Position Statement
Head of School
Moses Brown School
July 1, 2023
Providence, Rhode Island
Moses Brown School, founded in 1784 by Quaker abolitionist Moses Brown, is a modern, dynamic, bold school, which effectively links its historical roots and culture as a Friends school to academic excellence and student success. Located on a beautiful 32-acre campus in the middle of Providence, Rhode Island, Moses Brown currently enrolls 790 students in nursery school through grade 12. With a history of able, long-serving heads of school and stable governance, the successful 13-year tenure of Head of School Matt Glendinning will conclude after the 2021-2022 school year. Moses Brown School seeks an experienced, innovative, inspiring leader to assume their responsibilities in July of 2023.

A stroll across the vibrant campus of Moses Brown School reveals students ages 3 to 18 engaged in their academic, athletic, and artistic pursuits or, equally valuable, play. Beautiful fields, mature trees, and alluring open spaces create an atmosphere of safety, permanence, learning, and history. Wide paths through the campus lead past spectacular new facilities, including the Woodman Family Community and Performance Center, a newly renovated Lower School, and the state-of-the-art Y-Lab, as well as classic architecture and some spaces ready for reinvention in the years ahead. Students are friendly and warm, clearly comfortable and deeply engaged in their environs, relationships and responsibilities, and the staff is engaged, exceptionally bright, and dedicated. Genuine spirits of equity and joy permeate the culture of the school, along with a powerful atmosphere of purpose and high achievement.

The challenges ahead for this special school are also profound opportunities for leadership. There is a thirst for big ideas and a broad palette for the next round of strategic thinking and action. Comprehension of the fundamental principles of Friends decision-making will be vital, as will clarity and transparency around decision-making, and the school’s culture will require perceptiveness and deep respect for listening and transparency. Moses Brown is a school poised to take innovative steps to ensure its success in the future. With commitments to diversity and belonging that are intrinsic to its Quaker values, Moses Brown School aspires to continue its tradition of producing ethical leaders and citizens who will shape the future in profound and beneficent ways.
The school’s mission is simple and compelling:

*Moses Brown, a Friends School, exists to inspire the inner promise of each student and instill the utmost care for learning, people, and place.*

Accompanying the mission are a set of Quaker values, learned by the youngest children through the acronym “SPICES” as simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship, and lived in more nuanced ways in classrooms, studios, laboratories, the Friends Meetinghouse and playing fields.

The school’s remarkable founder, Moses Brown, envisioned a school that “defined excellence, one that would prepare young people to be highly useful for promoting society at large.” Spiritual and practical goals were joined together from the earliest days of the school and have remained the foundation of Moses Brown School.

While the school first opened its doors in Portsmouth, Rhode Island in 1784, its remote location and post-Revolution instability caused it to close shortly thereafter for what began as one year and became over 30 years. Moses Brown persisted. After the War of 1812, he donated 43 acres of his Prospect Hill farm, the school’s current location, to the Yearly Meeting, and his son Obadiah and son-in-law William Almy donated half the money needed to construct the school’s first building, Middle House. In 1819 the school reopened in Providence as the New England Yearly Meeting Boarding School, later renamed Friends School. The school continued to grow, its future secured by a generous bequest of $100,000 in Obadiah Brown’s will; at the time, this was said to be the largest single contribution made to an American educational institution.
In the late 19th century, Head of School Augustine Jones added music, art and a broader athletic program and welcomed the school’s first day students. In 1904, the school was renamed in honor of its founder, Moses Brown. As a result of changing national attitudes towards coeducation, Moses Brown became a single sex school in 1926, admitting only boys. From 1925 to 1955, inspirational and determined Head of School L. Ralston Thomas navigated a path through the many challenges and disruptions of the 1920s, the Depression, and the Second World War. The school returned to coeducation in 1976. Shortly thereafter, Head of School David C. Burnham helped the school return to its Quaker roots, built its endowment and brought needed improvements to the campus facilities, including the complete restoration of East Middle House, now known as Burnham House.

Joanne P. Hoffman became the head of school in 1994, deepening the school’s commitment to its traditions as a Friends school, leading broad advancements in the academic program, and raising over $43 million for capital improvements that supported excellence in education.

Head of School Matt Glendinning arrived in 2009, with more than a decade of leadership experience in Quaker schools. Matt helped the school formulate a new strategic plan called MB Believes: a vision for learning, people and place and worked with many in the community to bring it to fruition by means of a successful $65 million capital campaign. The strategic plan is focused on fostering key skills and attributes in students, including creative problem-solving, global and intercultural awareness, and ethical leadership. The campaign also changed the physical campus significantly with the addition of the Woodman Family Community & Performance Center, the renovation of Jones Library, creation of the Y-Lab, expansion and renovation of the Lower School, the addition of the Gorgi Family Squash and Education Center, a new artificial turf field, and new facilities for baseball, soccer, tennis, and softball.

As a Friends school, Moses Brown has long been committed to forms of education that seek to make the world a more just, humane, and sustainable place. Guided by its comprehensive Strategic Action Plan for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, the school’s current initiatives include deepening training around cultural competency; creating an Office of Community & Equity (the nexus of DEI, Heath/Wellness programming, and Friends Education); and working to ensure that each student finds belonging and has equitable access to learn and thrive.
Quaker values provide the foundation upon which all aspects of the Moses Brown program are built. The curriculum has been thoughtfully developed to support the academic, emotional, physical, and social growth of all students. The Lower School’s rigorous, evidence-based curriculum celebrates individuality, collaboration, a passion for learning, and play. Students thrive in self-contained classrooms and a co-teaching model, supporting them to build the skills necessary for future success in school. Middle School builds on those skills and fosters confidence as students increasingly take responsibility for their own learning and growth. Under the guidance of a dedicated faculty, middle schoolers experience an exciting curriculum that builds depth of understanding in all academic areas as well as connections across disciplines. In Upper School, students continue to solidify skills needed to be compassionate, competent, and considerate leaders and citizens. They are challenged to think deeply, process facts, and consider diverse perspectives in order to tackle theoretical and practical issues and develop reasoned, compassionate solutions. College advising at Moses Brown is highly individualized and focused on helping students find the right fit, whether at one of the nation’s leading liberal arts colleges, public flagship universities, specialized institutions, or premier research universities.

Performing and Visual Arts are essential academic subjects that provide students with opportunities to integrate skills and demonstrate their essential humanity and commitment to Friends values. Whether dabbling in a new area of interest or pursuing an established passion, there are options for students of all skill levels to explore drawing, painting, sculpture, woodworking, fabric, photography, dance, theater, instrumental music, and voice.

STEM education is integrated throughout the Moses Brown curriculum. Starting in Lower School, students learn to code and study the principles of engineering through various hands-on projects. As students move into Middle School, they apply more sophisticated algorithmic thinking to their approach to real-world problem solving. In Upper School, students have myriad opportunities to build on their understanding and skills within the curriculum, in clubs, and individually. The Y Lab - a state-of-the-art STEM classroom - is a space of inspiration and experimentation where students can cultivate passions and future-ready skills.

Moses Brown has a long tradition of athletic excellence. The sports program emphasizes cooperation, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Students learn perseverance, sharpen skills, develop self-discipline, and foster their own healthy physical development. For students passionate about sports in the Upper School and Middle School, Moses Brown offers 61 teams in 16 sports across three seasons. These teams are exciting and competitive but always put sportsmanship first. For those with extraordinary gifts, Moses Brown is a nurturing and competitive environment that consistently turns competitors into champions. Approximately 22% of Moses Brown seniors go on to compete at the collegiate level.

To learn more about the Moses Brown program, visit the website.
**FINANCES**

Moses Brown is a healthy, financially stable institution. While primarily tuition-financed, meaning that robust annual enrollment and re-enrollment endeavors are essential, the budget is bolstered by successful fundraising and significant endowment of over $55 million. The annual fund for the current year is on track to achieve its $1.375 million goal. Annual capital fundraising will exceed $4 million dollars, and this is in the wake of the completion of a successful $65 million capital campaign. The annual budget for the school exceeds $32 million. Nevertheless, maintaining financial health in the future in the highly competitive Providence school market will require focus on continual enhancement of the student experience at the school, as well as effective marketing and adept fundraising skill and investment of energy and resources.

**ADMISSIONS**

Moses Brown School’s enrollment for 2021-22 is 790 students, 211 in Lower, 164 in Middle, and 415 in Upper School. Thirty percent identify as students of color, and 40% of students receive financial aid, with an average award of $21,000. Admissions is strong due to the art and science of the school’s talented enrollment team. Moses Brown is well known in the area and attracts families who are seeking a top-notch PK-12 program in RI and Southeastern MA. With fierce competition from other independent day schools, boarding schools, and area public schools, it is important that Moses Brown’s messaging is clear, consistent, and compelling in order to continue to attract and enroll mission appropriate students. Tuition ranges from $19,170 in Nursery and Pre-Primary to $42,820 for Upper School.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The next Head of School at Moses Brown School should be prepared to collaborate with a forward-thinking and devoted school community to fulfill the school’s mission and to lead Moses Brown School wisely and confidently into the future by embracing current challenges and seizing new opportunities. These challenges and opportunities include but are not limited to the following:

- The Moses Brown community embraces the school’s Quaker mission and testimonies across all constituencies; without exception, these values are held up as the reason for the strong bonds throughout the community and the powerful education provided for children from nursery school through their graduation. Three strands of
the school’s work—the vibrancy of Quaker values that are hundreds of years old, the vitality of the increasingly diverse community, and the excellence of the academic program—must be woven together in the next phase of the school’s journey. Under political and social pressures and in the anxious post-Covid climate, it has been all-too easy to silo these key aspects of the school’s identity and health. The next Head of School will lean upon sturdy and timeless Quaker values and articulate clearly and consistently how they strengthen all the aspects of school life, building reflective, engaged and passionate citizens.

- During the monumental achievements over the last decade of the school’s growth, which included the completion of a strategic plan, major building projects, a $65 million campaign, a thorough accreditation process, and successful navigation through two years of pandemic-related challenges, the decision-making process has been stressed. Clarity around decision-making, and training around consensus-building, will be important as the school rebuilds the community. The next Moses Brown Head of School will assure that the voices of community members are heard and that the decision-making process is clearly articulated. Community members understand that consensus is neither efficient nor necessary in many—indeed most—decisions, but seek greater inclusion, transparency and communication around the decision process from trustees, division leaders and members of the administration.

- Connectedness and equity emerge as challenges in the upcoming years as the Moses Brown community seeks to build (and rebuild) connections between the lower, middle and upper school divisions and between faculty, staff, and administration. Newer members of the school community—whether teachers, staff members or parents—are eager to learn about the school’s Quaker roots, contribute to its thriving academic...
program, and support the growth and healthy development of its students. With tectonic shifts in the distribution of responsibilities during the pandemic, it will be important to assess load and staffing and adjust towards equity and inclusion.

- Moses Brown seeks a Head of School who is a lively and engaged presence in the halls, classrooms, labs, studios and playing fields of the school, connecting with three-to-eighteen-year-old students, teachers in all three divisions, staff members in all departments, alumni scattered across the country, and parents eager to engage in the vibrant Moses Brown community. This quality of leadership will be especially vital in the post-pandemic recovery process; the community yearns for connectedness across all constituents.

- While the Moses Brown campus is a stunning and impressive asset of the school, continued work is necessary to sustain and improve school facilities. From improving technology platforms and infrastructure, to increasing accessibility or attending to the trees, gardens and outdoor spaces that grace the school, facilities will require consistent upkeep and planned refurbishments. The older buildings of the school are both beloved and—in some cases—in need of significant repair and renovation. The next strategic plan will likely include continued campus-wide upgrades.

- Moses Brown is emerging from a highly successful round of strategic planning and fundraising for initiatives that emerged from that planning, and their implementation. The timing is right and the attitude at the school is fertile for the next round of strategic thinking. The school is excited to think boldly about its future, while firmly anchoring that sense of purpose in the school’s mission and values.
KEY QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES

The successful candidate to be Head of School at Moses Brown School will be a mission and values-driven leader who will embody and demonstrate most, if not all, of the following skills, qualities, characteristics, and experiences:

- Demonstrated success as a visionary and inspirational educator;
- Ability to serve as a visible presence who knows the names of colleagues and students;
- An active listener with a collaborative nature;
- Breadth of experience in schools and familiarity with every area of school life;
- Personal integrity, high emotional intelligence and inspirational spirit, along with warmth, energy, enthusiasm, and a sense of humor;
- Capacity to serve as an ethical and transparent role model for administrators, faculty, staff, and students, and capacity to call on others to be their best selves in a community;
- Significant training and experience with building and supporting diverse, equitable, and inclusive communities;
- Talent for identifying, selecting, and retaining outstanding administrators and teachers as well as supervising and developing them and encouraging their professional growth;
- Ability to forge authentic relationships with a wide range of people both within the constituencies of the school and externally, including parents, alumni, and others;
- Experience as a strategic thinker;
- Strength as a community builder;
- Superb oral and written communication skills;
- Financial acumen, fundraising experience, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a record of ambitious and data-driven change;
- Understanding of and deep respect for Quaker principles in regard to decision-making and education;
- Willingness to lead in alignment with the mission, values, and history of the school.
TO APPLY

Moses Brown School retained the firm Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support its search for a new Head of School. If you wish to submit your application, please do so at: https://rg175.com/candidates/signup.

Applications include:

- Letter of interest (cover letter)
- Resume or CV
- A Personal, Leadership or Educational Philosophy Statement
- One additional writing sample of your choice
- Names of four current references and contact information (optional)

The deadline for receipt of full application materials is Wednesday, July 20, 2022.

Please note that the Moses Brown School Head of School Search Committee intends to interview semi-finalist candidates in-person on a date to be determined in late July or early August. Finalists will be invited to visit campus in September. Please plan accordingly.

For any questions or further information about the position, please contact any of the consultants below:

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Moses Brown School honors and upholds Quaker practices and values while also embracing students, faculty and staff of every faith and background. In its hiring practices, Moses Brown deliberately seeks to maximize the diversity of the school (in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, nationality and language.)