



Inspire Today. Prepare for Tomorrow.

Head of School Position Statement

With the announcement of retirement by current Head of School, Lisa Brown, Saratoga Independent School is seeking a new Head of School to begin July 1, 2021. The educator who assumes this role will be expected to enrich and inspire the student body of grades Pre-K-8; lead a talented, dedicated faculty in a collaborative environment to ensure the smooth daily functioning of the school; sustain the special culture of the school; and strive to make the Saratoga Independent School experience the best it can possibly be.



Our beautiful Adirondack-style campus located at 459 Lake Ave., Saratoga Springs, NY.

Mission and Philosophy

At Saratoga Independent School, our mission is to empower students to be curious and confident learners, capable of critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and articulate expression. As an inclusive, nurturing community that values diversity and mutual respect, we strive to cultivate in our students the knowledge, skills, work ethic, and character to lead purposeful, healthy lives.

Saratoga Independent School is for families who believe in the value of enduring and meaningful learning and want it for their children. Because children learn best through direct experiences, we fill our days with opportunities for students to explore, create, question, and interact with the world around them. Our approach to education weaves the skills of independent thinking and self-reliant learning, the transformation of curiosity into motivation, the development of intellectual courage, and theme-based curriculum into an unmatched educational experience from Prekindergarten through Middle School.



The S.I.S. Motto

We take care of ourselves, each other, our school, and our community.

Our School at a Glance

Saratoga Independent School is a thriving, nurturing coeducational day school serving nearly 150 students in prekindergarten through eighth grade who reside in more than a dozen different school districts. The success of our school for nearly three decades is based on an educational model that integrates strong academics with social and emotional development.

The school remains committed to the vision of its founders: a multiage learning environment, thematic instruction, hands-on learning activities, small classes, and a cohesive learning community. This framework creates a culture in which children feel empowered to take personal and intellectual risks, think independently, question assumptions, participate in dialogue, and embrace a rigorous curriculum.

Community is central to the school's culture. The values of respect, compassion, and leadership are fostered through the many opportunities that children have to interact with faculty, peers, and older and younger students in community-wide activities. The school's mission and motto are reflected in all aspects of the school's culture.

Saratoga Independent School is Saratoga County's only non-sectarian school with a model serving prekindergarten through eighth grade. The school employs a faculty and staff of approximately 35 individuals who are hired and evaluated by the head of school. Saratoga Independent School is governed by a dedicated board of 17 trustees with five functioning committees, has an active association of parent volunteers, and is accredited by the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS). The school's picturesque Adirondack-style campus is located on 60 wooded acres in a country setting that provides students with abundant opportunities for exploration, discovery and play.



The Saratoga Springs Community

Located in upstate New York and just a few minutes from vibrant downtown Saratoga Springs, Saratoga Independent School benefits from a community with a thriving local economy, well-educated young professionals, and an abundance of educational, charitable, and cultural institutions. Known for its “health, history and horses,” the city population is nearly 28,000 people, has a median age of 40 years old, and a median household income of \$83,000 per year. The city is in the midst of experiencing another growth spurt from young families relocating from the New York City and Boston metropolitan areas due to the coronavirus pandemic and the region’s affordability and high quality of life.



World-class cultural and entertainment venues have made Saratoga Springs a destination since the Victorian era. The world-class Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC) is the summer home of the Philadelphia Orchestra, New York City Ballet, and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and annually hosts the Saratoga Jazz Festival and popular big-name acts like Dave Matthews Band and Phish. Other cultural attractions include the National Museum of Dance, Opera Saratoga and the Saratoga Shakespeare Company. Saratoga Race Course, the nation’s oldest thoroughbred race course, and the National Racing Museum and Hall of Fame are also distinctive attractions. The city is also home to Skidmore College and Empire State College, as well as an abundance of excellent restaurants and a lively nightlife. The 9,375 square mile Adirondack Park, including Lake George, is just minutes away, offering year-round outdoor activities.

Campus and Community Outreach

Our beautiful 60-acre campus offers ample opportunities for outdoor education from our vegetable and Alphabet Garden to our woodlands and nature trail. Athletics and recess occur outdoors year-round.

Just a few minutes from vibrant downtown Saratoga Springs, student enrichment benefits from community relationships forged by the school.

- In the arts, students have participated in multiple special programs with Saratoga Performing Arts Center, including performing in the Decoda Ensemble and a SPAC dance residency “Rock n’ Roll Revolution.” Saratoga Opera, Saratoga Shakespeare, and Ellen Sinopoli Dance Company have all joined the school for performances, presentations, and workshops.
- Community service opportunities have allowed students to support Home of the Good Shepherd, Shelters of Saratoga, SNACpack Program, and Wellspring. Students have recently held clothing drives for local migrant workers’ families and pet food drives for local animal shelters.
- Students benefit from the beauty of the region through field trips, overnight class trips, off-site outdoor education, and Ski Club at a local ski mountain.

Fast Facts

- 2020-21 Enrollment: 139
- Students Receiving Financial Aid: 16%
- 2020-21 Tuition:
 - Pre-K (Full Day 5 Days) \$10,750
 - Kindergarten \$10,950
 - Lower School (1-5) \$13,950
 - Middle School (6-8) \$15,950
- Average Class Size: 10.5
- Number of Faculty & Staff: 35
 - Full time: 23
 - Part time: 12
- 2020-21 Operating Budget: \$1.9 MM
- 2020-21 Annual Fund To Date: \$88,400
- Capital Campaign Completed
December 2020: \$1.7 MM

Our History

Founded in 1991, Saratoga Independent School is a fully-accredited private school serving Pre-K through 8th grade. Saratoga Independent School was formed by parents who were dedicated to an educational philosophy that embraces children as individuals with unique learning styles. The educational programming of Saratoga Independent School continues to embrace this philosophy to this day, offering an education focused on both academics and personal development. Our commitment to small class sizes and flexible teaching practices creates a community of confident and inquisitive learners.

A dozen years after its founding, Saratoga Independent School experienced a pivotal year in 2003 by launching a successful, ambitious capital campaign that raised more than \$600,000 in gifts and pledges. The campaign also resulted in a gift of 60 acres of land for the development of a new facility and campus on the outskirts of the city where the school is currently located. Construction of the initial 7,700 square foot Adirondack-style facility was completed in 2004.

Due to steadily increasing enrollment, the facility has undergone significant growth and since then, with a 4,700 square foot East Wing being completed in 2010. Five years later, another addition was completed, nearly doubling the footprint to 40,000 square feet with additional classrooms, a larger library, and a second floor for a planned future middle school.



Our History

To complete the new facility and fully meet the needs of a high-quality middle school, Saratoga Independent School launched a wildly successful capital campaign in 2017. The result was raising \$1.7 million (\$500,000 above our goal) a year ahead of schedule, giving the middle school expansion a green light. In 2019, sixth and seventh graders moved into the newly finished second floor, designed specifically for the needs of our Middle School, including science labs, a technology and media center, and spacious state-of-the-art classrooms.



Our first class of eighth graders will graduate in June 2021, and our community is enormously proud of the middle school that they have helped to found. Our “trailblazer” class dove in with an innovative, rigorous curriculum, played on our first interscholastic soccer team, and enthusiastically embraced their role as our founding middle school class.

In 2019, a comprehensive research project was completed by a former Microsoft marketing manager to do a deep dive into the “DNA” of our school community and quantify what draws and keeps families at Saratoga Independent School. Comprehensive surveys and focus groups were conducted with parents, faculty, staff, and trustees which found an overwhelmingly strong sense of community and belonging, as well as practices enriching the social and emotional development of enrolled students. Common themes espoused by parents included their children’s passion for learning, problem solving skills, self-confidence, and social and emotional well-being as well as attributes such as “caring,” “nurturing,” “warm,” “inquisitive,” and “inclusive.”

Our History

As evidenced by the accomplishments of our alumni in secondary and post-secondary education, Saratoga Independent School has a strong track record of preparing students for remarkable academic success. Some achievements include our alumni earning valedictorian honors, National Merit Scholars, Presidential Scholars, perfect SAT scores, student body presidents, Harvard Book Award recipient, gold medalist at the Empire State Games, publications of articles, and college and university merit scholarships.

Following their secondary education, the academic pursuits of our Saratoga Independent School alumni have taken them to a variety of well-regarded colleges and universities, including Amherst, Bates, Cal. Berkeley, Cornell, Dartmouth, Georgia Tech., Hamilton, Harvard, Julliard, Lafayette, Lehigh, M.I.T., Rochester, Rollins, Skidmore, St. Lawrence, Union, UPenn, Vanderbilt, Vassar, Williams, and Yale, among others.



In its nearly three decades of existence, Saratoga Independent School has and continues to achieve its mission of “empowering students to be curious and confident learners, capable of critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and articulate expression. As an inclusive, nurturing community that values diversity and mutual respect, we strive to cultivate in our students the knowledge, skills, work ethic, and character to lead purposeful, healthy lives.” We look forward to continuing this work for generations to come and seek our next Head of School to partner with us in this endeavor.

Faculty and Staff

The faculty and staff at Saratoga Independent School are dedicated and passionate about teaching. They believe that how they teach is as important as what they teach. They are committed to creating a rigorous learning environment in which all students have the opportunity to succeed. Our teaching structure allows faculty to teach to their strengths and passions rather than teaching all subjects within a contained classroom. At Saratoga Independent School, we view all members of our faculty and staff as educators, and value and honor the connections adults make with students. Our commitment to theme-based learning, inspires teachers to collaborate as they help students forge connections across disciplines. In addition, as a team of teachers, faculty and staff communicate regularly to celebrate student successes and brainstorm ways to provide support when needed. This student-centered approach ensures that we meet the needs of students in our care each day.



Curriculum and Program

Saratoga Independent School takes a holistic view of each child's unique educational needs. Through small classes, flexible teaching styles, and a respectful community environment, we provide an environment where students grow academically and socially. Our students learn in and out of the classroom through comprehensive multi-age projects, outdoor activities, and daily team-based assignments.

Saratoga Independent School's curriculum is centered around a theme-based model. Each year, students interact with an annual theme that provides students and faculty the opportunity to forge connections across disciplines. Our multi-age classrooms reinforce the understanding that children grow and develop at their own pace, as well as cultivating leadership and empathy. At the heart of our curriculum is that children learn best by doing. The Columbia Teachers College Reading and Writing Workshop curriculum acknowledges that in order to grow as readers and writers, children need time to read and write. The Singapore Math program encourages a deep mastery of material through a sequence of hands-on activities that progress to more abstract levels of thinking. Students in all grades receive regular instruction in science and social studies that is experiential, often project-based, and linked to the annual theme. From Pre-K to 8th grade, students participate in weekly classes in art, music, and Spanish. Elementary and Middle School students have PE at least once a week, while Pre-K students have ample outdoor time.

Teachers use the Responsive Classroom model to create a respectful and positive community in which each student feels heard. In addition, Responsive Classroom provides strategies for active and interactive teaching, respectful and proactive classroom management, and developmentally appropriate instruction. Students K - 8 start their day with Responsive Morning Meeting (K - 5) or Advisory (6 - 8), which provides opportunities for social and emotional learning, academic skills, study habits, and community building.

We are proud that our students like coming to school each day.

Pre-K (Age 3+)

At Saratoga Independent School, our multiage Pre-K program is a warm, happy, and nurturing environment for 3 – 5 year olds, in which children are actively engaged in play and other learning activities. Our students are part of a community in which children and adults interact with respect, positive support, trust, and responsiveness.

Our Pre-K activities promote all aspects of a child's development: intellectual, social, emotional, and physical. Because children learn best through direct experiences, we fill our days with opportunities for students to explore, create, question, and interact with the world around them in a natural manner. Development of early literacy in math and language arts is embedded in the Pre-K curriculum.



Elementary

Our mission and motto are the foundation of our school, the bedrock of the work that our students accomplish in their classrooms, on the playground, in Morning Meeting, in interactions with peers and adults, and beyond. Encouraged to learn the value of both independence and collaboration, students gain confidence and competence in thinking for themselves and solving problems on their own. Through the process of creativity and discovery, students learn and appreciate the benefits and joy of teamwork.

The notion of giving time to children's growth and learning underlies our work at Saratoga Independent School. Whether in Singapore Math's strong emphasis on understanding and mastery, or in Reading and Writing Workshops that give time for close reading and pride in creating well-written, polished work, our teachers understand the importance of allowing time for children to think, learn and discover. In-depth, personalized, written report cards for each student are done three times per year in all subjects. Assessments are done regularly in all classes to gauge progress. Letter grades are introduced in Middle School.

Middle School

The benefits of our Middle School education reflect our deep dedication to rigorous academics, low student-teacher ratio, and innovative teaching. Because students learn best through engaging experiences, we fill our days with opportunities for students to explore, create, question, and interact with challenging, higher-level concepts. Curriculum centers around a year-long theme which allows students and staff to make connections across disciplines and understand that real-world experiences rarely lie within a single subject. Letter grades and regular subject testing are introduced in 6th grade. In addition, in-depth, personalized, written report cards for each student are done three times per year in all subjects. Our Middle School experience equips our students with the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in high school, college, and beyond.

Opportunities and Challenges

The next head of Saratoga Independent School should be prepared to work in close partnership with the faculty, staff, administration, and trustees to accomplish the following:

- 2020-2025 Strategic Plan goals in these six key areas:
 - Campus Plan: Facilities Master Plan & Unified Campus
 - Community Relationships: Internal & External
 - Curriculum & Programming
 - Financial Health
 - Human Resources
 - Technology/IT
- A 10 year self-reflection and accreditation process through New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS), our accrediting body. We began this process in 2020, which was postponed due to the Covid pandemic. We will re-engage in this process, revise our report, and welcome a NYSAIS visiting committee in Spring 2022.



The Candidate

The successful candidate will likely exhibit the following characteristics, qualities, skills and experiences:

- Visionary leader with an innovative mindset
- Collaborative leader and decision maker who will mentor administrative leaders
- Strategic thinker and empathetic problem solver
- Open and honest communication style to foster trust and build cohesiveness
- A commitment to engaging and advancing a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment
- Understanding of and experience with budgeting and financials
- Openness and vision for the role of technology in education
- Passionate educator who genuinely appreciates the joys and challenges as well as the art and science of teaching
- Enthusiasm and experience for the outward facing role of the Head of School in admissions, marketing, and development
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Demonstrate the highest levels of integrity in all conduct and work

Application Process

Applicants should submit the following materials by **March 15, 2021** to hossearch@siskids.org

- Resume
- Cover letter
- Educational philosophy statement
- Three references

