



Head of School Position Announcement

May 14, 2026

To apply, please click [HERE](#).

**Applications requested by June 26, 2026
and accepted until the position is filled.**

The Opportunity

The Montessori School of Durham (MSD) seeks a new Head of School to lead a team of dedicated professionals and volunteers committed to the joy of learning and educating the whole child. This next Head of School will succeed a respected leader who has served for over a decade, building a legacy of stability, thoughtful growth, financial strength, and deep trust across the community. With a talented faculty, a loyal parent body, and a strong reputation in the Triangle region, MSD stands on a firm foundation.

At the same time, the school is at an exciting point of possibility. Having reached a position of health and maturity, MSD is ready for a leader who can honor what makes the school distinctive while helping the community thoughtfully explore its next horizons, including long-term growth, access and affordability, community impact, and future programmatic opportunities.

The Organization

Almost fifty years ago, a diverse group of Durham parents seeking an alternative educational path for their children founded the **Montessori School of Durham**. They had envisioned a school that would foster a child's intrinsic desire to learn in an environment that nurtures children to discover who they truly are. In its early years, the school operated in a variety of locations across Durham before school leaders purchased land and built the idyllic seven-acre campus that today serves approximately 180 students from infancy through 6th grade.

MSD's campus is filled with beautiful and spacious classrooms, inviting playgrounds, and garden spaces that give children daily opportunities to work, explore, and play in a natural environment. Families and faculty alike describe the campus as a distinctive and beloved part of the school's identity.



A Montessori education is highly individualized to each child's unique developmental path. Modern neuroscience affirms that classic Montessori methods promote problem solving,

independent thinking, creativity, collaboration, and self-direction. Children learn at an appropriate pace while developing confidence, responsibility, joy in discovery, and an appreciation of nature. Each Montessori class operates on the principle of freedom within limits.

Since its inception in 1976, Montessori School of Durham has been affiliated with the American Montessori Society, and in 1996 was recognized as the first school in North Carolina to become an Accredited School by the AMS. Today, MSD remains one of only six schools in the state of North Carolina to hold this distinction. MSD offers programs for infants (6-15 months), toddlers (15 months – 3 years), early childhood (3-6 years), lower elementary (grades 1-3), and upper elementary (grades 4-6).

MSD is also distinguished by the strength of its community. Families bring time, talent, perspective, and partnership that enrich the educational experience and help sustain a warm, supportive, and highly engaged school culture.

To learn more, visit Montessori School of Durham's website at <https://www.msduham.org/>.

The Position

The Head of School serves as the chief executive and leader of the Montessori School of Durham and is responsible for the overall leadership, administration, and long-term vitality of the institution. Reporting to a 16-member Board of Trustees and evaluated through the Executive Committee, the Head of School leads a talented faculty and staff of approximately 55 individuals who guide the growth and development of approximately 180 students from infancy through 6th grade.

This is an opportunity to lead a school of genuine strength. MSD is widely respected for its authentic Montessori program, long-tenured and deeply committed faculty, warm and engaged community culture, sound financial stewardship, and a governance structure that has matured into a thoughtful and high-functioning Board partnership. Previous leaders have positioned the school well, creating a stable and healthy foundation from which the next Head can lead.

At the same time, MSD has reached an important moment of strategic possibility. With enrollment near capacity on its current campus, the school's next leader will help the community consider future pathways for sustainable growth and revenue generation. These pathways may include thoughtful enrollment expansion, exploration of an additional campus or programmatic footprint, and the continued development of a stronger advancement

function and culture of philanthropy. Additional revenue generation will be important to sustaining excellence, investing in people, and continuing to attract and retain outstanding faculty and staff.

The next Head of School will also have the opportunity to further strengthen the school's internal infrastructure as MSD continues to mature as an organization. Areas of opportunity include evaluating and modernizing systems and practices; enhancing communication and transparency; strengthening budgeting, human resources, and talent development functions; and refining leadership structures that support clarity, accountability, and long-term excellence.

A central leadership challenge - and opportunity -will be balancing thoughtful evolution with deep respect for the culture that has made MSD distinctive. The faculty-led nature of the school, marked by professional trust, autonomy, and a shared commitment to children, is highly valued by the community. The next Head must be able to bring fresh thinking, disciplined leadership, and forward momentum while honoring the people, traditions, and Montessori values at the heart of the school.



The Location

Durham, known as the "Bull City" and the "City of Medicine," is one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing communities in the Southeast. Located in the heart of the renowned Research Triangle, Durham offers the energy of a thriving city paired with the warmth and accessibility of a connected community.

Home to Duke University and North Carolina Central University, Durham is widely recognized for its intellectual vitality, entrepreneurial spirit, and commitment to innovation. Nearby Research Triangle Park, one of the largest research parks in the world, anchors the region's global reputation in technology, biotechnology, and pharmaceuticals.

Durham is equally celebrated for its culture and quality of life. The city offers a dynamic arts scene, highlighted by venues like the Durham Performing Arts Center, and the eclectic galleries and studios in the Golden Belt District. The city pulses with artistic energy. Food is a culture in Durham with a culinary landscape that has garnered national attention. Whether you're drawn to its academic excellence, medical advancements, or cultural vibrancy, Durham stands as a testament to progress and community spirit.



Core Responsibilities

The Head of School will serve as the chief executive and leader of the school, working in close partnership with the Board of Trustees to advance the mission, ensure programmatic excellence, and sustain a strong, engaged community. This individual will balance strategic leadership with operational rigor, fostering a culture aligned with Montessori principles while positioning the school for long-term success.

The Head of School will be expected to fulfill the following key responsibilities:

Leadership and Vision

- Partner with the Board of Trustees to refine, articulate, and advance the school's mission, ensuring alignment across all constituencies including students, families, faculty, staff, alumni, and the broader community.
- Lead the development and execution of a forward-looking strategic vision, translating long-range plans into actionable priorities and measurable outcomes, particularly as the school considers its next phase of growth and sustainability.
- Ensure effective governance practices by supporting Board operations, serving as a non-voting ex officio member, and maintaining consistent, transparent communication on school performance and key issues.

- Provide leadership across the organization, establishing clear decision-making structures while honoring the school's highly relational, faculty-centered culture and commitment to shared responsibility.
- Represent the school within the broader educational and Montessori communities, maintaining strong external relationships and contributing to the advancement of Montessori education.

Academic Excellence and Program Oversight

- Ensure the delivery of a high-quality Montessori education that reflects the school's mission and adheres to AMS accreditation standards.
- Protect and strengthen the school's deeply rooted Montessori identity, ensuring that programmatic decisions remain grounded in core principles while remaining responsive to evolving student and societal needs.
- Oversee ongoing evaluation and refinement of curriculum and programs to ensure consistency, coherence, and excellence across all levels.
- Support faculty in maintaining strong student outcomes, including appropriate processes for monitoring academic social-emotional development.

Enrollment Management and Strategy

- Lead enrollment strategy to attract, enroll, and retain a mission-aligned and increasingly diverse student body.
- Strengthen the school's value proposition and market positioning within the competitive Triangle independent school landscape.
- Ensure enrollment targets are met while maintaining alignment with the school's philosophy, program capacity, and individualized approach to education.
- Promote strong retention through a positive student and family experience, ensuring that student needs are met and outcomes are regularly assessed.
- Partner with the Board and leadership team to explore long-term growth opportunities, including potential program expansion or additional campus development.



Staff and Organizational Management

- Recruit, develop, and retain a highly qualified and diverse faculty and staff aligned with the school's mission and educational philosophy.
- Foster a culture of trust, respect, and professional autonomy, recognizing that “teachers are the heart of school” and central to MSD’s success.
- Provide ongoing evaluation, support, and professional development opportunities for all employees, with particular attention to retention, compensation, and engagement.
- Establish and evolve leadership structures and systems that support clarity, accountability, and organizational effectiveness as the school grows.

Family and Community Relationships

- Foster a welcoming, inclusive, and responsive environment for students and their families.
- Maintain a visible and accessible presence within the school community, building trust and strong relationships through authenticity, consistency, and engagement.
- Oversee systems for gathering and responding to family feedback, ensuring that families feel heard and valued.
- Support families in key transition points, including student progression and placement beyond the school.
- Guide and support effective, thoughtful conflict resolution processes when needed.

Communications

- Establish and maintain clear, consistent, and high-quality communication with all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, families, Board members, and alumni.
- Strengthen internal communication practices to support transparency, alignment and trust across the organization.
- Ensure that all communications reflect the school's mission, professionalism, and standards of excellence.
- Promote the school within the broader community, strengthening understanding of and appreciation for Montessori education.

Financial Management and Resource Development

- Partner with the Finance Committee and Director of Finance to develop and manage annual and long-term financial plans, including operating and capital budgets.
- Ensure sound fiscal management and stewardship of school resources, building on the school's strong financial foundation.

- Lead and support the continued development of a more robust advancement function, helping to build a culture of philanthropy and diversify revenue beyond tuition.
- Align financial strategy with key priorities, including faculty compensation, program investment, and long-term sustainability.
- Oversee facilities planning and management, including consideration of future campus needs.



Operations and Risk Management

- Provide oversight of day-to-day school operations, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness, and alignment with mission and strategic priorities.
- Strengthen organizational systems, including human resources, communication, and administrative processes to support a maturing and evolving institution.
- Ensure compliance with all legal, regulatory, and nonprofit governance requirements.
- Identify and manage organizational risks, engaging legal counsel as appropriate and keeping the Board informed of material issues.
- Ensure policies, procedures, and operational systems reflect best practices and support organizational excellence.

Board Partnership

- Serve as the primary liaison to the Board, ensuring timely and accurate reporting on school performance, enrollment, and key initiatives.
- Support Board committees by providing relevant data, insights, and operational context to inform decision-making.
- Maintain strong alignment between Board priorities and school operations, ensuring effective execution of Board policies.
- Contribute to a culture of transparency, trust, and shared accountability, serving as a strategic thought partner while respecting the Board's governance role.

Required Attributes, Skills, and Qualifications

The next Head of School will demonstrate a deep commitment to the school's mission and Montessori philosophy, coupled with the leadership presence and operational expertise required to guide a complex educational organization. The successful candidate will be a visible, people-centered leader who communicates clearly, fosters open dialogue, welcomes feedback, and builds trust across constituencies. This is a dynamic and consequential leadership opportunity requiring sound judgment, initiative, emotional intelligence, and the ability to lead with both steadiness and ambition.

The successful candidate will bring the following attributes, skills, and experiences:

Mission Alignment and Montessori Commitment

- Deep understanding of and commitment to Montessori philosophy and student-centered learning, with the ability to partner closely with faculty to sustain program fidelity and protect the integrity of an authentic Montessori environment.
- Genuine respect for the school's faculty-led culture, including an appreciation for professional autonomy, collaboration, and the central role educators play in the life of the school.

Leadership and Organizational Management

- Significant leadership of a diverse, professional faculty and staff, including direct management of a senior administrative team, in an independent school, Montessori setting, or comparable educational or mission-driven organization.
- Demonstrated success in organizational leadership, including strategic planning, program oversight, enrollment management, and operations.
- Experience leading an organization through growth, change, and increasing complexity, with a thoughtful, measured approach that builds alignment and maintains community trust.
- Ability to establish and evolve systems, structures, and processes that support clarity, accountability, and long-term institutional effectiveness.

Relationship-Centered Leadership

- Demonstrated ability to build strong, trust-based relationships across a school community, including faculty, families, and Board members.
- A leadership approach that centers faculty and staff, prioritizing support, retention, and professional growth as essential to institutional success.
- High emotional intelligence, personal integrity, and sound judgment, with the ability to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics with patience, transparency, and care.

- Ability to balance empathy and approachability with firmness and accountability, including making difficult decisions and upholding institutional standards.

Communication and Community Engagement

- Exceptional communication skills, including the ability to listen deeply, communicate clearly and persuasively, and foster open dialogue across constituencies.
- Demonstrated ability to maintain a visible, engaged presence on campus and within the broader school community.
- Skill in representing and articulating the school's mission and value proposition to both internal and external audiences.



Governance and Board Partnership

- Demonstrated success partnering with a Board of Trustees, with a clear understanding of governance and leadership roles.
- Ability to serve as a strategic thought partner to the Board while ensuring effective execution of Board priorities.

Financial Acumen and Resource Development

- Strong business acumen, including experience with budgeting, financial planning, and evaluating financial models (e.g., tuition, enrollment, and/or fundraising) to support long-term sustainability and access.
- Experience supporting or leading advancement efforts, including donor engagement, frontline fundraising, and partnership with development staff, with the ability to help build a culture of philanthropy.
- Understanding of the financial dynamics facing independent schools, including the need to balance tuition, compensation, access, and long-term sustainability.

Enrollment, Access, and Inclusion

- Experience supporting or leading enrollment management efforts, including student recruitment, retention, and community composition.

- Demonstrated commitment to advancing access and inclusion, with the ability to lead and implement a clear, mission-aligned strategy.

Experience and Education

- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree in education, leadership, or a related field preferred.
- Significant leadership experience in an independent school, Montessori setting, or comparable educational or mission-driven organization.
- Montessori credential or formal training is valued but not required; the ability to deeply understand and champion Montessori philosophy is essential.

Personal Leadership Presence

- A visible, steady, and grounded leadership presence that inspires confidence and trust.
- A long-term orientation and commitment to the school and community.
- The ability to lead with both humility and conviction, bringing new ideas while honoring the traditions and relationships that define MSD.
- Ability to communicate clearly and persuasively, inspiring confidence and effectively articulating the school's mission to diverse stakeholders.

Compensation and Benefits

Montessori School of Durham is committed to attracting an extraordinary leader for this position through a compensation package that includes a competitive salary and a generous employee benefits package that includes employer-paid health insurance, dental, vision, long-term disability, health savings account, 403b retirement plan, vacation days, 14 paid holidays, discretionary leave, professional development, and more. The school will provide relocation support for the selected candidate.

Equal Opportunity Employer Statement

Montessori School of Durham is an equal opportunity employer. It is our policy to comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, gender, national origin or citizenship status, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status in matters related to employment.

To Apply: Please submit a cover letter and resume by June 26, 2026, by [applying here](#). Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Questions: msdsearch@mossandross.com

Montessori School of Durham

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<https://www.msdurham.org/>