HEAD OF SCHOOL
The Oakwood School
Greenville, North Carolina

Founded in 1996, The Oakwood School serves more than 320 students, grades PreK-12. Driven by its mission to instill in its students the wisdom, creativity, and strength of character needed to make a difference in the world, the Oakwood community is earnest, warm, and motivated by a genuine love of learning and teaching. The only secular independent PreK-12 school in Greenville, Oakwood is uniquely positioned for growth, as it enters its third decade.

In the short time since its founding, The Oakwood School has distinguished itself as the destination for innovative pedagogy in the region. Focused on building the STEAM and “soft” skills vital to success in the 21st century, Oakwood offers an experiential, process-based education to a wide range of students in the Pitt County area.

On its bucolic, 41-acre campus, Oakwood has built a nurturing, engaging, and diverse community. The school’s mission and philosophy guide its unique academic program and set it apart in Eastern North Carolina. Oakwood’s well-rounded curriculum develops critical thinking, empathy, resilience, and an enthusiasm for learning that prepares students to enter some of the nation’s most prestigious colleges and universities.

For a position to begin in July 2018, the Board of Trustees seeks a creative, experienced, and dedicated leader to forge a path forward for this young school. This is a unique opportunity for a candidate with the vision and commitment to guide Oakwood into a new era of growth.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: September 19, 2017
MISSION The Oakwood School seeks to instill in its students the strength of character, the creativity, and the wisdom to make a difference in the world.

VISION We seek to be the school of choice for families who value a 21st century education.

PHILOSOPHY The Oakwood School exists to help its students to learn and to love learning, to value themselves and others, and to become contributing members of ever-larger communities.

SCHOOL BELIEF STATEMENTS
- We believe in respect, responsibility, and honesty to self and others.
- We believe students become enthusiastic lifelong learners and develop a sense of community in small classes where they are valued and supported by others and where their talents and energy are recognized and enhance the common life.
- We believe that the need to develop positive relationships with others is as basic to human nature as is the need to learn.
- We believe that students come to understand that their growth occurs in the context of others’ needs and views; that their own gifts can enrich the lives of others; and that other human beings, however different, have inherent dignity and value.
- We believe that both within and beyond the school walls, students learn that service to others is one of the deepest satisfactions the human spirit can know.

ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECTED ENROLLMENT, 2017-18</th>
<th>321</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOWER SCHOOL (PreK-3)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE SCHOOL (4-7)</td>
<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPPER SCHOOL (8-12)</td>
<td>126</td>
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<tr>
<td>STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO</td>
<td>8 to 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>STUDENTS OF COLOR</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-17 TUITION RANGE (PreK-12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINANCIAL AID AWARDED</td>
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<td>STUDENTS RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID</td>
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FACULTY AND STAFF

| FULL-TIME FACULTY | 40 |
| FACULTY WITH ADVANCED DEGREES | 61% |
| AVERAGE FACULTY TENURE AT OAKWOOD | 10 yrs |

FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

| OPERATING BUDGET | $5.2 million |
| INDEBTEDNESS     | $3.3 million |
| ENDOWMENT        | $112,000     |
| TOTAL FUNDS RAISED IN 2015-16 | $406,095 |
| ANNUAL GIVING IN 2015-16 | $240,867 |
| PARENT PARTICIPATION | 78% |

AFFILIATIONS

| ACCREDITATION | Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS); AdvancED |
| MEMBER | National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), North Carolina Association of Independent Schools (NCAIS), Independent School Management (ISM) |

ON THE WEB:
www.theoakwoodschool.org
ABOUT OAKWOOD

In 1996, The Oakwood School opened its doors to 42 students, grades K-5. Operating out of mobile units on leased land, the school took a substantial step forward in 1998 when 25 acres of land were anonymously donated for the establishment of a permanent campus. The erection of the first two buildings also saw the school’s expansion to grades K-8. In 2005, Oakwood launched its Upper School and graduated its first senior class in 2009. Since then, the school has grown its campus to 41 acres and now enrolls over 320 students.

THE STUDENT BODY

Small by design, Oakwood will enroll more than 320 students for the 2017-18 school year. Students and their families represent 30 different countries and bring a variety of viewpoints and abilities. Through a relationship with New Oasis International Education, Oakwood enrolls Upper School students from China each year who live with local host families. Oakwood students are earnest, hardworking, and open-minded. The school’s friendly atmosphere, no-cut athletics program, and commitment to pedagogical innovation encourages students to be collaborative and inquisitive. They enjoy a safe and nurturing community and the freedom to explore that Oakwood affords them; they frequently distinguish themselves in the arts, athletics, and academics.

All Oakwood students are accepted to college, and 80% are typically admitted to their first-choice school. Oakwood’s mean SAT scores over the past few years are 609 in Critical Reading, 637 in Math, and 599 in Writing. Oakwood’s Director of College Placement, who also serves as the school’s Guidance Counselor, works with students beginning in eighth grade to find colleges and universities compatible with their strengths and interests and to prepare them for the competitive process that lies ahead. Between 2014 and 2017, Oakwood students matriculated to the following colleges and universities:

- Appalachian State University
- Barton College
- Campbell University
- Dartmouth College
- Duke University
- East Carolina Univ. (Honors College)
- Elon University
- North Carolina State University
- Savannah College of Art and Design
- Toccoa Falls College
- Univ. of Alabama (Honors College)
- Univ. of California, Santa Barbara
- University of Florida
- Univ. of Maryland-Eastern Shore
- University of Mississippi
- Furman University
- Guilford College
- Louisburg College
- Loyola University, New Orleans
- Meredith College
- North Carolina A&T University
- UNC-Asheville
- UNC-Chapel Hill
- UNC-Charlotte
- UNC-Greensboro
- UNC-Pembroke
- UNC-Wilmington
- University of Ottawa
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of South Carolina
- University of Texas at Arlington
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Wake Forest University
FACULTY, STAFF, ADMINISTRATION, AND GOVERNANCE

The faculty at Oakwood is a dedicated, warm, and enthusiastic group. A mix of veteran teachers and new faces, the 40 full-time faculty members are committed to fulfilling the school’s mission and providing an individualized education catered to each of their students’ unique talents and abilities. Knowledgeable and experienced in their own fields and grade-appropriate pedagogy, 61% of Oakwood’s faculty hold advanced degrees. With an average tenure of 10 years, the faculty members hold strong ties to the school and are eager to implement new initiatives. Oakwood’s recent receipt of an E.E. Ford Foundation grant and matching funds from Southern Bank Foundation will enable continuing education initiatives for the school’s academic departments, and faculty members are eager to take advantage of the new professional development resources.

The Head of School at Oakwood reports to the Board of Trustees and currently has many direct reports, including the Division Coordinators, Athletic Director, Advancement Director, Technology Director, Business Manager, Student Support Services Coordinator, College/Guidance Counselor, Registrar, Department Chairs, and teaching staff. The Head or a designated administrator also serves on the Board of Horizons at The Oakwood School, a mission-based community service initiative hosted at the school that provides cost-free academic summer enrichment to underserved public school children. The school’s Bylaws allow a maximum of 21 trustees who can serve up to two three-year terms. The Head of School and the immediate past President of the Board serve as ex-officio Board members.

SCHOOL SETTING AND CAMPUS

The Oakwood School sits on 41 acres in Greenville, North Carolina. The scenic campus boasts 37 classrooms, 4 science labs, 2 art rooms, 2 media centers, a gymnasium that can be converted to a performance space, and a weight room. The grounds include a micro-farm; three playgrounds; soccer, baseball, and softball fields; tennis courts; and a 5k cross-country running course. Taking full advantage of its open space, Oakwood developed the Outdoor Agricultural Student Ecosystem (OASES) micro-farm as an avenue for hands-on STEAM learning, starting with its youngest students and continuing through grade 12. The
micro-farm includes a greenhouse, hydroponics and outdoor gardens, and chicken coop led by teaching staff and Hydroponics Club student volunteers.

Home to East Carolina University (ECU), Greenville was recently named one of the Best Small Places for Businesses and Careers by Forbes magazine. With the lively culture of a college town and surrounded by the natural beauty of the Inner Banks, Greenville is thriving. The vibrant city center—called “uptown” by locals—features small galleries, shops, and restaurants. About 90 minutes east of the Research Triangle Park and Raleigh Durham International Airport, Greenville is by no means sleepy, but the pace of life is relaxed and the community is warm and welcoming. Annual traditions like Pirate Fest, Freeboot Friday, Art Walk, and Sunday in the Park enrich life in Greenville with a small town feel and strong sense of community.

Within Greenville, there are more than twenty public parks and greenways. There are coves for sailing and rivers for kayaking within a half hour of the city center, and the beautiful beaches of the renowned Outer Banks can be reached in less than two hours. Despite the high quality of life and steady economy—thanks in part to the influence of ECU and its renowned medical, dental, pharmacy, and nursing schools and a number of pharmaceutical companies moving into the area—the cost of living in Greenville remains low.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Oakwood’s educational program provides 21st century learning to students in Pitt County and its surroundings. With a curriculum centered on experiential learning, the school seeks to educate the whole child and cultivate service-minded global citizens.

THE LOWER SCHOOL

Serving grades PreK-3, the Lower School at Oakwood uses guided discovery and inquiry as a framework for cultivating a genuine love of learning in its students. At the Lower School level, nurturing and guiding students’ socio-emotional growth and developing baseline skills in reading, writing, and math are Oakwood’s primary goals. In service of that, the curriculum emphasizes free play, exploration, and outdoor education. Students study science and math in Oakwood’s OASES where they raise and care for chickens and ducks to learn about biology, ecology, and even business as they harvest and sell the eggs. Students grow pumpkins that they eventually bake into pies, while learning about agriculture, chemistry and fractions. Starting in PreK, students have classes in music, studio art, lab science, and Spanish, and through third grade, students have recess twice a day. Technology is incorporated into the classroom, starting in PreK, where students begin to develop an understanding of how best to use it responsibly and as a learning tool. Recognizing the differences in developmental readiness in this age group, the Lower School teachers offer differentiated instruction, and they base promotion on academic growth, rather than a fixed set of academic benchmarks. The Lower School develops students who are self-aware, resilient, respectful, and
responsible; it also helps them build a framework for critical thinking and risk taking that allows them to succeed as they move on to the Middle School.

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Separated into two divisions, Oakwood’s unique approach to the transitional Middle School years helps students systematically develop study habits and self-knowledge. The Lower Middle School includes grades four and five and introduces students to moving from class to class, while retaining elements of a Lower School approach like close ties to their homeroom teacher and recess. The Upper Middle School consists of grades six and seven and increases student accountability for independent work and time management, in preparation for Upper School. Both Middle School divisions benefit from an increased emphasis on technology. Starting in grade four, students are required to own an iPad, which serves as a platform for quizzes, homework, and various class projects. Students learn to do systematic, rigorous online research and begin the process of learning to filter the wide range of information available on the web. Oakwood uses PowerSchool starting in Middle School, and students and parents use this interface to stay up to date on assignments and tests. Students explore their near and distant surroundings on annual trips that progress from one to three nights during the Middle and Upper Schools’ Experiential Education Week to places like Jamestown and Williamsburg, VA; Duke Marine Lab in Beaufort, NC; and Washington, D.C. These group overnight programs tie into the curriculum and contribute to Oakwood’s tight-knit community. By the end of Middle School, Oakwood students develop skills that allow them to enter the Upper School as positive, independent learners, ready to meet the challenges that await them.

THE UPPER SCHOOL

The rigorous Upper School curriculum at Oakwood is designed to prepare students for success in college and beyond. Building on the analytical skills students developed in Middle School, the Upper School offers a challenging set of courses aimed at instilling in its students “the strength of character, the creativity, and the wisdom to make a difference in the world.” Oakwood also emphasizes the acquisition of the soft skills necessary to becoming an influential citizen in the 21st century. The school encourages teachers and coaches to mentor students, helping young learners develop confidence and superior communication skills. The English and
History departments encourage inquiry and exploration, along with the development of vital communication, research, and analytical skills. Oakwood offers twelve AP courses, and as a member of the North Carolina Association of Independent Schools, its students can take optional online AP courses in subjects not offered at the school. Upper-schoolers benefit from a college-counseling program that helps them find a best-fit college of their choice.

Increasingly aware of the importance of building global citizens, Oakwood encourages its students to aim for mastery of a foreign language by graduation, and has increased opportunities in Spanish and Latin for seniors to reach that goal. Additionally, Oakwood collaborates with New Oasis International Education to enroll a number of students from China, who live with Oakwood families and participate in a cross-cultural exchange that enriches the Oakwood community.

Students can also broaden their horizons during Experiential Education Week, when they are free to design their own project to be completed anywhere in the world. They can travel with classmates to domestic locations like Charleston, SC and New York City or international locations like Puerto Rico, Spain, and Germany, or participate in self-designed internships or independent studies. Oakwood alumni report that their education left them academically and socially prepared to thrive in college and beyond.

**ATHLETICS**

Beginning with intramural sports in grades two through five, Oakwood considers participation in athletics to be a vital part of its students’ personal growth. Lower and Middle School students participate in a fitness program that follows a sports-based curriculum that emphasizes teamwork, motor skills development, and health. Operating with a no-cut policy, Oakwood’s athletic program is an integral part of the Oakwood experience for many of its students. Eighty-five percent of Middle and Upper School students participate in athletics, regardless of their ability. Still, Oakwood teams have had success in the competitive North Carolina Independent Schools Athletic Association 1A league. Over the past five years, Oakwood has had state championship teams or runners-up in girls’ basketball, boys’ tennis, softball, volleyball, boys’ soccer, and baseball. Individual students are regularly recognized with All Conference, All-State, and Student Athlete honors.
ARTS

Oakwood’s rich arts curriculum provides its students ample opportunity for exploration and skill building in the visual and performing arts. Lower School students have weekly music and studio art classes, where they learn fundamentals of music and art and have platforms for creative self-expression. After class, Suzuki violin lessons are available to Lower School students. In Middle School, students have the opportunity to choose between chorus, strings, and band. The strong choral program often sends students to the North Carolina and National Honors Choirs, and many students receive state solo and ensemble recognition, as well. Students may also elect to take part in the dance program, which explores various genres and develops physical expression and technical ability. The Upper School adds to these offerings, and the two divisions combine each year to put on a musical production, attracting over 1,200 audience members.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

The next Head of School at Oakwood will inherit an institution with an earnest and passionate community, innovative academic program, and an experienced faculty. The Oakwood headship is an exceptional career opportunity for a leader with the vision to distill Oakwood’s existing mission and culture into a more clearly defined identity and value proposition. As a school in its adolescence, Oakwood has weathered more dire storms than its recent enrollment downturn, and the community is eager to embrace a Head with new ideas that will continue to embrace its mission. The Board of Trustees is committed to investing in programs and resources that will move the school forward and has a history of partnering with Independent School Management. The next Head will build upon their 2015 strategic plan and financial plan and have a major role in determining the course of the school’s future. Among the issues to be addressed by the next head of school are:

ENROLLMENT

Although Oakwood enjoys the distinction of being the only secular PreK-12 independent school in Greenville, recent changes in the
local educational landscape have made it difficult for the school to maintain a healthy enrollment. Residents of Greenville and its surroundings have many options to choose from: two new charter schools; traditional public schools; and other independent schools, including more established institutions and schools with a strong religious identity. While some families are drawn to Oakwood’s 21st century educational philosophy, the perception that it is a “liberal” school is a challenge in recruiting some local families. The Board and school community remain committed to Oakwood’s identity and mission as an open, globally minded, apolitical school, but they are realistic about the social and political dynamics on a local and national level. In addition to the challenge of managing its brand and various market forces, a serious student disciplinary event in the spring of 2016 – and the subsequent reactions to the incident – tested the Oakwood community. The school has begun to move on, but it will take time to rebuild trust among all constituents as the school hopes to heal lingering divisions as quickly and responsibly as possible. The next Head of School can make a critical contribution to Oakwood by refreshing the school’s identity and improving the school’s position in a competitive marketplace. She or he will have the opportunity to build bridges within the school community and balance local traditions and values with a commitment to diversity, growth, and global perspectives.

SCHOOL FINANCES

As a relatively young school Oakwood has not benefited from a large alumni base or a robust culture of giving that one might find at a more established school. The school has taken on debt for facility expansion. While the budget has consistently been balanced for the past 7 years as evidenced from annual independent audits, the school is working on reducing accounts receivables by collecting outstanding tuition payments from some current and past parents. The Board is admirably clear-eyed about the school’s financial position and has retained Independent School Management (ISM) to improve the situation. One bold proposal is to cover 100% operating costs with tuition revenue alone. However, with affordability concerns increasing among prospective families and a desire to maintain a diverse student body, both tuition control and adequate financial aid resources are expected to be high priorities in the years ahead. The new Head of School will need to partner closely with the Board to develop and execute a comprehensive plan to put the school on a clear path to long-term financial sustainability. The school has had success the past five years in growing fundraising through the Annual Fund, Corporate Partners, and Blue Jean Ball Auction & Gala, sustaining and growing its donor base; however, planning for a future capital campaign and strengthening enrollment management (both retention and recruitment) will be a big part of the conversation, as will be operational efficiency and sound financial planning.
ADMINISTRATION AND FACULTY

As a parent-run school in its early years, Oakwood benefited from a highly engaged and collaborative group of teachers and administrators. The dedication and flexibility of the school’s faculty and staff are undeniable strengths, but as the school has grown and matured, many feel the administrative structure at Oakwood has not kept pace. The next Head will be charged with evaluating Oakwood’s current structure and ensuring that the school is getting the most out of the people and systems that help it run effectively. She or he will need to work with the faculty and staff to redefine key roles and responsibilities and clarify reporting lines. The new Head will also lead an effort to rebuild faculty culture aligned with NAIS Principles of Good Practice and Oakwood’s Characteristics of Professional Excellence.

CAMPUS CULTURE

As a forward-thinking school in a city that can be cautious when it comes to change, Oakwood provides a clear alternative to other schools in the area. With annual traditions like its International Festival, hosted by the Parent Service Association, as well as a community-wide sports tournament and fundraiser, “Spike It For Life,” led by students to raise money for a local cancer center, Oakwood is a dynamic place with many passionate constituents representing a wide range of views on nearly every aspect of the institution. In a community that includes established local families and more transient families with ties to the university and/or the medical industry, the next Head will have the opportunity to harness Greenville’s increasing cultural, social, and economic diversity and unite the Oakwood community around a vision for the institution. This effort is likely to include specific discussions about school policies, including how to best develop and support personal and professional excellence among students and teachers; deliver an outstanding student and family experience; and strengthen the school’s academic programs and support services.

WHO SHOULD APPLY: IMPORTANT QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Oakwood is looking for an innovative, decisive leader with the passion and foresight to define a clear vision for the institution, strengthen the community, and implement a focused strategy to ensure the school’s stability in the coming years. At the same time, the community seeks a Head who is warm, approachable, and excited by its culture and mission. Oakwood is committed to offering a competitive compensation and benefits package.
Ideally, the next Head of The Oakwood School will have the following credentials and characteristics:

- A charismatic and diplomatic leader who will strengthen Oakwood’s community and inspire trust.
- A strong, decisive, and empathetic leader who can be both firm and fair.
- A visionary, optimistic educator with the ability to articulate and execute a plan for achieving school-wide goals.
- A businessperson with experience overseeing a school’s financial operations.
- A genuine interest in leading advancement efforts, including fundraising and enrollment management.
- A forward-thinking educational leader who is familiar with progressive pedagogies across the PreK-12 spectrum.
- An affinity for the identity, mission, and values of Oakwood.
- A compelling school ambassador with exceptional interpersonal and communication skills.
- An insightful manager who can evaluate the systems, people, and policies of a school and drive a process of continuous improvement.
- A willingness to engage broadly with the Pitt County community and embrace the culture of Eastern North Carolina.
- An innovative, energetic leader who is willing to take well-considered risks.
- A record of success in hiring, developing, and retaining talented faculty and staff.
- A seasoned leader with the highest regard for personal and professional integrity.
- Solid academic credentials, including an advanced degree.
- A love of working with and for children of all ages.
ANTICIPATED SEARCH CALENDAR

- Application deadline: September 19, 2017
- Selection of semifinalists: October 3, 2017
- Semifinalist interviews: October 14-15, 2017
- Finalist visits: October/November 2017
- Appointment: November 2017
- Starting date: July 2018

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND SEARCH PROCESS

Acting on behalf of The Oakwood School, Wickenden Associates is actively recruiting talented academic leaders for this unique leadership opportunity. The lead consultants are Linda Knights (lknights@wickenden.com) and Sue Walters (swalters@wickenden.com). Both may be reached at (609) 683-1355.

Candidates should submit **no later than Tuesday, September 19, 2017**, an application package including the following:

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

These materials should be transmitted via email attachment to searches@wickenden.com. Candidates who are new to Wickenden Associates are particularly encouraged to initiate the application process well before the deadline.

After an initial review of applicants, the Search Committee will interview semifinalist candidates on **October 14-15, 2017**. Shortly thereafter, finalists will be invited to Oakwood for a more comprehensive series of interviews with representatives of the school’s constituencies. A November appointment is anticipated. Wickenden Associates will keep all applicants informed of their status throughout the process.