St. Luke’s School
Head of School Position Statement

New Canaan, Connecticut
July 1, 2022
The St. Luke’s motto, Enter to learn, Go forth to serve, captures the spirit of an exceptional school, in service of graduating students who are motivated and well-prepared to make a difference in the world. With a well-deserved reputation for both academic excellence and genuine care for each student, St. Luke’s has found a sweet spot that sets it apart from many of its Fairfield County, CT public and independent school peers.

As a community that deeply values the power of relationships between and among students, teachers, and parents, St. Luke’s leverages those partnerships to provide an outstanding education that is characterized by high standards and a commitment to fostering positive character growth in its students.

St. Luke’s seeks a new Head for July 2022 who has the experience, skill, passion, and creativity to not only sustain the School’s current strong position as a leader in education, but who will also chart a path of continued improvements that will further elevate the St. Luke’s exceptional educational experience. That new Head will embody the attributes which comprise the core of the St. Luke’s School: intelligence, kindness, achievement, and humility.

Founded in 1928 and located on a beautiful wooded hilltop in New Canaan, CT, St. Luke’s is a secular, coeducational day school serving 586 students in Grades 5 though 12. Students hail from 30 towns in Fairfield County (CT) and neighboring Westchester County (NY). The campus sits on 40 acres and includes both well-designed classrooms and outstanding facilities for athletics and the arts. Great care has been taken to maintain and update the campus to ensure that it supports both the depth and breadth of the School’s program as well as facilitating the strong sense of community that all at St. Luke’s hold dear.
MISSION
At St. Luke’s, the entire community truly embraces the School’s mission: “An exceptional education that inspires a deep love of learning, a strong moral compass, the commitment to serve, and the confidence to lead.”

St. Luke’s advances its mission by fostering an inclusive learning environment where students develop as well-balanced, confident leaders who can succeed in a diverse, globally integrated world.

PROGRAM
The pedagogy, curriculum, and culture at St. Luke’s have been designed to encourage curiosity, open mindedness, understanding, reflection, and integrity. From the semi-self-contained 5th grade through 12th grade, the School’s program represents the Faculty’s desire to inspire, challenge, and prepare students to think and to lead. To that end, there are several initiatives at St. Luke’s that exemplify these goals:

- **The Center for Leadership** allows students to practice what it means to be ethical and empathic leaders through four leadership lenses: Design Mindset, Inclusive Ethos, Global Perspective, and Service Orientation. Among the leadership experiences that are available to students are Leadership Lab, Lunch and Lead, Meditations, and Social Justice, allowing students to develop and grow their leadership voices in various ways and in particular areas of interest.

- **DesignLab** promotes creative problem solving through hands-on, project-based learning. The facility inspires student projects, and with 6 laser printers, a laser cutter, CNC routers, table saw, and other tools, the sky’s the limit in terms of what St. Luke’s students are able to build. The annual Hackathon —unique among peer schools—challenges students from St. Luke’s and other schools to identify a problem, begin to imagine how to solve it, and then to build a working model over the course of a weekend.

- **J-Term** is a week-long immersive learning experience in the 9th grade that culminates in an expo where students present complex issues and possible solutions.

- **The Scholars Program** allows students to dive into topics that fascinate or inspire them as a Classical, Global or STEM Scholar. Under the supervision of faculty mentors, students conduct extensive research in one of three broad thematic areas and make formal presentations of their findings.

- **St. Luke’s crafted Advanced courses** are Upper School courses that are custom designed by St. Luke’s most capable teachers to provide college-level coursework in certain subjects where AP curriculum underwhelms. These classes enable St. Luke’s students to challenge
themselves academically and experience true college-level learning.

- **Faculty Growth and Renewal**, while not an aspect of curriculum per se, is central to St. Luke’s pursuit of curricular and pedagogical excellence. In the name of continuous improvement, this unique program encourages faculty to seek and accept feedback and to use it to ensure that they are improving their craft and serving their students well.

The curriculum at St. Luke’s is designed to inspire and challenge students, while building the skills and attitudes necessary for success in college and beyond. While outcomes are important, faculty and students alike embrace the idea that knowledge itself is a worthy prize. Beginning in Grade 5, passionate teachers engage students in classes characterized by dynamic discussions and challenging projects. Faculty desire to know each student’s skills, motivations, and aspirations and to challenge them to stretch and grow throughout their middle and high school years. Academic standards are high, but with close faculty-student relationships at the center of the St. Luke’s experience, students feel supported in facing difficult moments and learn the resilience necessary for long-term success. As one parent put it, “Every student has their person. Whether it is a teacher, coach, or advisor, all the students know there are adults in the community who know and support them and to whom they can turn no matter what.”

Athletics play an important part in the St. Luke’s experience. Upwards of 90% of students elect to play at least one interscholastic sport each year. With 19 varsity sports teams and 23 Middle School teams, there are plenty of opportunities to play. Athletic Director Mike West notes that the value of athletics at St. Luke’s is “to learn through mistakes and through challenges and to perform at a really high level, while not forgetting what’s really important, which is character, class, and sportsmanship.” All student athletes benefit from first-class facilities, including two gyms, four turf fields, four international squash courts, five tennis courts, and a new Center for Wellness and Fitness. Outside facilities, such as the Country Club of New Canaan for golf and Sono Ice House for hockey, enhance St. Luke’s on-campus resources.

The Arts are a greatly valued and award-winning area of the School’s program, in which students are able to further existing passions and talents and to develop new ones. Visual Arts offer studio classes in ceramics, drawing, painting, photography, and digital design in purpose-built studios. Performing Arts include music offerings such as band, chorus, chorale, and digital music production. In total, there are 6 bands, 11 choral ensembles, and 4 a capella groups at St. Luke’s. The Theater Department offers classes in acting and theater design and puts on 8 productions annually in the state-of-the-art Seldin Performing Arts Center and Wyckoff Family Black Box Theater.
COMMUNITY

Talk with anyone about what sets St. Luke’s School apart and they will inevitably mention the community. Faculty, students, parents, administrators, and alums agree that this is a major component of the School’s secret sauce. As one teacher put it, “Everyone at St. Luke’s is known, needed, and cared for.” This all starts with a culture of kindness that is perhaps best exemplified by the “Be Kind Plaza” at the School’s entrance, reminding all who enter of this important community expectation. St. Luke’s puts a premium on the power of constructive, supportive relationships to inspire all members of the community to treat each other with consideration and respect.

Whether from New Canaan or up to an hour away, students and families are drawn to St. Luke’s by the opportunities of a robust program associated with a large school and the feel of a small school. Students cherish their close relationships with faculty and the connections they build with each other. They feel known by the Head of School who greets them on many mornings, and they appreciate access to a school administration that is responsive to their needs. The recent change to a later start to the school day is a palpable demonstration of St. Luke’s commitment to health, wellness, and balance and an administration that listens to student voices. Students are engaged and involved at St. Luke’s and in their own communities, living the School’s mission and motto. St. Luke’s is a place that accomplishes what many other schools strive for: Students who perform at high levels without feeling as if they are in competition with each other.
St. Luke’s emphasis on hiring, supporting, and retaining outstanding faculty is at the core of its reputation for excellence. Experienced, dedicated, and long serving, the faculty is valued for its collective passion, enthusiasm, joy, and ability to connect with students. Furthermore, teachers at St. Luke’s appreciate the School’s support for innovation and its emphasis on continuing professional growth and renewal. Students benefit from their teachers’ expertise, the care they provide in and out of the classroom, and the way they live the values of the School.

Parents, too, embrace the School’s focus on community. At St. Luke’s, the school-home partnership is characterized by frequent and open lines of communication. Clear and regular communication, transparency, and general availability have been hallmarks of the current Head of School, and all agree that these are continuing priorities.

Located in New Canaan, CT and Fairfield County, St. Luke’s is nestled in an affluent suburban community. Known for its historic Main street and terrific public schools, New Canaan offers parks, restaurants, cultural attractions and more for its residents, many of whom commute roughly 60 minutes by train to nearby New York City.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

In May of 2017, the St. Luke’s Board of Trustees approved a Vision for Inclusive Excellence, affirming that diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical components of educational and institutional excellence and pledging to focus the School’s resources—human and financial—around three key areas: Community, Culture, and Curriculum. Led by the Director of Equity and Inclusion and supported by the Head of School and Board of Trustees, St. Luke’s actively strives to ensure that all feel a sense of belonging and that students are developing as well-balanced, confident leaders who can succeed in a diverse, globally integrated world.
STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

The next Head of School will benefit from St. Luke’s School’s many strengths, including:

- A strong culture of kindness and respect that is valued by all constituents
- A well-deserved reputation for both academic excellence and genuine care for each student – a balance that sets the School apart from many of its peers
- A superb Faculty, Staff, and Administration, including an exceptionally skilled Technology Department
- A strong financial position with a modest level of debt and no deferred maintenance
- A beautiful and well-maintained campus with excellent facilities to support the School’s broad and deep Grades 5-12 program
- A commitment to ongoing innovation that is valued by all stakeholders
- An ambitious and exciting strategic plan that reflects the forward-thinking ethos of the School
- A palpable love for St. Luke’s and a deep commitment by employees, parents, students, and trustees to implementing its mission and living its values
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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

St. Luke’s has been moving through the COVID-19 crisis with compassion, conviction, and courage, and the School’s faculty has been justifiably praised for their extraordinary efforts to maintain both strong instruction and strong relationships with students. When school campuses suddenly closed in March, St. Luke’s distance learning program was up and running in a matter of days. The School fully reopened with carefully developed health protocols in place on August 24, 2020—a time when no other peer school was ready to serve students. St. Luke’s admissions saw a surge in applications over the summer from families who had heard about the positive experience of students and families with the SLSReady program.

There is good reason for confidence that St. Luke’s will come out of this crisis with continuing strength as an institution. Beyond the dedication of its employees and community, the School will benefit from its reputation for academic excellence, its enduring values, its remarkable location and facilities, and its relatively secure financial resources. Nonetheless, there certainly will be challenges, as well as opportunities, facing St. Luke’s next Head of School.

The next Head of School should be prepared to work in partnership with the Board to:

- Continue to effectively balance St. Luke’s reputation for academic excellence with its enduring commitments to kindness and humility
- Lead the ongoing implementation and evolution of the School’s new Strategic Plan – incorporating design-based learning to empower each individual student; increasing the emphasis on programs for promoting student emotional health and well-being; and building on the School’s strong foundation of commitment to student leadership development
- Lead the ongoing implementation and evolution of the School’s Vision for Inclusive Excellence – deepening the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at St. Luke’s, while facilitating increased understanding and moving the community forward together in this work
- Manage future enrollment to ensure that St. Luke’s continues to be both financially strong and able to attract and retain students who resonate with its mission and values
- Effectively fundraise to build endowment to make the School less tuition-dependent and to ensure that it is able to effectively implement its compelling strategic priorities

- Continue to ensure the School’s ability to recruit and retain high-quality faculty in an increasingly demanding and competitive market
THE POSITION

St. Luke’s is a school with high standards that has benefitted from a legacy of inspiring, caring, and effective leadership. The next Head of School will require considerable poise, patience, confidence, and skill to effectively balance the demands associated with this exciting leadership opportunity.

St. Luke’s School is committed to providing highly competitive compensation, including the availability of housing for the next head of school and her/his family.

A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate the following skills, values, and experiences:

- An inspirational school leader with a demonstrated record of promoting excellence
- A relationship builder who leads by knowing and caring about students, employees, & families
- A champion for the balance that defines St. Luke’s – someone committed to the development of both the head and the heart of each student
- A highly visible and accessible leadership style

- A powerful combination of vision, intelligence, kindness, and humility
- An excellent listener and communicator
- A superb manager who knows how to prioritize, delegate, and hold people accountable
- A problem solver who can navigate difficult conversations and knows how to structure effective decision-making
- The capacity to embrace fundraising with passion, skill, and urgency
- The determination and skill to deftly lean into ongoing diversity, equity & inclusion work
- Belief in the centrality of teachers as the critical drivers of school improvement
- An enthusiastic partner in thinking with others about the future of learning and in seeking to ensure that St. Luke’s remains a leader in 21st century education
- Passionate and experienced recruiter of faculty and staff
APPLICATION PROCESS

St. Luke’s School has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next Head of School. If you wish to submit your application materials (which includes a resume, cover letter, and educational philosophy), please do so at the RG175 website:

https://rg175.com/candidate/signup

Deadline to apply: February 12, 2021

Position begins: July 1, 2022

For inquiries, or if you would like to nominate a candidate for this position, please contact the RG175 consultants working with St. Luke’s School:

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