



Position Statement
Head of School
Wheeler School

Providence, Rhode Island
Start Date: July 1, 2025

RG 175

Change as Opportunity

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Overview

Wheeler School, a N-12 day school with 807 students in the heart of Providence, RI, was founded in 1889 by prominent educator, artist and activist Mary Colman Wheeler. Inspired by its founder, Wheeler's mission, "To learn our powers and be answerable for their use," has served as a call to excellence for more than 135 years, and has secured Wheeler's position as a national educational leader.

Situated atop College Hill within a stone's throw of Brown University, Wheeler's city campus is a dynamic and educationally rich atmosphere, featuring student-centered, innovative spaces for grades N-12. Just five miles away, the ideal experiential complement is the 120-acre Wheeler Farm, which immerses students in their natural environment as a key part of their academic journey and provides expansive space for athletic and recreational activities. This unique combination of urban and rural campuses supports a breadth and depth of opportunity that captures Mary Wheeler's vision for integrated learning and growth – "An uncommon education in a joyful environment."

Wheeler's facilities are impressive and reflect the intentionality of the Wheeler ethos to build and sustain an inclusive community where every student feels seen, understood and valued as a person and a learner. From the Design-Innovate-Build Lab to the Design Shop, to Prescott Library, to the Student Center, experienced and passionate faculty members leverage academic spaces to unlock creativity, innovation and the unlimited potential of each Wheeler student. Effective teaching and engagement build the confidence and sense of purpose that allows students to see themselves as agents of impact and positive change.



Relevance and connection to the broader community is seamless as Wheeler hosts two leading non-profit organizations on its campus—Breakthrough Providence and The Providence Children's Film Festival. And Wheeler students meaningfully engage in the city in multiple ways, including Founder's Day, which annually provides over 1,000 volunteers to support city initiatives and a variety of nonprofit organizations. Within the curriculum, all eighth graders experience Cityside, a year-long immersive and interdisciplinary program, another key example of Wheeler's commitment to authentic learning and community-based experiences.

Wheeler is poised to continue its positive momentum and the announcement of Allison Gaines Pell's departure was met with gratitude and recognition for what she has achieved. The Board of Trustees sees the search for its next head of school as an exciting opportunity to partner with the Wheeler community to build on their storied history and current achievements to sustain their leadership role as a superb independent school both locally and nationally.

We encourage you to learn much more about the Wheeler School by exploring the school [website](#).

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Mission and Strategic Design

Wheeler’s Strategic Design for 2023 was inspired by the foundational work in 2018-19 to refine the school’s mission to serve as the north star for the ensuing strategic planning process. Engaging multiple community voices and led by the Board of Trustees, the current mission statement is true to the founding ethos of the school and serves as the galvanizing vision for today’s Wheeler:

Through exploration of Wheeler’s transformative curriculum—which actively cultivates voice, social conscience, passion, and interest—students will unlock their powers of mind, body, heart, and spirit. While all our paths of discovery are unique, each of us will develop the empathy, knowledge, and skills needed to lead a life of joy, meaning, and impact as ethical, engaged, and creative citizens of our school, community, and world.

Answering the call to the mission, the Wheeler community generated three significant priorities for the Strategic Design for 2023 as their ‘framework for growth and innovation”:

- **One Wheeler:** leverage our strengths to build the next generation Wheeler experience for all students
- **Within and a Part of the World:** engage our local and global communities as critical resources for learning, experience, and impact
- **Organizing to Learn:** organize for a culture of growth and learning to ensure stability, dynamism, and innovation into the near and distant future.

The school has embraced these priorities and strives to integrate them into their daily mindset as well as the curricular and co-curricular dimensions of the Wheeler experience.

The Wheeler community recognizes that the school exists in a community, state, country, and world populated by a multitude of cultures and viewpoints. Therefore, diversity and inclusion imbue the Wheeler culture and program. From academic programs to athletic programs, extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, Wheeler endeavors to create an environment that includes people and viewpoints from a variety of cultures, backgrounds, and ways of life.

To learn more about the work of diversity, equity and inclusion and at Wheeler, please click [here](#).



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Program

Wheeler’s program reflects its curricular vision to “actively cultivate voice, social conscience, passion, and interest” in order for students to “unlock their powers of mind, body, heart, and spirit.”

This unusual and seamlessly integrated dual focus on the meaningful engagement of individual learners operating within a purposeful and motivated academic community is core to Wheeler’s identity and program.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the [Hamilton School](#), Wheeler’s 35-year-old unique “school within a school” specializing in the education of elementary and middle school students with learning differences and serving as a model for effective, individualized instruction for the entire school.

To learn more about the entire academic program at Wheeler, please click [here](#).

To learn more about the exceptional depth and breadth of the Wheeler School Program, please click [here](#).

Other signature programs include:

- **Aerie:** Founded over thirty years ago, Aerie is named for the eagle’s nest that nurtures its young and teaches them to fly. This unique program is a commitment to school-wide enrichment individualized to a student’s passion. Students work with faculty in all divisions to generate curricular and extracurricular initiatives that unlock their passion in wide-ranging topics of interest, from learning Turkish to Multivariable Calculus with a Brown doctoral student to an independent project on DNA sequencing for a national publication.
- **Wheeler Farm:** A visionary purchase of Mary Colman Wheeler’s over a century ago, [‘The Farm’](#) is the ideal programmatic complement to Wheeler’s campus in downtown Providence and features The Nest, Wheeler’s outstanding early childhood and pre-school program, the interdisciplinary Farm Program for all sixth graders, and expansive athletic fields and the Van Norman Field House. All Wheeler students are able to take advantage of curricular and co-curricular experiences and community events at this extraordinary site.

Wheeler also provides a rich variety of global education opportunities, including travel experiences, cultural and linguistic immersion programs and campus initiatives focused on cultivating responsible and mission-driven local and global citizenship. Each programmatic initiative reflects Wheeler’s commitment to providing a well-rounded education that prepares students for success in a diverse and dynamic world. As Young Un, the Head of Strategic Innovation, shared: “If we want our students to know their powers and be answerable to their use as our founder Mary Wheeler believed, we must give them real and relevant opportunities to practice in the world.” This is the essence of the Wheeler education.


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Challenges and Opportunities

The next head of school at the Wheeler School should be prepared to collaborate effectively with a forward-thinking and devoted school community to fulfill the school's mission and to lead Wheeler 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:

- Wheeler historically has been a place that marvelously fosters, values and celebrates individual inspiration, passion, creativity, potential and achievement. Yet there is a need to balance this central element of the school culture and heritage fairly and effectively with the expression and implementation of clear vision, systems, policies and expectations that extend across divisions and programs in this complex school.
 - Wheeler has developed and asserted a compelling and inspiring strategic vision for the future of the school. The path toward this vision will require further articulation and development, and then the resources for its realization must be identified, raised and acquired, and judiciously invested.
 - Wheeler is both in reality and by reputation a school with a superb academic program and outstanding teachers. The next head of school must be prepared to interact with exceptionally bright, engaged and motivated students, teachers and parents with high expectations for the school, while also continuing to support and develop as needed the school's considerable human and material resources dedicated to mental and physical health and wellness.
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- The future of the athletic program at the school will require the investment of thought and planning in a clear strategic context, particularly in regard to investment of resources and athletics' value and position in regard to the cohesion, spirit and opportunities provided to students in the overall program.
 - Wheeler is a school with a deep sense of community built around the positive power of relationships. The head of school must embody, model and foster this spirit and effectively build relationships within all constituencies of the school; the head will need to be visible and an inspiring and unifying presence in the extended community.
 - In accordance with its mission and values, Wheeler has invested impressive thought, care, resources and energy into building a more inclusive, equitable and broadly diverse

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community. The next head of school needs to sustain this commitment while also further fostering a sense for all community members that they are welcomed, seen and heard.

- In a national and global post-pandemic environment that can be divisive and charged, there is an appetite for a more cohesive culture and an elevated sense of community for all constituents in the school. The next head of school will have the opportunity to pursue this work with broad enthusiasm and support from all school constituencies.
- There are challenges ahead in regard to the long-range financial pressures facing the school. While the market and finances of the school are vibrant and healthy today, the realities of rising tuition and the demand for financial aid, appropriate support and compensation for faculty, burgeoning programmatic initiatives, the expectation of overall excellence, and other factors will require the head of school to be an astute strategic thinker, an adept and forward-thinking manager of the budget, and an enthusiastic fundraiser.



Key Qualities and Qualifications

The successful candidate to be head of school at the Wheeler 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 an inspirational and collaborative leader and educator;
- Ability to serve as a visible, energetic, active and engaged presence in the extended Wheeler community;
- Breadth of experience relevant to school leadership and familiarity with school life and programming in a complex N-12 day school;
- Personal integrity, high emotional intelligence and inspirational spirit, along with warmth, enthusiasm, and a sense of humor;
- Capacity to serve as an ethical, firm and transparent role model for administrators, faculty, staff and students, and capacity to call on others to be their best selves in a community;
- Financial acumen, fundraising experience, entrepreneurial ability, and a record of ambitious and data-driven change;
- Significant training and experience with building and supporting inclusive, equitable and broadly diverse communities;
- Talent in identifying, selecting, retaining and inspiring outstanding teachers, staff and administrators, as well as for supervising, motivating and developing them, and encouraging their professional growth;

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- Ability to forge authentic relationships with a wide range of people both within the constituencies of the school and externally, including parents, alumni, and wider community members;
- Demonstrated experience as a strategic thinker and implementer of strategic vision;
- Superb written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills;
- Willingness to lead in alignment with the mission, values, and strategic vision for the future of the school.



To Apply

The Wheeler School retained the firm Resource Group 175 (RG 175) to support its search for a new head of school to start in July of 2025. If you wish to submit your application, please do so at <https://rg175.com/candidate/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 all application materials is Thursday, June 6, 2024.

Please note that the Wheeler School Head of School Search Committee intends to interview semi-finalist candidates on a date to be determined in mid-August 2024. Finalists will be invited to visit campus in September 2024.

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

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