



The Frederick Gunn School



**HEAD OF SCHOOL
OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**



THE OPPORTUNITY

In 1850, Frederick Gunn established a school based on the belief that strength of character was the goal of education. Today, The Frederick Gunn School rests on four cornerstones of character: scholarship, integrity, respect, and responsibility. Character is forged in a cohesive, diverse community informed by a challenging college preparatory curriculum, a broad range of athletic, artistic, and social activities and a faculty of scholars and committed educators dedicated to the intellectual and ethical development of every student. A Frederick Gunn School graduate is a broadly educated, socially responsible citizen with strength of character and the courage to act on tested beliefs and convictions.

The Board of Trustees at The Frederick Gunn School seeks an educational leader with the passion, energy, and experience to build upon the enduring foundational vision of Frederick Gunn. A pioneer educator, courageous abolitionist, activist on the Underground Railroad, and rugged outdoorsman, Gunn inspired generations of students to be curious, thoughtful, active members of their communities, and to stand up for what they believe in. The Frederick Gunn School has reclaimed its narrative, creating purposeful experiences for its students, empowering it to, “Be a Force for Good.” The next Head will continue to develop and strengthen the strong trajectory of the school to create an educational community that lives up to the ambitious vision of its founder.

When the Board of Trustees chose to change the name of the school in 2020, Gunn became a school aligned with the values of Frederick Gunn, thereby transforming boarding school education. Bold and entrepreneurial, The Frederick Gunn School creates innovative and real-world experiences for its students. Students are encouraged to apply the school’s Core Values in all pursuits and strive to better themselves and their communities. They view themselves as global citizens, problem solvers, and active participants who think deeply about the impact of their decisions. This is an action-oriented school, and the next Head, in partnership with the talented leadership team, faculty, and board, will embrace the opportunity to build on the school’s legacy by driving innovation, serving the curious and diverse student body, and honoring the ambition for students to be a recognizable force for good in the world.

The next Head will be a highly visible member and leader of the school community and the town of Washington, Connecticut. The Frederick Gunn School is a boarding school, serving about 325 students, focused on meaningful relationships, providing challenging academic and co-curricular programs, and inspiring participation in experiential programs that take students out of their comfort zones. The next Head will be a bold and ambitious community member who embraces building and sustaining a diverse and inclusive school where all students, faculty, and staff feel and promote belonging and togetherness.

The Head will be appointed by the Board of Trustees and will be responsible for all aspects of the school, including academic program, operations, financial health, external relations and fund-raising. In partnership with the board, the Head is responsible for setting the school’s strategic priorities and delivering on the school’s mission. The next Head will be motivated to build upon the school’s current major initiatives that reflect Gunn’s unique mission and values, and will be enthusiastic about the opportunity to lead the next major campaign. The 12th Head of The Frederick Gunn School will continue the strong trajectory of the school, drive a bold agenda, and continue to develop a community that models excellence in every dimension of boarding school life.

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT HEAD

- ▀ Inspire the school community to strive towards the ambitious vision of the school's founder; ensure that the entrepreneurial spirit drives the overall path of the school.
- ▀ Be a bold, forward-thinking leader on the dimensions of curriculum and pedagogy; continue to develop programs that inspire curiosity and thoughtfulness and that further distinguish the school.
- ▀ Invest deeply in developing and leading a modern, innovative, residential school community and culture that supports each student's growth and development and provides the foundation for them to find their voice, their friendships, and their passions.
- ▀ Engage actively in the life of the campus; be visible and fully present at important moments of the school as well as at everyday events engaged with students, faculty, and staff; develop relationships with faculty, students, and staff in ways that reinforce a sense of common purpose and shared experiences.
- ▀ Invest in the school's commitment to be the diverse, inclusive, warm community of students, faculty, and staff that Frederick Gunn envisioned.
- ▀ Cultivate and shape the vision for the school's keystone spaces and programs, including The Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Center for Innovation and Active Citizenship, opening in Fall of 2023, which will house the Center for Entrepreneurship and Center for Citizenship and Just Democracy, and the newly opened Thomas S. Perakos Arts and Community Center.
- ▀ Promote the visibility of the school, and its recent successes, in the boarding school community.





- ▣ Ensure that the strength, diversity, and collaborative nature of The Frederick Gunn School's leadership team is maintained.
- ▣ Focus on professional development and continuous improvement for faculty and staff alongside systems that prioritize accountability and feedback across the institution.
- ▣ Partner with the Admissions Office to build on recent success, currently including the school's highest enrollment in its history, and develop and execute a strategy that expands enrollment to 350 smart, curious, and thoughtful students.
- ▣ Serve as a visible, active, and devoted member of the local community, and ensure the school positively invests in the well-being of Washington, Connecticut.
- ▣ Engage actively with alumni and the parent body and embrace a leadership role in fundraising; serve as an inspiring spokesperson and compelling public face for the school, engaging parents, alumni, donors, and the independent school community.
- ▣ Build and sustain momentum in raising funds for ongoing major projects, such as the new athletic center.
- ▣ In partnership with a strong and committed Board of Trustees, cultivate engaged donors and trustees to ensure the philanthropic support and expertise the school needs to thrive; steward the school's resources wisely, creating a sustainable path forward by aligning the institution's strategic priorities with its resources and making decisions based on short- and long-term needs and aspirations.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

- ▀ Experience as an educational leader, broadly speaking, and an authentic appreciation for the values and practices of boarding schools; commitment to innovation to meet the needs of students.
- ▀ A deep connection to students and parents with an ability to forge authentic, trusting relationships.
- ▀ Tested organizational and managerial skills; Experience setting vision and goals and aligning support from multiple stakeholders.
- ▀ A demonstrated clear commitment to diversity, inclusion, and active citizenship.
- ▀ A team-builder and decision-maker who has experience identifying, attracting, and retaining top talent and empowering these individuals to act in the institution's best interests.
- ▀ A track record of inspiring, effective communication in a wide range of situations from daily engagements to prepared speeches to promoting the school to crisis communication.

CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND VISION

In a boarding school community with an enduring commitment to academic excellence and innovation, intellectual curiosity, and strength of character, the Head will be an educator dedicated to a transformative experience for all students, faculty, and staff. With a strong intellect and a penchant for encouraging students to both listen and share, the Head will support the continued evolution of the school, mindful of its focus on providing an academically challenging program, promoting a sense of wellness, and fostering the four cornerstones of The Frederick Gunn School: scholarship, integrity, respect, and responsibility.

The Head will be passionate about teaching and learning and will encourage the faculty to think expansively about curriculum, pedagogy, and real-world experiences that ensure that the program reflects the values fundamental to the school. Recognizing that a creative, dedicated, and caring faculty and staff is the lifeblood of a strong school, the Head will recruit and nurture a talented, diverse community of adults and promote a culture committed to continuous improvement and professional development with a focus on challenge, care, and inclusivity.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

The next Head will embrace the school's history, culture, and community while concurrently continuing the school's journey to be an intentionally diverse and inclusive school where all members feel connected, engaged, and have an authentic sense of belonging. The next Head will move fluidly through the school and the surrounding community and be able to listen well, convey appreciation and respect, and build substantive relationships with a broad range of people. The Head will be visible and accessible and will communicate consistently about priorities, values, and goals. Located in the heart of Washington, Connecticut, they will create a shared sense of community and connection by communicating clearly, listening to all voices, and engaging in socially responsible ways.



ORGANIZATIONAL, STRATEGIC, AND OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

An entrepreneurial, ambitious, and empathetic leader with a strong business acumen, the next Head will be an effective steward of the school's financial, physical, and human assets. In partnership with key stakeholders, the Head will set priorities that reflect Gunn's values and communicate the plan. The leader will build, lead, and empower a talented and diverse team of faculty and staff to work collaboratively, listen well, and partner to solve problems and chart an ambitious, sustainable path forward. The Head will balance the need to establish the appropriate levels of autonomy and accountability, creating an environment where people feel challenged and nurtured. The Head will develop strong relationships with the school's Board of Trustees and partner closely with them on major institutional issues.

FUNDRAISING AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS STEWARDSHIP

An inspiring communicator and spokesperson, the next Head will be the public face of The Frederick Gunn School. The next leader will ensure that all constituents — those on campus, alumni, current and prospective parents and students — understand the distinctiveness and dynamism of the school. The next Head will foster a culture of philanthropic support from alumni and parents and will be an effective fundraiser, communicating the value of the school in a compelling way and driving success in both annual and capital giving.

\$100+
MILLION
IN PHILANTHROPY
OVER THE LAST
10 YEARS

5,530
GLOBAL
ALUMNI
NETWORK

\$25
MILLION
LARGEST
GIFT
IN SCHOOL HISTORY

OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- ♥ A dynamic, courageous, and mature leader with good judgment and an entrepreneurial mindset.
- ♥ Warm and engaging; genuinely interested in the lives of students, faculty, and staff members.
- ♥ Confidence and willingness to listen empathetically, empower others, and make decisions.
- ♥ Exceptional verbal and written communication skills — someone who is thoughtful, inspiring, and authentic.
- ♥ Patience and the ability to see around corners and anticipate future needs and potential impacts.
- ♥ A sense of humor.

SEARCH PROCESS

The Frederick Gunn School is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Except in cases of a bona fide occupational qualification or need, or except as otherwise permitted or required by law, the school does not discriminate against applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, present or past history of mental disorder, intellectual disability, learning disability or physical disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, or any other protected class status under applicable law with respect to hiring, compensation, promotion, discharge from employment, or other terms and conditions of employment.

The Frederick Gunn School Search Committee is being assisted by Spencer Stuart in the search process. The committee welcomes comments, questions, nominations, or expressions of interest.

Please send expressions of interest with any supporting materials to the following confidential email address: FGSHead@spencerstuart.com



THE SCHOOL

The Frederick Gunn School, founded in 1850 and located in Washington, Connecticut, is a coeducational boarding and day school for 325 students in grades 9-12 as well as a post-graduate year. The school has begun a search for its 12th Head of School. In recent years, the school has experienced many tremendous achievements, including making substantial progress rebuilding much of its campus, creating a new and innovative curriculum, launching a multi-year fundraising campaign, achieving record enrollment, and building a deep team of senior leaders. Driven by more than \$100 million in philanthropy over the last decade, the school opened Graham House, a dormitory for 9th grade girls, in 2016, followed by the 32,000-square-foot Thomas S. Perakos Arts and Community Center in 2020. The school also opened the Emerson Fitness Center in 2020 and, most recently, broke ground on the 24,000-square-foot Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Center for Innovation and Active Citizenship that will sit in the center of campus and open in the fall of 2023. The school has recently begun the process of planning for a new state-of-the-art athletic center and additional fields on the east side of its campus.

In 2020, the school changed its name from The Gunnery to The Frederick Gunn School, an intentional decision that was guided by a desire to honor our founder and clarify the school's vision. The announcement was revitalizing to the institution and recommitted the school to the ideals that its founder lived 173 years ago, ideals that remain inspiring today. The new name symbolizes the school and culture that has been built over decades, notably with an unwavering commitment to ongoing innovation in all that we do.

ABOUT FREDERICK GUNN: A TRANSFORMATIVE LEADER

Frederick Gunn was a pioneering educator, courageous abolitionist, and rugged outdoorsman. He was a leader of the Underground Railroad, guiding enslaved people to freedom; he appeared in the first known photograph of a baseball game; and he is acknowledged as the founder of the American camping movement. Frederick Gunn inspired generations of students to be curious and thoughtful, to be active members of their communities, to stand up for what they believe in, and to find a sense of wonder and renewal in the outdoors.

The transformational, holistic educational philosophy that defined Mr. Gunn's original vision for the school over 170 years ago is even more powerful today. With our founder's ideals in mind, Gunn is a school that has built a legacy of simultaneously challenging and supporting our students, helping them identify their passions and exceed their potential while becoming engaged citizens. The most powerful and encouraging elements of the school community are rooted in Mr. Gunn's timeless educational philosophy, with its emphasis on character development, curiosity, risk-taking, and independent thinking. Gunn students are life-long learners who will Be a Force for Good in the world.

*We believe that **Integrated Humans** immersed in a **Learning Ecosystem**, surrounded by **Hope-Filled Faculty** and engaged in **Moral Character Development**, become **Active Citizens**.*

At The Frederick Gunn School, we give our students the lifelong learning and leadership skills they need to be active and responsible citizens, both locally and globally. We prepare our students for what's next as they continue to learn and grow, in college and in life. It all begins in the classroom, yet because we are a boarding school, it intentionally spans across all of our on-campus experiences.

INNOVATIVE LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

Our timeless educational philosophy, with its emphasis on challenging academics, character development, curiosity, risk-taking, problem-solving, and independent thinking, will meet every student where they are, while never letting them stay there. At The Frederick Gunn School, our learning ecosystem champions the interdisciplinary and experiential nature of life and learning, incorporating athletics, arts, and the outdoors into everyday life alongside ambitious academics.

RISK-TAKING AND INNOVATION

Frederick Gunn's own entrepreneurial mindset is as relevant for our students in the 21st century as it was for his students in the 19th century. Our new Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Center for Innovation and Active Citizenship, opening in the fall of 2023, will house our Entrepreneurship Program alongside our Center for Citizenship and Just Democracy and our IDEAS Lab. This entrepreneurial mindset will be integrated into every one of our programs on campus as we prepare our students to take risks and to be makers, not consumers.

LEARNING YOURSELF AND HOW TO LEARN

The key to 21st century skills is the work for each of our students to understand themselves as integrated human beings who are unique as individuals and as learners. Exemplified in our Center for Academic Excellence (CAE), these priorities are found through our advising program and our Student Progress Meetings as well as in every single classroom at Gunn.

PUBLIC CHARACTER AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The mission of the Frederick Gunn School is to form active citizens who will have a positive impact here on campus and out in the world. While they learn these principles explicitly through the Center for Citizenship and Just Democracy, we know that it takes an ecosystem of adults committed to this work to ensure this outcome for our students.

A SENSE OF ROOTEDNESS AND PLACE

Exemplified by Gunn Outdoors, a sense of rootedness and place is important for all Frederick Gunn School programs, as this exemplifies Frederick Gunn's instincts around place-based and experiential learning, a commitment to the natural world, instincts for sustainable living, and practical, life-skills outcomes for every Frederick Gunn School student.



THE CENTER FOR CITIZENSHIP AND JUST DEMOCRACY

The Center for Citizenship and Just Democracy is central to each student's development. Here we put the focus on reasoned dialogue and rational debate. Our intentional, four-year curriculum promotes learning through robust discussion and viewpoint diversity. This program is at the core of what it means to become an active citizen, to develop the skills necessary to persuade others, to listen to other viewpoints, and to be an engaged group member.

CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Beginning in the fall of 2023, The Frederick Gunn School will open its Center for Entrepreneurship in the Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Center for Innovation and Active Citizenship. Entrepreneurship is both a mindset — risk-taking, independent thinking, and willingness to thoughtfully disrupt — and a skill set defined by innovation, resilience, perseverance, and collaborative leadership. Students will discover how to turn ideas into action, develop plans, pitch an idea, learn from failure, and then to adjust their sights to move ahead. Gunn students will both imagine and build the future.

GUNN OUTDOORS

Outdoor life and adventure have been part of the school's ethos since its beginning. Students discover outdoors an ability to take risks, problem-solving, leading, collaborating, and dealing with a world that won't conform to their every desire. Gunn Outdoors offers an intentional curriculum committed to being a cornerstone experience at The Frederick Gunn School. Students at our school learn to hike, pitch a tent, build a fire, and to conquer a ropes course. These experiences are about students discovering themselves — going into nature can be hard, yet students can do hard things and this offers a tremendous sense of accomplishment. The outdoors gives us life lessons that we hold onto forever.





CENTER FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

A resource center located in the center of campus, the Center for Academic Excellence aims to empower everyone to acquire the skills that will allow them to be more successful learners across all subjects. We coach our students on planning, discipline, research skills, note-taking, and executive function — effectively, project management for high school. For faculty, we are striving for the CAE to be a resource center for professional growth that will enable them to stay abreast of the current research, methods, and practices in their subjects — giving them the tools to create an environment that will excite and engage each and every student. We believe the best faculty members are themselves lifelong learners and ought to have the benefit of the best resources.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Led by our Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and in partnership with our Board of Trustees Task Force, our continuous focus on moral character development intentionally engages all members of our school in the work of creating an inclusive and equitable living and learning ecosystem. Community and citizenship are at the heart of our aspiration to both social justice and academic excellence, with individual diversity integral to the strength of that community. When we embrace difference and pursue school life with respect, equity, and compassion, we prepare our students to be engaged citizens, as described in the school's Character Statement.

In keeping with the tenets of our founder Frederick Gunn, who was himself a prominent abolitionist and progressive educator, The Frederick Gunn School seeks to provide a pluralistic learning environment for all, inclusive of (but not limited to): culture, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, national origin, learning differences, physical difference, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic differences.

ATHLETICS

Athletics have been central to our learning ecosystem since Mr. Gunn played first base at the school's baseball games on the Green. He knew that athletics teach students the collaboration, resilience, courage, and physical fitness that make them truly integrated human beings. Home to five athletic fields, two full-size gyms, eight tennis courts, an ice rink, and a boathouse, our school fields more than 30 teams in 15 different sports. Students take with them for life the lessons they learn at all levels of athletics — teamwork, resiliency, good wins and tough losses, and when to take the big shot, on and off the field.

ARTS

Becoming an artist is a rich expression of our belief in putting your ideas out into the world. Four elements define the experience at The Frederick Gunn School: Creation, Risk, Connection, and Wonder. We invite our students to be creators and makers. Whether in the visual or performing arts, students are asked to leave their mark on the world, to challenge someone to see the world in a new way, and to express their perfectly unique point of view.



BY THE NUMBERS

325
STUDENT
BODY

STUDENTS FROM
25
COUNTRIES
&
22
STATES

60
FACULTY

12
AVERAGE
CLASS SIZE

120
ACADEMIC
CLASSES

35
AP & HONORS
CLASSES

35
SPORTS
TEAMS

\$5
MILLION
AWARDED IN
FINANCIAL AID

220
ACRE
CAMPUS



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Gunn
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frederickgunn.org