



CARY ACADEMY

Director of Admissions and Financial Aid

*Cary Academy
Cary, North Carolina*

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The Opportunity

Just over twenty years ago, Cary Academy started with an idea: to create a school based on interdisciplinary curriculum and innovative teaching nestled in the Research Triangle area of North Carolina.

To make this idea a reality, Cary Academy hired its first seven employees a year before it opened its doors. One of those original seven was Denise Goodman, hired to work in the admissions office, who subsequently became the Director of Admissions, a position she has held for the last 15 years. Denise believed in the school from the moment she first heard of the idea, and her belief has proved well-placed. Cary Academy has grown into one of the nation's leading independent schools. Cary Academy is now a model for excellence in pedagogy, technology, and student learning in part because it has never lost the entrepreneurial energy with which it started.

The next Director of Admissions and Financial Aid will enter an office that sits in a position of strength. Enrollment is full, retention is routinely 97% or higher, and Cary Academy's reputation in the community is strong. Despite all of its success, neither Cary Academy nor the admissions office rests on its laurels. The school is in the leadership phase of a capital campaign that will bring a new 22,000-square-foot Science Center, where the Upper School will consolidate

the critical disciplines of science and mathematics in one location. It will also allow for the renovation of the current Upper School building into a hub for the humanities and support a greatly expanded Student Center that can serve as a space for both MS and US activity after hours. This addition will make Cary Academy even more competitive in a market in which it is already well positioned.

The new Director of Admissions will lead a team of four professionals who have helped Cary Academy become the most diverse independent school in North Carolina and developed a highly successful parent and student ambassador program. The next Director of Admissions & Financial Aid will be stepping into a high functioning office and a bright future.

**Cary Academy is a
nonsectarian, coeducational
day school serving 764 students
in grades six through twelve.**

To Apply

Cary Academy has selected **Southern Teachers Agency** to lead the search for its next Director of Admissions and Financial Aid. For application instructions, please see the last page of this profile.



SOUTHERN TEACHERS
AGENCY



Performance Objectives



Cary Academy finds itself in an enviable position regarding its admissions operation. The school enjoys consistently high application and yield numbers and maintains waitlists in every grade. The school is able to offer generous financial aid, and its diversity percentage is among the highest in the nation.

The goals for the next Director of Admissions and Financial Aid are far from maintaining the status quo, however. Cary Academy has always been successful because it has asked how it can do more and do better. Specific near-term goals include:

- Further develop the use of analytics in admissions and enrollment management processes
- Increase African-American and Hispanic/Latino diversity, bringing it in line with local demographics
- Partner with the Communications Department on development of new messaging, website, and advertising
- Maintain retention around current levels of 97% or above
- Examine data and trends regarding financial aid to better leverage dollars towards Cary Academy's goals
- Mentor admissions team members and parent and student volunteers

The Position

Reporting to the Head of School, the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid oversees the recruitment, enrollment, and retention of students in grades 6 through 12 and directs the financial assistance program.

Cary Academy seeks energetic, creative, and highly organized professionals with exceptional communication and interpersonal skills. The Director of Admissions must be able to maintain confidentiality and deal effectively with employees, parents, and other internal and external constituents with sensitivity and understanding.

Though no list of duties can be comprehensive for a position as multifaceted as this one, major responsibilities include:

- Provide strategic leadership for the entire admissions, enrollment, and financial aid program.

- Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan that includes online advertising, tour and information session materials, and other external promotional strategies for modern parents.
- Design and manage need-based financial aid programs and merit-based assistance programs.
- Supervise the development and implementation of the Student of Color Recruitment Plan, working collaboratively with the Director of Diversity to enhance the school's philosophy of inclusivity.
- Hire, train, supervise, evaluate, and provide strategic direction for admissions staff.
- Evaluate student applications for admission, make admissions decisions for student applicants, and advise and work collaboratively with the appropriate admissions committees if the applicant is referred to committee for an admissions decision; chair the Middle and Upper School Admissions Committees.





The Position *(Continued)*

- Assess student applicants and families for admissibility throughout the yearly admissions cycle; conduct student interviews to determine potential compatibility with the school and generate written student interview reports.
- Meet with potential families to provide information about the school's mission, culture, and programs, and appraise their willingness and commitment to partner effectively with the school.
- Maintain current and historical student enrollment records, inquiry data, and demographic information. Design and maintain statistical reports concerning enrollment trends, market demand, and demographic analysis.
- Oversee all parent and student admission volunteer support.
- Develop and manage budget for admissions department.
- Take an active role in professional activities; attend relevant professional meetings and conferences; participate and be actively involved with Triangle Independent School Consortium.

The School

History and Program

Cary Academy opened its doors in August 1997 to 244 students enrolled in grades 6-10. Grade 11 was added in August 1998, and grade 12 was added in August 1999. The school earned its initial accreditation from SACS in 2000 and awarded diplomas to its first graduating class in June of that year. In 2004 the school received a No Child Left Behind/Blue Ribbon School Award. Current enrollment is 764 students.

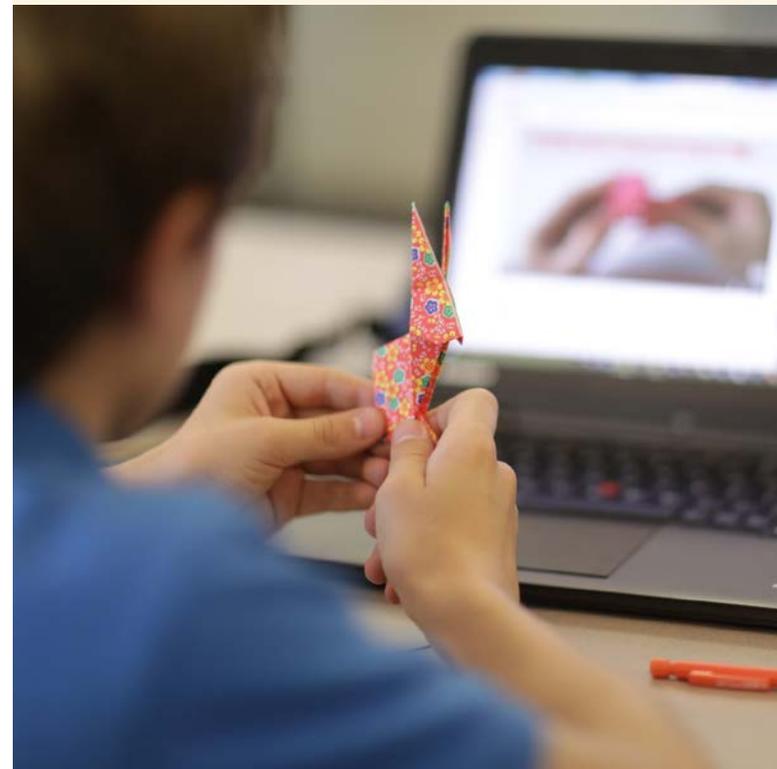
Cary Academy offers a robust, learner-centered academic program that gives students the opportunity to explore their talents, take risks in learning, and uncover new interests in a secure and nurturing environment. Students are taught to think critically and creatively about the world around them and to find and pursue their individual paths with passion and confidence. An extensive fine and performing arts program, a thriving athletics program, and a rich variety of club opportunities further broaden students' horizons. Leadership and service opportunities also abound.

Strategic Plan

Cary Academy strategic vision is to create learning opportunities that are flexible, personalized, and relevant. The school strives to cultivate self-directed and bold life-long learners who make meaningful contributions to the world.

To achieve this vision, the current strategic plan includes the following goals.

- **Institutional Flexibility:** Creating institutional flexibility to facilitate dynamic and innovative learning experiences
- **Authentic Engagement:** Fostering the intellectual and cultural elasticity needed to adapt and thrive in the world
- **Strong Connections:** Strengthening existing relationships and building new connections to embrace multiple perspectives and opportunities
- **Appropriate Resources:** Building the professional and learning environments necessary to realize our strategic vision





The School *(Continued)*

Technology plays a vital role in the life of the Cary Academy community, supporting learning across all content areas and enhancing communication, collaboration, and creation among all constituents. Every student and faculty member is issued a tablet computer. Importantly, Cary Academy is committed not only to putting cutting-edge technology into the hands of our faculty and students, but also to ensuring that every teacher and every student receives the ongoing training and technical support needed to use these tools and resources creatively and effectively for teaching and learning.

Global education is also a strong point of emphasis at Cary Academy. One of the major highlights of the student experience is the Upper School world language exchange program, conducted in partnership with sister schools in Argentina, Austria, Chile, China and France. Each year, our entire sophomore class spends 14-18 days abroad--visiting a host school, attending classes, living with a host family, and experiencing daily life in the host community. In return, the Cary Academy students and their families host groups of students from partner schools for a home-stay experience in the Cary community.

Ambassador Programs

Cary Academy knows that the best advertising is word of mouth. Because nobody can sell the school to prospective families like current families, the admissions office has developed a New Parent Programs Committee. This group organizes the Parent Ambassador Tours, where current parents give small group tours to interested families and share their experience as a part of the Cary Academy community. The feedback from this program has been tremendously positive, and their work is nicely reinforced by a Student Ambassador Program where guides in the middle and upper school provide a students'-eye perspective during tours. These two ambassador groups give far more tours than the admissions staff do, and provide families with information and viewpoints that help them understand Cary Academy's distinctive culture and mission.

Arts, Athletics, Debate

Cary Academy allows its students to explore their creativity beyond the classroom. The arts have been an integral piece of the Cary Academy experience from the beginning. The school offers a full range of courses and performance opportunities in the visual arts, music, theater, dance, and digital arts. Middle and high school students study design thinking in 2D and 3D visual arts courses. They can participate in band, chorus, or orchestra, explore many different styles of dance, participate in theater productions, and produce professional quality digital media.



Cary Academy offers a comprehensive athletic program. A member of the North Carolina Independent School Athletic Association (NCISAA) and the Triangle Independent School Athletic Conference (TISAC), CA Chargers can participate on one of the 48 teams fielded in nine all-girls sports, eight all-boys sports, or three coed sports. Almost 80% of Upper School students participate on a junior varsity or varsity sport. The Chargers have had great success as well. In the past six years, Cary Academy teams have won 11 state championships and finished each year in the top five of the 3A division of the NCISAA Wachovia Cup, which ranks schools according to all-around sports excellence.

The Speech and Debate Team is another signature program for Cary Academy. Founded during the second year the school was open, the Speech and Debate Team at CA is the largest in the state of North Carolina and has had considerable success. The program has produced 61 qualifiers for the National Speech and Debate Tournament, sending students to that event for 15 consecutive years where many went on to finish near the top in the nation. This past year, Cary Academy was named a School of Excellence for Debate at the National Tournament.





The School *(Continued)*

Faculty profile

The dedicated faculty at Cary Academy works with students to foster an interactive and collaborative learning environment that fulfills the school's mission to create a community committed to discovery, innovation, collaboration, and excellence. With over 20% teachers of color, Cary Academy's faculty is one of the most diverse independent school faculty in the state of North Carolina. Almost 80% have a graduate degree. They are also the most experienced faculty among CA's benchmark group of schools in North Carolina, with over 80% having more than 10 years' teaching experience. CA teachers engage in extensive professional development; Cary Academy is one of the country's leaders in terms of professional development spending.

Beyond the statistics, however, Cary Academy teachers are passionate about their subject and seek out professional growth, communicate effectively with all stakeholders, and strive to know students as individuals. They engage students in constructivist learning activities and encourage them to explore their own interests. They model exploration and experimentation. They seek new ways to use technology to enhance student learning. And they teach, model, and emphasize a community of respect, integrity, and compassion in all that they do. The faculty of Cary Academy is its greatest asset and is central to the school's remarkable success.

Student profile

Cary Academy students come from all over the Triangle area, though 60% live in Cary or neighboring Morrisville. As with its faculty diversity, Cary Academy enjoys the most diverse student body among its benchmark schools in the state of North Carolina with 39% students of color. Cary Academy students are accomplished. Over 70% score a four or a five on their AP exams, which is all the more impressive given that Cary Academy does not offer College Board certified AP courses, finding the course syllabi too restrictive. Cary Academy graduates are in demand at colleges in North Carolina and beyond. Regularly, nearly 80% of CA applicants are accepted into the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which is triple the University's overall acceptance rate.

Cary Academy does not gauge student success by AP scores or college admissions, however. The school has a clear idea of

At a Glance

- Founded: **1996**
- Grades: **6-12**
- Total Enrollment: **764**
- MS Enrollment (6-8): **312**
- US Enrollment (9-12): **452**
- Boys: **49%**
- Girls: **51%**
- Diversity: **39%**
- Students Receiving Aid: **13%**
- Total Aid: **\$1,400,000**
- Total Faculty: **89**
- Female Faculty: **64%**
- Male Faculty: **36%**
- Student/Faculty Ratio: **9:1**
- Average Faculty Experience: **18 yrs**
- Faculty with Postgrad Degrees: **79%**
- Highest Tuition: **\$22,400**
- Annual Budget: **\$18,636,042**
- Endowment: **\$45,000,000**
- Annual Fund: **\$570,000**
- Participation in Sports: **~90%**
- Accreditations: 2015 **(SAIS/AdvancED)**
- Board of Trustees: **21**

the Cary Academy graduate. He or she is a critical and creative thinker, a self-directed learner, and a skilled and responsible user of technology. The CA graduate is also an adept team player, a clear and effective communicator, a model of respect, integrity, and compassion, and a capable leader for the modern world.

Head of School

Mike Ehrhardt has served as Cary Academy's Head of School since 2013. Dr. Ehrhardt earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from St. Olaf College. He also has a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University, a master's degree in educational administration from the University of Massachusetts-Lowell, and a doctorate of educational administration from the University of Minnesota. Mike was head of school at the Marshall School in Duluth, Minnesota.





The School *(Continued)*



Prior to his work at Marshall, he worked for four years at The American School in London, where he served as the middle school principal and the associate head of school for operations. He joined ASL after 10 years at the Graded School in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where he served as director of technology, assistant high school principal, and finally middle school principal. He began his teaching career at the American School in Cyprus.

Campus

Cary Academy is located on 67 acres in western Wake County, near the Raleigh-Durham airport and just off of I-40 between Raleigh and Durham. The campus is modern and aesthetically pleasing. It features a dining hall that seats 350, a theater that seats over 450, a smaller lecture hall, two gyms, multiple fields and courts, and a centerpiece, two-story library. The school is currently in a capital campaign to build a new science center that will create eight new science labs, including a greenhouse and living wall, a 2400 square foot makerspace, three conference rooms for quiet collaboration, and a two-floor atrium with media wall and large-scale gathering presentation space. Several other spaces on campus are going through renovations to make them more open, adaptable, and conducive to project-based, student-centered learning.

The Community

Cary is a thriving community in the heart of the Triangle region of North Carolina, an area repeatedly ranked among the top regions in the country to live or work, to find a home or start a business, to raise a family, or to retire. Cary is proud to call itself a town rather than a city. Town governance works hard to preserve its character despite remarkable growth over the last 20 years. Cary has been honored for its forward-thinking infrastructure, such as conserving drinking water by reclaiming treated wastewater for irrigation and industrial processes, preserving open space, and integrating sustainability into all development plans. Cary enjoys the lowest crime rate in the country of a community of its size, according to FBI data.

Money Magazine rated Cary as the best place to live in North Carolina in 2016, noting its safety, affordability, high median income, natural areas, and cultural offerings. Perhaps not surprising given its close proximity to Duke University, North Carolina State, and the University of North Carolina, almost two-thirds of Cary adults hold a college degree, which is twice the national average. Also of note, 97% of Caryites have access to the Internet in a city nicknamed the Technology Town of North Carolina.

Cary is also known for its progressiveness and diversity. Less than 30% of Cary's population was born in the area; 19% of townspeople were born in another country.





Application Process & Timeline

For most thorough consideration, candidates for the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid position should submit applications to Southern Teachers Agency (available 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.*

Initial interviews with the consultant at Southern Teachers Agency will be ongoing.

The new Director of Admissions and Financial Aid will begin work July 2018.

