends Council on Education. Students learn how Quaker practices influence the school and their learning. During the weekly Meeting for Worship, students, faculty, and visitors engage in a period of silent worship and vocal ministry. Teachers make ongoing efforts to explicitly point out how Quakerism affects learning and social dynamics of the community within each classroom. None of this happens by chance, but through ongoing, intentional work. The next Head of School will focus on preserving established Quaker traditions and building connections with other Friends schools to keep the school grounded in Quaker culture.

Review Strategic Plan
The school unveiled its current strategic plan in 2020, right as the pandemic hit. The community has made progress on many of the goals in the plan, including the recent addition of a DEI Director. However, the pandemic has prevented staff and Board members from working through the plan as systematically as they originally intended. The new Head of School will work with the Board and school community to revise and reframe the priorities in the current plan and lay the groundwork for the next one. The Head of School will give particular attention to FSW’s progress as a one-campus school and its further capital improvements.

Program Review
Friends School of Wilmington faculty understand that three strands—Quaker values, social justice, and focus on the environment—undergird the curriculum and instill the vital elements of the school’s whole child approach. However, teacher excellence cannot replace ongoing program reviews and refinement. The new Head of School will commit to ensuring a quality academic program by defining and articulating, internally and externally, the FSW curriculum. This work will include an examination of and recommitment to faculty evaluation and growth, ensuring that FSW staff understand and focus on the vehicles that make the FSW program come together.

Develop the Longleaf Center for Environmental Learning
In the spring of 2021, Friends School of Wilmington expanded its campus by purchasing an additional 2.8 acres of adjoining green space that was once a family farm dating back to the 1950s. They have designated this property as the Longleaf Center for Environmental Learning. It includes and is named for great stands of longleaf pine, an iconic tree of southeastern North Carolina. A large meadow features an extensive grape arbor and pecan trees. A driveway lined with azaleas leads to a cottage nestled among the pines and boughs of live oak. This cottage has been remodeled into an environmental education center. FSW envisions that the Longleaf will serve the school, the surrounding neighborhoods, and the greater community.

Over the past year, staff facilitated weekly environmental education classes for students in PreK-grade five and collaborated with middle school teachers and students. In addition, they established an EE Task Force to set immediate, short-term, and long-term goals. These goals include:

- Thoughtfully transform the property by guiding the cottage renovation and developing interpretive trails and natural play areas
- Enhance and create habitats with native plants for wildlife
- Create meaningful programs for the school community and local BIPOC, multicultural, and environmental justice groups or initiatives
- Integrate FSW’s SPICES values

The next Head of School will collaborate with colleagues and the Board to further develop the Longleaf Center for Environmental Learning and establish partnerships and programs over the next three to five years that extend its reach into southeastern North Carolina.
The Position

The purpose of the Head of School is to lead the school in fulfilling its mission and strategic goals by serving as a leader of the faculty and staff, administering school policy, and assisting the Board of Trustees in fulfilling its responsibilities. The Head of School will assure that Quaker SPICES values are pre-eminent at school.

Responsibilities

General:
- Oversee the school’s day-to-day operations, calendars, and schedules
- Engage in regular program evaluation, gathering data from all constituencies
- Model listening, gathering input, engaging in appropriate consensus building, and moving efficiently to decisions in consonance with the school’s Quaker values

Board Communications and Relations:
- Develop annual school goals consistent with the school mission and strategic plan in consultation with the Board
- Develop annual written professional development objectives and participate in an annual performance review initiated and conducted by the Executive Committee
- Consult with the Board of Trustees regarding ideas and decisions having a significant impact on the school

Financial Management & Development:
- Work with Finance Committee and Business Manager to prepare proposed budgets
- Operate the school and approve expenditures within the constraints of the Board-approved Operating Budget or other Board-approved expenditures
- Set faculty salaries within a range specified by the Board
The Position (continued)

• Actively participate in fundraising activities and lead donor cultivation

Policy Development and Adherence:
• Work in collaboration with the Board to maintain necessary broad institutional policies and develop and revise procedures to ensure compliance with operational policies

Faculty Supervision & Curriculum Oversight:
• Hire, supervise, and retain faculty in accordance with personnel policies
• Oversee and encourage faculty professional development; ensure that faculty receive regular formal and informal evaluations, bi-annual written evaluations, and appropriate guidance and coaching to help them improve teaching skills; maintain personnel files
• Articulate the school's curricular vision and ensure that faculty use curricula, student learning assessments, and best practices for individual needs and learning styles that resonate with this vision
• Share trends and research in education especially as related to Quaker education

Student Supervision:
• Create and maintain a supportive, nurturing social/emotional environment for students, faculty, volunteers, and families
• Assure a disciplinary process that is both fair and consistent with Quaker testimonies
• Assure delivery of student services from external agencies as faculty identify needs
• Participate in the school's weekly Meeting for Worship and foster spiritual development within the school community

Facilities Oversight:
• Ensure that the school property is maintained
• Assist Board in planning for necessary improvements to facilities and visioning for the future

Communications, Marketing, Maintaining Target Enrollment:
• Assure excellent faculty and staff communication with students and parents
• Engage in timely, clear, honest communication with all constituents

SPICES

The Friends School educational experience is based on essential Quaker principles known in the community by the acronym SPICES: simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and service. These foster habits of respect, trust, reflection, and personal responsibility as cornerstones of the school's vibrant community.
The Position

• Seek opportunities to describe the mission and objectives of the school to the public
• Model Quaker practices whenever representing the school
• Communicate regularly with students, the Board, school families, and the Wilmington Friends Meeting
• Function as liaison to North Carolina Yearly Meeting(s), Wilmington Friends Meeting, and Friends Council on Education

Environmental Education

Friends School of Wilmington believes that stewardship of the Earth is one of its most critical missions. Knowing that lifelong relationships with the natural world begin in childhood, Friends School of Wilmington starts by introducing preschool students to the wonders of nature inside and outside their classrooms.

Teachers ask young students to consider the basic needs of people, animals, and plants and ask, “How do we care for ourselves, each other, and the Earth’s creatures?” As students grow throughout the years, FSW guides their understanding of the interconnectedness of all living things, teaching them the importance of knowing their ecological address, beginning with the local environment, and drawing an ever-widening circle to include the global community.

FSW wants students to understand how environmental problems affect communities of color and the economically disadvantaged living and working in areas targeted and affected by toxic contamination. Friends School of Wilmington believes a comprehensive environmental education program addresses issues related to equality and equity and peaceful resolution of conflicts.
The School

History
Founded in 1994 with instrumental involvement of members of the Wilmington Friends Meeting, WFM has served from the outset as a spiritual resource to the school. FSW and WFM are separate corporate entities with separate governing boards, but the FSW Board of Trustees includes active Quakers, some of whom are WFM members or attenders. From its start, FSW has been known for its high academic standards and powerful sense of community.

Originally, FSW served preschool through grade two at its Pine Grove site and grades three through eight at its Camellia Lane location. Recently, FSW sold its Pine Grove campus. For the 2021-22 school year, new facilities were constructed to house the Lower School and an expanded preschool program, and the school consolidated its entire community on the one campus. The school also purchased 2.8 additional adjacent acres in 2021 to expand FSW’s environmental education programs.

Brenda Esch became FSW’s second Head of School in 2012. Under her leadership, FSW has expanded the administrative team to include a Development Director, Lower School and Middle School Division Heads, Director of Environmental Education, DEI Coordinator, and School Counselor.

Academic Program
FSW offers a well-rounded, compelling academic program that integrates the arts and sciences and utilizes research-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum. Through challenging and relevant hands-on learning activities, students explore and evaluate information to construct an increasingly sophisticated understanding of our world. FSW guides students to take direct responsibility for their learning, models high standards, and encourages them to develop internal standards of excellence. The school recognizes that education takes place in all learning situations and encourages direct experiential learning through projects and frequent field trips. FSW supports students as they develop a broad range of interests and abilities, build essential knowledge, and master critical thinking and civil discourse.

Arts, Language, and Athletics
Friends School of Wilmington provides students with a variety of activities that supplement and enrich the academic curriculum. Ability and confidence are discovered and nurtured so that children come to see themselves as artists, musicians, linguists, and athletes.

Physical education, Spanish, art, and music are all are essential elements of the weekly curriculum. Physical education classes and fitness activities provide opportunities for skill development and cooperative teamwork experiences. Spanish classes stimulate second language acquisition and an appreciation for cultural diversity. Art and music classes help children develop skills for creative expression.

Art studies focus on art aesthetics, art production, art history, and critique. The combination of these four areas creates a well-balanced understanding of every aspect of art. Music’s primary goals are to create, learn, understand, and appreciate music. All music students focus on learning to listen, analyze, describe, and critique music and examine the role of music throughout history and in diverse cultures.
The School (continued)

developing awareness and respect for diversity.

Spanish for Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grades is communicative-based, starting with an age-appropriate mix of high energy activities that build towards focused academic study preparing students for Spanish in high school.

Physical Education classes at Friends School of Wilmington follow the SPARK Curriculum (Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids), a research-based program designed to be inclusive, active, and developmentally engaging. FSW also fields athletic teams for Middle School students with a focus on developing skills that will help on and off the field and learning how to set goals, problem solve, recognize the importance of sportsmanship, and develop character and learn responsibility and leadership. FSW is a member of the Division II Southeastern Middle School League.

The Community

Wilmington lies on the Cape Fear River in North Carolina’s Inner Banks region. It was first settled in the early 1700’s, and today its historic downtown is a main tourist attraction and business center. Nestled between a river and the ocean, the city is famous for its breathtaking beaches, amazing seafood restaurants, historic plantations, and friendly people. The local economy is strong, with a healthy mix of old and new employers, from International Paper to GE Nuclear Systems and Corning Optical Fiber, and several pharmaceutical and fintech firms. Wilmington also has a large regional hospital and medical complex. Unemployment is below both the North Carolina and national averages.

Cultural opportunities include aquariums, museums, historical sites, festivals, libraries, film studios, and theaters. Wilmington is home to the WWII Battleship USS North Carolina, a war memorial open to public tours and across from the downtown port area. The University of North Carolina at Wilmington boasts 14,000 undergraduate students and 1,800 graduate students offering bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees. Cape Fear Community College enrolls 25,000 students and features an award winning, state-of-the-art Fine Arts Center. Wilmington is a center of film and television production, including such motion pictures as Blue Velvet and The Crow and television shows such as Dawson’s Creek and Under the Dome.

Wilmington’s population is 278,000, making it North Carolina’s seventh most populous metropolitan area. The cost of living is around the national average. Forbes Magazine ranks Wilmington among the top 40 cities in the United States for business and careers and anticipates further job and economic growth for the area. For anybody looking for an affordable lifestyle near the beach and a comfortable pace of life, Wilmington is ideal.

Application Process & Timeline

For consideration, candidates should submit applications to Southern Teachers at SouthernTeachers.com, along with a current resume and a cover letter explaining their interest in and qualifications for this leadership position.

Questions may be directed to Mr. Jamie Estes at Estes@ SouthernTeachers.com or 434-295-9122.

Please do not contact the school.

The new Head of School will begin work July 2023.