



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

HEAD OF SCHOOL The Walker School

Marietta, Georgia

Application deadline: August 30, 2010

Founded in 1957, The Walker School is an independent, nonsectarian college preparatory day school serving students in Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12. What started more than 50 years ago as a kindergarten class of 10 students in the basement of St. James Episcopal Church near historic Marietta Square has grown today into a vibrant community of more than 1,000 students. The school combines traditional standards of academic rigor and discipline with modern approaches to learning in an atmosphere that is both stimulating and nurturing. Faculty and students share relationships characterized by warmth, energy, joy, and a commitment to healthy risk-taking. At Walker, students enjoy the benefits of accelerated learning without the pressures that often accompany it.

Located 15 minutes northwest of Atlanta in the historic suburb of Marietta, Walker enrolls students from throughout the metropolitan area. From the youngest to the oldest, Walker students are encouraged to challenge themselves academically, artistically, and athletically. In January 2009, *Atlanta* magazine ranked Walker as "one of the best all-around high schools in Atlanta," while also recognizing the Middle School in the Junior Achievement category. The rigor of the academic program is evident in the school's Advanced Placement performance. Choosing from among 23 AP offerings, students in the Class of 2009 took an average of four AP courses during their high school career, with 21 percent taking seven or more AP classes. Among the 412 AP exams taken in 2009, 86 percent earned scores of 3 or higher. Virtually all graduates go on to attend four-year colleges, including the nation's most selective institutions.

Headmaster Don Robertson has led Walker with vision, passion, and skill during his very successful 26-year tenure. Over the past 15 years, two capital campaigns and the purchase of additional property have more than doubled the acreage of the school and added several new academic and athletic facilities to the 32-acre campus. Governed by an active Board of 19 corporate and community leaders, The Walker School is a healthy institution well positioned for continued success.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

For a position to begin in July of 2011, the Board of Trustees is seeking a visionary educational leader, strategic thinker, and exceptional communicator to build upon the excellent foundation already in place at The Walker School. This is an excellent career opportunity for an experienced and successful school administrator who shares Walker's educational philosophy and who exhibits a leadership style that will resonate with this warm, caring, and supportive school family. The school needs both an internal and an external leader – a visible and persuasive advocate within and beyond the Walker community.



On the web: www.thewalkerschool.org

**THE SCHOOL
AT A GLANCE
2009-10**



MISSION

Our Mission is to provide an excellent college-preparatory education in a nurturing environment that values personal integrity, that prizes creativity, and that inspires the lifelong love of learning.

WE BELIEVE:

1. in the infinite worth and dignity of the individual.
2. that student learning is the chief priority of the school.
3. that the school should provide a safe, supportive, and challenging environment for learning with clear goals and high expectations for student achievement.
4. that the school's curriculum should develop creative and analytical thinking.
5. that the school should foster in students the confidence to work independently and the social skills to work collaboratively.
6. that the school should encourage parents, teachers, and students to work together toward common goals.
7. that the school plays an important role in teaching students to value themselves and others.
8. that the school should provide a framework for learning to make responsible decisions.
9. that involvement in and appreciation of the arts is a vital part of education.
10. that the school should encourage the development of a healthy body through curricular and extracurricular activities.
11. that an understanding of the past is fundamental to understanding the present.
12. that the school should encourage students, faculty, and parents to develop a perspective that embraces diversity and enhances global awareness.
13. that the school should provide the foundation and framework for giving students the skills and the flexibility that are necessary to thrive in a changing world.
14. that the school can help students to become aware of the needs of others by encouraging involvement in the community.
15. that the continual development of the faculty is essential to the school's improvement.

Founded: 1957

Location: 32-acre campus situated 15 miles north of Atlanta

2009-10 enrollment: 1,071
Preschool (PK-K): 111
Lower (1-5): 322
Middle (6-8): 271
Upper (9-12): 367

Full-time faculty: 115; 70% with advanced degrees

Average faculty tenure: 11 years

Average years teaching: 17 years

Average student-teacher ratio:
Preschool/Lower School: 10:1
Middle School: 17:1
Upper School: 15:1

Investment assets: \$13.6 million

Indebtedness: \$16.1 million

Operating budget: \$17.8 million

Total development funds raised, 2008-09: \$429,000

Annual giving, 2008-09: \$387,000
Parent participation: 80%

2009-2010 full-day tuition: \$13,355-\$16,510

Financial aid, 2009-10: \$819,480

Students receiving aid: 12.2%

Board of Trustees: 19

Accreditation: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Southern Association of Independent Schools

Member: National Association of Independent Schools, Georgia Independent School Association, Atlanta Area Association of Independent Schools

DEFINING QUALITIES & UNIQUE ATTRIBUTES OF THE SCHOOL

The spirit of The Walker School is its people. From Board members to parents, from students to teachers, the Walker community is a close-knit collection of bright, creative people who share a passion for learning and a belief that anything is possible. Walker is a progressive community where character and values are not just taught but lived – evident in the fact that there are no locks on any student lockers. At the heart of the Walker experience is the relationship between teacher and student. At Walker, teachers are more than just educators; they coach sports teams, chaperone events, serve as tutors, and act as mentors.

Walker believes that a top-quality academic program can be sustained only in an environment that is both nurturing and challenging. Indicators of the success of this philosophy are not just the many awards and accolades earned each year by the school and its students, but the lives they lead and the career paths they choose after leaving the school's care.

THE STUDENT BODY

Bright, friendly, hardworking, and ambitious, Walker students are noteworthy for the breadth of their interests and their willingness to challenge themselves in academics, athletics, and the arts. Labels and cliques do not feature prominently here; students move easily and fluidly among interest groups.

Two-thirds of Middle School students typically qualify for the Duke Talent Identification Program, and 10 to 15 percent of the students in each class usually earn National Merit recognition. In the past two years, two students achieved a perfect ACT score; each was among only 12 students nationally to accomplish that feat. Over the past five years, three students have progressed to the final round of the Presidential Scholar program; in 2005, a Walker student was selected as the Presidential Scholar from the State of Georgia. Mean SAT scores for the Class of 2009 were 1210 (CR/M) and 1810 (including writing). Eighty-four percent of the class took the ACT exam, earning a mean score of 26.



All members of the Class of 2009 entered college upon graduation, with 98 percent attending four-year colleges and 62 percent venturing out of state. Recent graduates have been welcomed at the nation's most selective colleges, including Brown, Cornell, Emory, Princeton, Vanderbilt, and Yale, among others. College destinations for the Class of 2009 include the following:

American University
Arizona State University
Auburn University
Berry College
Clemson University
College of Charleston
Davidson College
Elon University
Emory University
Florida State University
Furman University
Georgetown University
Georgia College and State University

Georgia Highlands College
Georgia Institute of Technology
Georgia Southern University
Georgia State University
High Point University
Kennesaw State University
Louisiana State University
Mercer University
Millsaps College
Northeastern University
Northwestern University
Oglethorpe University
Presbyterian College
Providence College

Quinnipiac University
Reinhardt College
Rice University
Samford University
State University of New York
Maritime College
United States Air Force Academy
United States Military Academy
United States Naval Academy
University of Alabama
University of Central Florida
University of Colorado
University of Georgia
University of Michigan

University of Mississippi
University of North Carolina
University of Richmond
University of Tennessee
University of Vermont
University of Virginia
Valdosta State University
Vanderbilt University
Wofford College
Young Harris College

THE FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION

The Walker faculty is well educated, experienced, committed to professional development, deeply dedicated to students, and driven to create a learning community characterized by inquiry, collaboration, and growth. Eleven members of the faculty, staff and administration are alums, and teachers and administrators regularly win accolades for their accomplishments. The Dean of College Counseling & Guidance was named the 2007 Counselor of the Year for The College Board's Southern Region, and several Walker teachers have earned statewide Teacher of the Year awards. In 2009, a Middle School English teacher was one of 25 teachers nationwide selected to participate in the National Association of Independent Schools Teachers of the Future program.

The administrative team is a group of professionals who love the school and embody its student-focused philosophy. Division Heads, as well as other administrators, continue to teach at least one class to remain connected to students and to lead by example. The Head of School teaches an Upper School Personal Finance class, and, in a custom that is appreciated by faculty, pulls one teacher's name out of a hat each month and then substitutes for the winner – who is awarded an extra day off. The Admissions Director has served the school for more than 40 years and most of the administrators have been at Walker for a decade or longer.

LOCATION, CAMPUS, AND FACILITIES

The attractive campus sits on 32 acres and features nine buildings that house a 900-seat auditorium, a 65-seat black-box theatre, three libraries, two gymnasiums, three dining halls, science labs for each division, computer labs, and administrative offices. Athletic fields for football, soccer, softball, and baseball are well maintained. Two sets of tennis courts round out the on-campus athletic facilities. The school uses community facilities for swimming, golf, and track.

The school invested more than \$1 million in technology over the past five years and boasts a self-contained data center with 20 active servers, more than 400 networked computers, campus-wide wireless access, and multiple stationary and mobile computer labs including one Mac lab for digital communications classes. All classrooms have ceiling-mounted digital projectors, and nearly 80 percent of classrooms use interactive whiteboards.



Recent additions to the facilities include the renovation of the competition gym, which expanded and enhanced the weight room and wrestling facilities; the addition of a Lower School Enrichment Center and administrative offices; and the renovation of much of the Upper/Middle school building.

After the purchase of 3.6 acres of contiguous property in 2007 and 2008, the Board approved a 20-year Master Campus Development Plan in 2008. Campus improvements outlined in the plan include the addition of a new Upper and Middle School, an amphitheater, a competition gym, an athletic field house, and a performing arts center. Because of the current economic environment, the timing of the first phase of the capital campaign and building effort have yet to be finalized.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

For a detailed look at the curriculum in each division, visit the school's website: www.thewalkerschool.org. Here are a few highlights:

- The Upper School offers 33 Honors and Advanced Placement courses in a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum comprising a wide variety of offerings. Clubs, honor societies, and organizations offer students the opportunity to explore a broad range of interests. College guidance is based on a philosophy of "best fit," with students being guided to and accepted by colleges and universities across the United States. The Honor Council and Discipline Committee, both composed of students and faculty, play a major role in setting the tone for life in the Upper School as each addresses issues of rule violations and makes recommendations to the Principal concerning the appropriate school response.
- Signature features of the Middle School (grades 6-8) include two full periods a day of writing-focused language arts instruction, a daily 30-minute tutorial period to provide individual help, and a culminating 8th-grade research project that includes a traditional paper, a video, and a webpage component. The Middle School has employed single-gender math classes (up to Algebra II) for nearly 15 years with great success and is now considering single-gender literature courses as well. A spiraling science curriculum and a wellness-centered PE program complete the core curriculum. Enriching the program in all three grades are overnight field trips; these include a Space Camp adventure, a trip to Savannah, and an Outward Bound experience in the north Georgia mountains.
- The Lower School (grades 1-5) provides a strong academic foundation in an environment designed to help students develop poise and self-confidence. With average class sizes of 21, each classroom is overseen by a teacher and a full-time teaching assistant. The curriculum features a focus on all aspects of language arts, cursive writing beginning in second grade, Everyday Math, integrated social studies units, and a fully developed, hands-on, activity-based science program. Character education is a highly visible program that is integrated across the curriculum.
- The Preschool (Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten) offers a structured, child-centered, strong academic program. Each self-contained class studies language arts (including a robust phonics emphasis), reading, handwriting, math, science, social studies, and character education. Special area teachers also provide science, art, computer, music, physical education, library, and Spanish instruction.
- Walker's foreign language program begins in Pre-Kindergarten, with Spanish instruction offered through the 5th grade. To prime their formal language study, 6th-grade students take a linguistics course to learn how languages work. Seventh-grade students take a quarter each of Latin, French, Spanish, and German before deciding which language to pursue in depth beginning in 8th grade. In the Upper School, instruction in all four languages is offered through the AP

level; the AP German program has received national and world recognition for the performance of its students. International exchange programs are run each year in France, Germany, and Argentina.

- A seven-member Counseling and Guidance team serves students in all divisions, providing individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance, advisory group coordination, peer leadership, parent/teacher conferences, college counseling, parent education programs, and referral services.

THE ARTS



In every division, students have the opportunity to explore the arts under the direction of a group of educators who are practicing painters, sculptors, musicians, writers, and directors. Required and elective classes in the visual arts, instrumental and vocal music, and theater challenge and inspire students throughout their Walker careers. A month-long celebration of the arts is held each February, featuring visiting artists and authors in all divisions. Lower School students perform in a musical production at each grade level. Middle School students learn the ins and outs of serious stagecraft and begin to write their own plays. In the Upper School, students not only sing and act in award-winning productions like *Sweeney Todd* and *The Yellow Boat*, but also design and build the sets, run the lighting and soundboards, and design the costumes.

The music program is particularly diverse and strong, with recent state-level awards going to the Chorus and Jazz groups.

ATHLETICS

Seventy percent of Upper School students participate in at least one varsity sport, and 60 percent play on more than one team. Varsity Coaches have, on average, 15 years of coaching experience. Sports offerings in the Middle and Upper Schools include cheerleading, cross country, football, fast-pitch softball, volleyball, basketball, diving, swimming, wrestling, baseball, golf, soccer, tennis, and track and field.

The athletics program, supported by an active booster club, boasts many successes. During the 2009-2010 school year, the girls soccer team won its third consecutive state title and the boys tennis team won a state title. Walker has collected 24 team state titles and 20 individual state titles, including 11 in the past five years. The school routinely finishes in the top 10 of the Director's Cup, the all-sports trophy presented by the Georgia Athletic Directors Association. More than 100 former athletes have competed at the collegiate level.



COMMUNITY SERVICE

Although Walker does not impose a community service graduation requirement, students in all divisions are encouraged to participate in community service activities. Recent whole-school efforts have included the assembly of convoy kits for soldiers in the Middle East, canned food collections for the Salvation Army, and Toys for Tots participation. At the high school level, all of Walker's honors and clubs have incorporated a philanthropy or service project into the membership requirements. At a spring assembly, students are encouraged to speak about their particular community service projects.

SCHOOL CULTURE

A sampler prominently displayed in the Walker lobby reflects the school's unofficial motto: "Love is spoken here." The school's guiding philosophy – that a rigorous academic experience need not be a pressure-filled one for students – shapes the Walker culture and the daily interactions of school life. Student-teacher relationships are warm and respectful; the faculty, staff, and administration form a collegial team.

Walker parents are a devoted group who contribute to the school in myriad ways. The Walker Parent Association, composed of all parents, coordinates volunteer and social activities to keep the community connected. An athletic booster club – the Walker Backers – and a newly formed Parents of the Arts organization help generate support and encouragement for these two disciplines.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AWAITING THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

The next Head of The Walker School will join a school community that is proud of all that it has accomplished during the school's first half-century and eager to continue moving forward. Asked about the opportunities and challenges awaiting the next Head, members of the school families sounded two broad themes:

1. The importance of maintaining Walker's commitment to excellence and continuous progress.
2. The need to balance competing values: sustaining Walker's caring, supportive, flexible and loving approach while also maintaining high standards and a culture of accountability for both students and adults.

Among the specific challenges awaiting Walker's next leader are the following:

MARKETING AND ADMISSIONS

Historically, The Walker School has consistently exceeded its projected enrollment figures and was over-enrolled by 10 students for the 2009-2010 school year. Like the vast majority of independent schools in this difficult economic climate, however, the school has recently experienced a softening of admissions demand, particularly at the Preschool, where affordability concerns are most keenly felt. Increasing competition is also felt from the public school sector, where newly established International Baccalaureate and magnet school programs are proving an economically appealing alternative for some families. The school will not compromise its academic or behavioral standards to meet enrollment targets and, as such, will have to work hard to ensure that the applicant pool remains robust.

The school has become increasingly diverse in recent years, with approximately 16 percent of the students belonging to racial/ethnic minorities. Continued efforts to broaden the school's appeal to families from diverse backgrounds will be an important priority in the years ahead.

Walker understands that a key challenge is continually working to position itself more firmly in the competitive marketplace of other private and public school options. To that end, the Communications Director, under the guidance of the Board-led Marketing Task Force, recently launched a new marketing and admissions initiative that included the introduction of a redesigned website in February 2010, the creation of a new admissions video that will debut during the 2010-2011 admissions season, and a focus on enhancing the school's ongoing branding campaign theme: *WOW—The Wonder of Walker*.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Walker's educational program has many strengths. Each division retains autonomy and has its own department chairs and dedicated faculties. The combination of solid teaching experience and an average tenure of 11 years helps to create an exciting and positive learning environment and provides consistently rigorous educational opportunities for students. Departments are not structured vertically, so formal opportunities for cross-divisional departmental meetings will be implemented during the 2010-11 school year. The new Head will have the opportunity to author further efforts for vertical coordination of the departments. The school has made great strides in providing technology resources and initiatives to students and faculty and continues to look for ways to advance in this area. The new Head of School should be visionary and proactive in advocating technology as an integral part of the curriculum for a 21st-century education.

FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION

Walker's talented and experienced faculty and administrative team will be a tremendous resource for the new Head of School. Even though accustomed to a great deal of autonomy in their classrooms and offices, both groups know how to work well together and across divisions. Faculty evaluations, once an informal process, have become more formalized and are an area where the next Head should feel free to offer suggestions to a process designed to ensure accountability and uniformly high performance standards. The demographics of the faculty and administrative team suggest that there will be a series of key retirements in the near future that will allow the incoming Head to shape the next generation of teachers and school leaders.

FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING

Walker fundraising efforts are poised for significant growth over the next three years. Strengthening the school's fundraising efforts has become a prominent focus, with initial efforts centered on the Annual Fund. In 2009-2010, the school launched a planned giving program to bolster the endowment and secure the long-term financial sustainability of the school. An increasingly active Alumni Association, supported by the Director of Alumni Relations, is working to strengthen connections with the more than 1,700 graduates – nearly two thirds of whom live in Georgia. With an average age of just 29, the alumni represent a future potential asset as they move into their prime earning years. In the near future, Walker will need to plan for a significant capital campaign – both to finance the planned facilities improvements and to enhance the endowment so that it can better support the school's goals in the areas of financial aid, faculty salaries, and the possible purchase of additional adjacent properties.

WHO SHOULD APPLY: QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Walker School is seeking as its next Head of School an experienced educational leader with the vision and skills necessary to move a well-functioning school to the next level of excellence. Ideally, the next Head will offer most or all of the following:

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Strong academic credentials, including an advanced degree.
- Broad experience in classroom teaching and administration, ideally including experience in an independent school of high quality.
- An educational philosophy and approach that is consistent with the Walker mission and values.
- Knowledge of and interest in best practices across the PK-12 educational spectrum.
- An appreciation for the arts, athletics, and community service as important components of a well-rounded education.
- Demonstrated expertise and interest in the external aspects of school leadership.
- Demonstrated willingness and ability to play a key leadership role in fundraising.
- Exceptional communication skills, oral and written.
- Experience in strategic visioning and execution.
- Financial and organizational acumen.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

- A principled leader who will act in accordance with the mission and longstanding values of the school.
- A visionary leader who can inspire and motivate the school community.
- A decisive leader who sets clear expectations and holds both adults and students accountable.
- A confident and collaborative leader who is comfortable delegating appropriate responsibility to a skilled administration and faculty while maintaining effective, coherent oversight of the entire school.
- An outgoing, visible leader who is eager to interact with all members of the school family and represent the school enthusiastically in the wider community.
- A broad-minded, thoughtful, independent, and proactive leader who is open to new ideas and willing to challenge the status quo.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Integrity and high standards; clear, fair, firm, and consistent behavioral expectations.
- A strong moral compass; a willingness to resist political pressures and to say no when appropriate.
- Excellent people skills; a person who is warm, caring, inclusive, and approachable.
- Willingness to accept responsibility and share credit.
- Reason and common sense.
- Intellectual curiosity.
- Authenticity, transparency, and humility.
- Superior communication and listening skills.
- Energy and enthusiasm.
- A genuine affinity for children and young adults.
- An appreciation for diversity.
- Personal commitment to maintaining a healthy life balance.
- A sense of humor.



Anticipated Search Calendar:

Application deadline:	August 30, 2010
Search Committee selects semifinalists:	September 10, 2010
Semifinalist interviews:	September 18-19, 2010
Finalist visits:	October 2010
Appointment:	November 2010
Start date:	July 1, 2011

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS & PROCESS

Applicants should submit, no later than **Monday, August 30, 2010**, 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 addressed to James Wickenden and Susan Walters, lead consultants for the search, and transmitted via email attachment to:

searches@wickenden.com

After an initial review of applicants, the Search Committee will select semifinalists, who will be interviewed over the weekend of **September 18-19, 2010**. 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 in November 2010. The successful candidate will become the next Head of School of The Walker School on July 1, 2011.

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