



## HEAD OF SCHOOL OPPORTUNITY

# FAIRFIELD COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Fairfield, CT

**Application deadline: September 10, 2009**

Founded in 1936, Fairfield Country Day School is an independent school offering a rich program of academics, athletics, and arts to approximately 280 boys in Kindergarten through grade 9. An active presence in the International Boys' Schools Coalition, FCDS helps boys excel by providing strong, traditional preparation for success in secondary school and college as well as the skills and values necessary for productive and enriching lives thereafter. This warm, close-knit community of students and faculty is small enough to help boys discover their unique talents, build self-confidence, acquire wholesome personal and social values, and begin to follow their life's dreams.

Situated on an attractive, 20-acre residential campus in the historic Greenfield Hill section of Fairfield, the school occupies a former mansion that has been extensively renovated and expanded. The town of Fairfield is an affluent suburban community of 50,000 residents in an area noted for its beautiful beaches, numerous theaters and playhouses, scenic countryside, and a broad variety of cultural and recreational activities. Fairfield is located on Long Island Sound, along the I-95 corridor and just 50 miles from New York City.

Throughout its history, Fairfield Country Day has enjoyed strong and stable leadership. During the past 60 years, in fact, it has had only four Headmasters. The next Head will join a school community well positioned for a bright future. A thorough and successful self-study and reaccreditation process has just been completed, and a new Strategic Plan has been developed to guide FCDS through 2014. Former Deerfield Headmaster Robert Kaufmann is serving as Interim Head for the 2009-10 school year, setting the stage for a smooth transition.

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### WHO SHOULD APPLY:

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The headship of Fairfield Country Day is an exceptional career opportunity for a talented, energetic leader with a clear vision of excellence in the education of boys and a desire to join a close-knit school community united in its commitment to bring out the best in each student. For a position to begin in July 2010, FCDS is seeking an engaging leader, a competent and well-organized administrator, and an excellent communicator with a warm personality and the self-confidence necessary to guide a seasoned faculty and a parent body with high expectations.



**On the web: [www.fairfieldcountryday.org](http://www.fairfieldcountryday.org)**

## THE SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

**Founded:** 1936

**Location:** 20-acre campus in Fairfield, CT

**2009-10 enrollment:** 263

**Lower (K-4):** 130

**Upper (5-9):** 133

**% of student body belonging to ethnic minorities:** 11%

**Full-time faculty:** 35, 20% with advanced degrees

**Average faculty tenure:** 14 years

**Endowment:** \$5 million

**Indebtedness:** \$1 million

**Operating budget:** \$7.5 million

**Total funds raised, 2008-09:** \$759,000

**Annual Fund giving:** \$579,000

**Parent participation:** 68%

**Tuition, 2008-09:**

Kindergarten-Grade 3: \$27,400

Grades 4-6: \$28,300

Grades 7-9: \$29,300

**Financial aid awarded, 2008-09:** \$753,000

**% of students receiving aid:** 11%

**Board of Trustees:** 21

**Accreditation:** Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (renewed 2008)

**Memberships:** National Association of Independent Schools, International Boys' Schools Coalition



## MISSION STATEMENT

*Fairfield Country Day School provides an educational community dedicated to the personal growth and intellectual development of boys. Our balanced and challenging program is designed to help each student expand his desire and ability to acquire knowledge, stimulate his curiosity and creativity, and enhance his self esteem and respect for others. Each boy's individual development is encouraged in an environment that anticipates the future while appreciating the past.*

## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

### EDUCATING THE WHOLE BOY

*Fairfield Country Day encourages a rigorous academic environment that challenges our boys to achieve beyond traditional grade level expectations. From science and math to writing and the arts, our academic program addresses the whole boy while encouraging a high level of achievement. We embrace technology in the classroom to cultivate skills and create a dynamic educational experience to match the energetic learning style of boys.*

*Visitors to our classrooms will find young men actively engaged in the learning process.*

### EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY

*Our small class size and emphasis on community allow our faculty to form lasting relationships with our students that will instill a desire for success and a lifetime love of learning. From the earliest grade level, our traditional curriculum stresses the fundamentals and fosters the development of problem solving and critical thinking.*

### HIGH EXPECTATIONS

*The standards to which we hold our academic program are rivaled only by those to which we hold our boys. We expect each student to work to his ability, to try his best, and to ultimately learn from his experiences.*

*Our hope is that upon leaving the FCDS classrooms our boys will be prepared for the challenges of their secondary education and beyond.*

## DEFINING STRENGTHS AND UNIQUE ATTRIBUTES OF FAIRFIELD COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

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*"We know boys"* is the mantra at Fairfield Country Day School – a claim for which there is ample evidence in the daily life of the school. Asked to identify signature strengths of the FCDS experience, members of the school family noted the following:

- Emphasis on an orderly and structured – though not rigid – environment that promotes focus and engagement in the classroom. An honor code and a coat-and-tie dress code beginning in fourth grade also help to set the school's tone.
- A talented, cheerful, and fully invested faculty that each day goes "above and beyond" to ensure that students are both happy and productively engaged in learning.
- A classically oriented, traditional curriculum enriched with contemporary approaches including the embrace of educational technology. An emphasis on public speaking is a longstanding tradition at FCDS, beginning with the recitation of poetry by the youngest boys and progressing to debates at all-school assemblies and speeches by eighth- and ninth-graders to the entire student body.
- Many cherished traditions that enhance the sense of FCDS as an interconnected family. Daily lunch, for example, is a family-style meal with assigned seating of mixed-age groups and faculty members at each table, with frequent rotation to ensure maximum interaction among students and teachers. Link Days pair younger and older students in relationships that continue over the years.

Vital supporting players in the FCDS experience include a dedicated 21-member Board of Trustees composed of current and past parents, alumni, and friends. An active Parents Association provides financial and volunteer support and serves as an important source of information for parents.

The school operates with a balanced budget and a conservatively managed balance sheet. A recent capital campaign and the \$5 million endowment have enabled increases in faculty salaries and a series of major facilities improvements. Funds are also raised through an annual giving campaign and events that include a golf tournament and an auction.

### THE FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION

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Among the signature strengths of FCDS is a faculty that is deeply dedicated and very experienced – with an average tenure of 14 years. Virtually all teachers and administrators also serve as counselors, and most Upper School faculty either coach or advise student groups. A 1:7 teacher-student ratio supports the close, mentoring relationships that are a hallmark of the school. Approximately 40 percent of the faculty are men.

The Board of Trustees is committed to offering salaries above the NAIS median as well as a generous benefits program that includes full tuition remission. The school also provides limited on- and off-campus faculty housing in an effort to assist young teachers in an area with limited affordable housing options.



### THE STUDENTS

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FCDS students are a happy, eager, sophisticated, and appropriately energetic group of boys with a broad range of abilities, interests, and talents. Most families are drawn from the immediate Fairfield area, although some come from as far away as New Haven and Greenwich. While constrained by limited financial aid funds and the affluence of the



area in which it is located, the school continues its efforts to diversify its student body, including working with Reach Prep, an early identification program for talented minority candidates from Westchester and Fairfield counties.

Fairfield Country Day graduates are welcomed at a broad range of independent boarding and day schools as well as local public high schools. Secondary school placement is handled jointly by the Upper School Head and the Headmaster, who should demonstrate a strong interest in this important school function. Popular

independent school choices include Avon Old Farms, Choate, Fairfield Prep, Greens Farms, Hopkins, Loomis Chaffee, St. George's, Taft, and Westminster.

The FCDS classes of 2004 and 2005 have enrolled in a similarly broad range of colleges and universities, including Dickinson, Duke, Emory, Georgetown, Hamilton, Lehigh, Middlebury, Princeton, and Trinity College, among others.

## THE CAMPUS AND FACILITIES

The heart of the 20-acre FCDS campus is a handsome estate once owned by Timothy Dwight, the former President of Yale University. The original mansion, situated in a lovely residential neighborhood, has been extensively renovated and enlarged to accommodate 20 classrooms, two science labs, two music rooms, two art rooms, a library, a language lab, a computer lab, a kitchen, a dining room, an auditorium, and a gymnasium. Outdoor facilities include a hockey rink and four playing fields that are undergoing a multimillion-dollar upgrade. An impressive and comfortable home for the Head of School is located across the street from the main campus.



## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Reading and math specialists provide support and enrichment. A curriculum mapping project has just been launched to strengthen scope and sequence across grades and divisions. The school has been reviewing and revising its foreign language offerings, which now include Spanish beginning in Kindergarten and Latin in the Upper School.

- The Lower School (grades K-4) enrolls up to 140 boys in two self-contained sections at each grade level. Students receive a firm foundation in the language arts and mathematics as well as science, social studies, and penmanship. Enrichment activities include art, music, computer, Spanish, woodshop, and physical education.
- The Upper School (grades 5-9) can accommodate about 140 students as well, with two sections in grades 5-8 and a single section of grade 9. Instruction is departmentalized.
- The ninth grade program is a unique and demanding introduction to high school for a small group of boys who elect to remain at FCDS for this capstone experience. The size of the group varies from year to year, averaging about 15. This year's class includes 10. The ninth-graders are the acknowledged leaders of the school, editing the newspaper, captaining varsity teams, and taking seriously their roles as mentors to younger students. The class occupies a beautiful wood-



paneled classroom furnished with a large Harkness table and set apart from other classrooms. Among their privileges is the exclusive right to use the iconic blue door entrance.

- More than a decade ago, FCDS achieved national recognition for being at the forefront of innovation in the introduction of technology into the curriculum via a laptop program. The school remains committed to using technology thoughtfully via a tablet laptop program in the Upper School and the installation of SmartBoards and projectors in all Lower School classrooms. A computer lab and an 11,000-volume library also support the academic program.
- The school's proximity to New York City allows for a variety of enriching field trips. In addition, students in grades 7-9 embark on longer trips to destinations such as Boston, New Hampshire, and Miami.

## THE ARTS

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Students at FCDS do not choose between arts and athletics – they participate actively in both. For a school of its size, FCDS offers an unusually broad art and music program. Run by a husband-and-wife team, the music program includes an Upper School Concert Choir of more than 100 students that has performed throughout Italy, including at the Vatican. In addition to several Upper School musical course offerings, students may also participate in *a cappella* singing, a string quartet, or the Hand Bell Choir. An impressive annual musical production involves nearly every boy in grades 7-9. Vocal and instrumental musical expression and appreciation are taught throughout the Lower School years.

The fine arts program, offered in a spacious, well-equipped art studio, includes classes in painting, drawing, sculpture, printing, weaving, batik, etching, pottery, and computer-generated art. Lower School students also learn woodworking.

## ATHLETICS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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Physical education and athletics are a vital component of the program at all grades. Young students learn basic skills and rules of several sports in daily physical education classes. Beginning with intramurals in grades 4 and 5 and then progressing to JV and varsity teams, all students participate on a team in all three seasons. Teams compete in the Fairchester League against Greenwich Country Day, New Canaan Country School, Rye Country Day, Brunswick, and other schools. Sports offerings include cross country, football, soccer, basketball, ice hockey, baseball, and lacrosse.



## Opportunities and Challenges Awaiting the Next Head of School

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The next Head of Fairfield Country Day will join a school community clear about its mission and strategic priorities, proud of the breadth and quality of its educational program, and blessed with the passionate support of a dedicated faculty, a committed Board of Trustees, and an engaged parent body.

A fundamentally sound institution with a rich history and set of traditions, FCDS is well positioned to capitalize upon renewed interest in the benefits of single-sex education for boys. In this challenging economic environment, however, the school may need to launch more aggressive marketing and fundraising efforts to ensure its long-term financial health. Like most independent schools, Fairfield Country Day is experiencing some effects from the weak economy. After holding fairly steady at around 270 students for the prior seven years, enrollment jumped to 280 last year but declined to 263 this year. Requests for financial aid among current families have increased.

In a close-knit community accustomed to stability and longevity in the Head's office, the current period of leadership transition is disconcerting to some. After a year of calm and steady leadership from the seasoned Interim Head, FCDS will undoubtedly be well prepared to welcome a new leader. Still, it will behoove the next Head to pay particularly close attention to communicating well with all constituencies within the school family. Ideally, the new Head of School will be eager to forge a long-term relationship with this wonderful school community.



## THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND FACULTY

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As a family-oriented, single-sex, elementary/middle school with annual tuition levels approaching \$30,000, FCDS occupies a very specific educational niche in the marketplace. The school currently accepts a majority of applicants and welcomes boys within a fairly broad range of academic ability. The faculty's willingness to work closely with each student enables most boys to manage the program's challenging expectations, but there are ongoing discussions within the faculty about the need for enhanced learning support services and additional teacher training in techniques for differentiated instruction. The school recognizes the need to increase the depth of the applicant pool, both to grow enrollment and to return to a more selective admissions process.

Not surprisingly in a small school with a rich educational program and fully utilized facilities, managing the school schedule is an extraordinary balancing act. Negotiating the interplay of program, facilities, and schedules to ensure that students are not overextended will be a continuing challenge.

Preserving the collective strength of Fairfield Country Day's extraordinary faculty in the face of several impending retirements of veteran teachers will be a high priority for the next Head. Recruiting and retaining young teachers can be a challenging endeavor in this affluent, family-oriented, suburban setting.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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The newly approved Strategic Plan (especially when viewed in conjunction with the comprehensive 2008 self-study and accreditation report) will serve as a valuable roadmap for the next Head. Among the specific priorities identified in the plan are the following:

1. Double the endowment by the year 2014.
2. Develop an aggressive fundraising campaign targeting alumni, parents, and other sources of philanthropy, using professional techniques of communication, marketing, and promotion.
3. Maintain full enrollment and a conservative balance sheet.
4. Increase diversity in terms of enrollment, faculty, staff, and curriculum.
5. Develop a forward-looking facilities master plan.
6. Forge a cohesive community of constituents through innovative and effective use of communication technology and techniques connecting students, faculty, parents, and the wider community.

## FACILITIES

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The school has invested substantial sums in its physical plant over the past several years, and its facilities are in excellent condition. A major renovation of all four playing fields and all Lower School classrooms is being completed this summer. Plans have been approved by the Board of Trustees and all local regulatory authorities for the addition of four new classrooms, a new science lab, and a woodshop, as well as for the renovation of several administrative offices. These additions are estimated to cost approximately \$4 million and will require funding beyond the regular cash flow from operations.

## Who Should Apply: Qualities & Qualifications

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Fairfield Country Day School is seeking a strong, energetic, and confident leader who will inspire and unite the school community behind a common vision of excellence in the education of boys. The ideal candidate will offer most or all of the following qualifications and qualities:

### PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

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- Keen intelligence and excellent academic credentials, including an advanced degree.
- A record of success in teaching and administration, ideally in a well-respected independent school.
- A passion for education.
- Demonstrated ability to engage, inspire, motivate, and earn the respect of an experienced faculty.
- Knowledge of and interest in curriculum and pedagogy across the K-9 spectrum; familiarity with the universe of New England independent secondary schools would be a plus.
- Experience guiding and mentoring boys and young men.
- Exceptional communication skills; a compelling speaker and writer.
- An appreciation for the role of the arts and athletics in the development of well-rounded young men.
- Demonstrated interest in marketing, development, and finance.

### LEADERSHIP STYLE

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- A leader of strong character and unquestioned integrity.
  - A community-building leader who can articulate a compelling vision of excellence and unify the school family in support of that vision.
  - An open, collegial, collaborative, and visible leader who listens well and responds appropriately.
  - A confident, consistent role model who will earn the trust of students, faculty, and parents.
- An engaged and engaging leader who demonstrates a genuine interest in all constituencies of the school and all of the school's programs.
  - A respected leader who fosters a culture of kindness.

### PERSONAL QUALITIES

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- A natural rapport with young people.
- Wisdom, compassion, and kindness.
- Energy and enthusiasm.
- A warm, outgoing, positive personality.
- Creativity and flexibility.
- The ability to balance respect for tradition with openness to thoughtful change.
- Self-confidence, a thick skin, and the ability to set appropriate boundaries with students and adults.



### Anticipated Search Calendar:

Application deadline:	September 10, 2009
Search Committee selects semifinalists:	September 24, 2009
Semifinalist interviews:	October 3-4, 2009
Finalist visits:	October/November 2009
Appointment:	By December 2009
Start Date:	July 1, 2010

## Application Requirements and Process

Applicants should submit as soon as possible but no later than **Thursday, September 10, 2009**, the following:

- A cover letter explaining why they are particularly interested in and qualified for this position.
- A current résumé.
- A statement of educational philosophy and/or other supporting material (e.g. articles or speeches) that would be useful to the Search Committee.
- The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three references. (We will obtain permission from candidates before contacting references.)

This information should be sent via email attachment to:

**searches@wickenden.com**

Or via mail to:

**James W. Wickenden and Linda F. Knights  
Wickenden Associates  
1000 Herrontown Road  
Princeton, NJ 08540**

After an initial review of applicants, the Search Committee will select semifinalists, who will be interviewed over the weekend of **October 3-4, 2009**. Finalists (and their spouses, if applicable) will be invited to the school for a more comprehensive series of interviews with representatives of the school's constituencies. Wickenden Associates will keep all applicants informed of their status throughout the process.

Ideally, a final selection will be made before the end of 2009. The successful candidate will become the Head of Fairfield Country Day School on July 1, 2010.

Prospective candidates interested in learning more about this opportunity or the search process are invited to call Wickenden Associates at 609-683-1355.