



# West Sound Academy

Head of School Position Statement



Poulsbo, Washington





## Our Mission:

West Sound Academy is a college preparatory school that graduates accomplished, creative, intellectually curious young adults prepared to contribute responsibly to the world.

## Our Vision:

West Sound Academy is a globally recognized International Baccalaureate school that provides an exceptional educational and social experience for youth through a rigorous curriculum and nurturing environment, innovatively utilizing fine arts and sciences as a catalyst to foster high academic achievement.

## West Sound Academy at a Glance

Our School is located on a wooded, twenty-acre campus overlooking Liberty Bay in Poulsbo, Washington.

The school's four buildings include classrooms, library, art gallery, Commons, technology center, two science labs, and art, theatre and music teaching studios.

The outdoor setting and the magnificent views of the Olympic Mountains and Puget Sound inspire students and staff. Outdoor facilities include an amphitheater, a playfield, a maker playground, and a sports court.

<b>Grades Served:</b>	<b>6th-12th</b>
<b>Enrollment:</b>	<b>100-120</b>
<b>Student-Teacher Ratio:</b>	<b>8:1</b>
<b>International Student Body:</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Average Class Size:</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>College Acceptance:</b>	<b>100%</b>

# About the School

The dream of two long-time educators, West Sound Academy was founded in 1998 as a college-preparatory middle and high school that would leverage the study of arts and sciences to further academic achievement. The school's philosophy of blending rigorous academic studies, experiential learning, and deep engagement in music, theatre, and visual art fits the International Baccalaureate (IB) mission well. West Sound Academy has been offering the IB Diploma Programme since 2010.

Our school currently serves about 100 students in grades 6-12. Day students come from 12 towns in a wide geographic area in both Kitsap and Jefferson Counties on the Olympic Peninsula near Seattle. The school does not generally attract students or faculty and staff from the east side of the Puget Sound where Seattle is located due to the travel time. Typically, approximately 6-10 international students attend from multiple regions around the world residing with host families.

The middle school serves 36 students in grades 6-8. Currently, there is a 6-7 multi-age class and one section of 8th grade. The upper school serves about 60 students, with one section for each grade. A demographic and psychographic study completed in November 2020 indicated that the school should expect to remain between 100 to 110 students over the next 3 to 5 years with the potential to grow to full capacity at 135 in the longer term.

Situated on 20 acres in Poulsbo, Washington, on the ancestral lands of the Suquamish Tribe, the campus overlooks Liberty Bay and the Olympic Mountains. Four buildings house classrooms, a technology access center, science labs, art gallery, library, student commons, and administrative offices. The outdoor environment includes an amphitheater, soccer field, horticulture gardens, and sport court. The school utilizes all aspects of its campus as indoor and outdoor classrooms. WSA is located adjacent to Chief Kitsap Academy, which is a 6-12 public school operated by the Suquamish Tribe.

The school is a candidate member of the Northwest Association of Independent Schools due for a self-study in 2022-23 and site visit 2023-24. WSA is fully accredited through Cognia and due for reaccreditation in 2022-23. WSA is authorized to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme as a World School and due for reauthorization in 2024-25.



# Academics

Our school uses a two-semester system with a third three-week June Term at the end of the year. School starts before Labor Day, including an all-school retreat called Fall Gathering, and ends the second week of June. The weekly schedule is a rotating block system that includes time for Advisory, Faculty Collaboration Meetings, and community assemblies.

The Middle School program emphasizes project-based learning steered by the Humanities teacher and coordinated for integration with other subject area teachers. All students engage in studies in History, English, Language Acquisition, Math, Science, Art, Theatre, Music, Physical Education, and Technology.



Students in all grades participate in Creative, Active and Service (CAS) learning. Students plan activities outside of their classes and reflect on their experiences as they relate to the IB CAS Learning Outcomes. Each grade level has age-appropriate expectations for CAS learning and Advisors serve to facilitate the planning and reflecting.

Students in grades 6-10 all complete an Extended Research Project (ERP) each year. Through this project, students learn how to formulate a research question, investigate the topic thoroughly, and write with critical thinking.



In the spring, two days are dedicated to students presenting the results of their research to the entire school community. Students in grades 11 and 12 apply those skills to either the IB's Extended Essay requirement or a culminating Senior Project.

The school year concludes with June Term where faculty or adjunct faculty offer three-to-six-hour experiential learning elective classes to multi-age student groups. For example, students might study Forensic Science, Music, Science Fiction, Robotics, etc. Alternatively, faculty also offer travel experiences during this time to international and domestic locations.



## Faculty & Staff

The school has 10 faculty and 8 staff (6 admin and 2 hourly employees) including the Head of School. The current HOS and Associate HOS work closely together on all aspects of school operations, curriculum development, and strategic thinking. In partnership with the Director of Admissions, the three make up the senior admin team and maintain clear lines of communication and collaboration.

The admin team is very collegial and maintains a culture of stepping in and helping out as workloads ebb and flow. When necessary, administrators also teach a class. The current Head of School is departing in summer 2021, and the Associate HOS will serve as interim HOS until the new Head of School is hired.

Most of the 10 faculty teach both middle and upper school classes and lead one extra-curricular club, activity and/or serve on a committee such as the Hiring Committee or Commitment to Care Committee (which advances diversity, equity and inclusion standards).

Faculty salaries are within 92% of the NWAIS average faculty salaries for schools in Washington with fewer than 200 students, but in recent years the administration and the Board of Trustees have prioritized raising salaries to remain competitive with local trends.

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

West Sound Academy values diversity, equity, and inclusion and strives to teach, learn and practice anti-racism. Our community is stronger and more resilient when we have many ages, stages, backgrounds, ethnicities, languages, social identities, and financial means represented in our student body, faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees. Diversity brings varied perspectives to our entire community, along with creative and innovative thinking and approaches to life. Building global awareness and understanding is part of our mission: to graduate “accomplished, creative, intellectually curious young adults prepared to contribute responsibly to the world.”

West Sound Academy serves approximately 30% of students from underrepresented populations and traditionally marginalized groups such as LGBTQ+.

WSA uses a Sliding Scale tuition program to sustain socio-economic diversity in the school community. In 2021-22, tuition ranges from \$4,195 to \$23,500.

## Governance

The HOS currently reports to an eleven-member Board of Trustees made up of current and former parents, alumni and community leaders. The school's bylaws allow expansion of the Board. Board Members can serve up to two consecutive three-year terms and many do extend their terms. The Chair of the Board serves as Vice Chair for one year, Chair for one or two years and Past Chair for one year allowing for seamless continuity. The HOS and Chair work together to recruit two to three new board members each year.



# About the Position

As the Board considers WSA's life after the pandemic, it is looking for a leader who will guide the school with consistency, continuity, and creative thinking. The next Head of School should be an experienced educational leader who demonstrates financial acumen, strategic thinking, a caring and accessible approach, the ability to effectively articulate a vision for the school's growth, and the capacity to engage others in realizing that vision.



## Opportunities & Challenges

### **Advance Long-Term Financial Strategies and Enrollment**

The primary focus of WSA's strategic plan is securing long-term financial sustainability. The school has made tremendous gains over the last decade decreasing debt, increasing revenue and successfully re-aligning the annual cash flow. The school has also relied upon two rounds of Paycheck Protection Program loan funding to help offset the decline in enrollment due to the pandemic.

The beautiful 20-acre school campus was built in 2005 on financing rather than fundraising resulting in a large mortgage on the property. This mortgage is more appropriate for an enrollment size of 125-135 students. When enrollment is lower than that, the school has relied upon a higher fundraising goal of \$400,000, international enrollment, lean staffing, and tight budgeting to manage the debt load. The school does not have an endowment. The new Head of School will have the opportunity to join the continual work of the Board of Trustees on long-range financial strategies.

A key goal of the new Head will be to grow enrollment by about 10 students in the near term, with modest growth in the longer term. The sliding scale tuition model makes the school accessible to most families in the area, and the Head will need to convey the mission and value of the school to these families.

### **Embrace Global Citizenship**

Additionally, WSA is only one of two schools in the county offering the IB Diploma Programme and the only one that thoroughly embraces the idea of developing global citizens through an

international student body. The new Head of School has the opportunity to engage in the re-opening of the United States as a place where people of all backgrounds are welcome to come study.

### **Reconnect Community**

It is anticipated that in 2022-23 school operations and traditions will be conducted more normally than they have been since the start of the pandemic. This will be an opportunity to revitalize the connections among constituents, inspire students to be able to engage in in-person experiences, and reinvigorate teachers with exciting professional development and collaboration. This is a chance to foster a sense of renewal and hope to what new heights the school and its students can achieve.

### **Advance Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

The next Head of School at West Sound Academy will be able to rely on the tremendous strengths of the current administrative staff and faculty to continue to deliver a rich and engaging learning journey for students. However, there is a great opportunity to further advance foundational principles of social justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion in the curriculum and culture of the school.



## How to Apply

The Search Committee intends to complete the search by late October 2021. Interested candidates should submit application materials by July 15th, 2021.

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials, ideally in one continuous PDF document:

- Letter of Interest addressed to the WSA Search Committee
- Current résumé
- Statement of Educational Leadership Philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information including phone numbers and email addresses. References will not be contacted without notification to the candidate.

### **Materials and questions should be sent to:**

Andrew Allemann  
Board of Trustees  
[headsearch@westsoundacademy.org](mailto:headsearch@westsoundacademy.org)