



Candidate Brief

Montcrest School



Montcrest
discover • develop • thrive

Head of School

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Overview – The School

Overlooking Riverdale Park in the Broadview and Danforth area of Toronto, Montcrest School is a co-educational elementary community, home to 325 students, grades JK to 8.

The School's mission is to be small enough to honour the individual student, and big enough to provide an exceptional academic experience, with balanced opportunities in leadership, the arts, and athletics. Montcrest School challenges children to discover and acknowledge their own voices, so they can understand and make meaningful connections with the world. Founded in 1961, Montcrest has over 55 years of rich history and tradition behind what is now a very current and dynamic approach to elementary education. Montcrest's vision is to be recognized as the leading elementary school in Canada, realizing the unique potential of each child.

Montcrest puts students first, and excels at preparing children for academic and social success at high school. The School embraces a diversity of learners, and strives to develop in them a love of learning and self-confidence in an environment that balances rigour and joy. Teachers combine research and experience to guide the learning process, continually evolving their approach to meet the needs of their learners. Teaching at Montcrest is about motivating, engaging, supporting, and stimulating curiosity through hands-on, minds-on, and deep experiential learning. Montcrest believes that academic learning alone will not determine a child's future success. Montcrest teachers go well beyond mathematics and literacy to support collaboration, problem-solving, creative thinking, and empathy. The School promotes academic mastery, nurtures social-emotional learning, and encourages students to pursue their areas of interest.

When one arrives at Montcrest, the prevailing impression is one of family and community, where the uniqueness of each child is supported and celebrated. The relationship between faculty and students and their families is at the heart of the Montcrest experience. Whether it is in the houses where the academic programs are delivered, or in the natural play space, the School's culture and focus is on knowing, supporting, and challenging each child. Montcrest aims to nurture intellectually curious and critical thinking students who are also responsible citizens. The faculty are committed to nurturing the special gifts of each child, which allows students to discover, develop, and thrive.

The Montcrest community is healthy. Students appreciate the wonderful opportunities they get at Montcrest, and are devoted to their school. They describe their school as fun and friendly, and the School is blessed with an extremely talented, dedicated, and professional group of faculty and staff. Parents are engaged, supportive, and enthusiastic about the School and the community it represents. Montcrest is in excellent financial shape, and

demand for spaces is high. The program (curricular and co-curricular) is robust. Graduating students feel well-prepared and ready for the challenges of a high school education at top tier independent and public schools around the city.

September 2016 marked the official launch of the Building Together campaign: Montcrest's largest ever building project to transform the School's campus. The \$12 million project, that was in the making for five years, will result in the construction of a new facility connecting two historical houses on Broadview Ave. The first phase of this project opened in March 2018, and the full project will be completed by the end of 2018. The new building will house grades six, seven and eight, along with new art, instrumental music, and science lab space, and an atrium.

Recently, the Montcrest Board of Governors released the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan which lays out a clear roadmap for Montcrest over the next three years. The strategic plan has a thoughtful and deliberate focus to "go deeper" in two key areas – Montcrest's caring and nurturing learning environment, and student-centred teaching and learning. There are also goals to expand the Kindergarten program, strengthen the connections with alumni, and enhance communications and digital capabilities.

The plan also calls for a continued focus on building a culture of philanthropy in the Montcrest community. Enormous strides have been made in this area. The current campaign has been generously and enthusiastically supported – by parents, alumni, faculty, staff, and the Board. The challenge now will be to maintain this momentum, and to continue to enhance the financial future of the School – to provide resources for scholarships, program enhancement, and future capital projects in support of the goals of the strategic plan.

The current Head will lead the School through the first year of this plan, and will play an instrumental role in the successful transition of his successor. Montcrest's next Head of School will fulfill the goals of this plan and achieve the School's vision, while ensuring that they take the time to really get to know the School. They will then have the immensely exciting opportunity to lead the community in discussion about the next strategic plan, and the School's longer term future. The 2018-2021 plan is an important companion document to this brief, and can be found at: <https://www.montcrest.on.ca/strategicplan>.

For more information about Montcrest School, please visit www.montcrest.on.ca.

To read more about the Head of School Transition, including the Board Chair's announcement of David Thompson's retirement, and a letter from David, please visit <https://www.montcrest.on.ca/transition>.

The Role

Montcrest is looking for a dynamic, outgoing, community-minded, and student-centred Head of School to provide vision and leadership. The new Head will galvanize and inspire students and staff, and will work closely with the Board and parent community to move the School forward on its path to being the best elementary school in Canada.

The new Head will bring a passion for, and deep commitment to, the principles that characterize Montcrest – including embracing a diversity of learners, facilitating social and emotional well-being (for both students and staff), exploring and innovating teaching and learning practices, integrating the outdoors and nature-based learning, and cultivating a culture of service and giving in students.

There is a solid blueprint to guide the way. The fundamental direction is there; the new Head will interpret, adjust, encourage, and motivate as they implement the strategic plan. Moving forward with this plan, and then bringing exceptional vision and energy to the imagining of Montcrest's longer-term potential and direction, will be the new Head's challenge.

Reporting to the Board of Governors, providing leadership to a strong senior administrative team and a faculty and staff of more than 70, and managing an operating budget of \$10 million, the Head holds full responsibility for all aspects of the academic and administrative management of the School, and for the well-being of the students.

The Head's responsibilities, broadly defined, include the following:

Visionary Leader

- Sustaining the educational mission of Montcrest School, and ensuring that it continues to provide an exceptional experience for its students, and that the balance among academics, arts, athletics, experiential education, and community service is supported and maintained.
- Bringing a strategic lens to the complex combination of financial, marketing, advancement, human resources, and program development pieces that underpin the School's success.
- Working in partnership with the Board, faculty, and administration in the achievement of the School's goals and implementation of its strategic plan; and providing guidance and vision for the future of the School.



- Maintaining the School's reputation for excellence, and celebrating its rich traditions and special culture while, at the same time, ensuring that the School continues to grow and evolve to be at the forefront of elementary education.
- Actively leading and participating in advancement and development initiatives, as the School continues its focus on building and sustaining a culture of philanthropy.

Manager and Administrator

- Ensuring the continued financial well-being of Montcrest, and that the School's organizational structure, policies, systems, and procedures are strong and robust and – with the right people in the right roles – able to effectively support academic and operational excellence at all levels. This includes ensuring that technology and data management needs are met, and that the School is in compliance with all regulations related to safety, risk, and health.
- Challenging, mentoring, and developing the faculty and staff, through the creation of a team environment where all are encouraged to participate and assume leadership roles; leading the entire staff team – through recruitment, motivation, evaluation, and on-going professional development.
- Providing leadership to the School's senior administrative team, and giving the coaching and mentorship necessary to enable team members to operate at their highest level.
- Ensuring a close and productive partnership with the Board, and that the Board is actively prepared and informed, so that members can contribute to their fullest.

Educator

- Serving as the educational leader of Montcrest School --through articulating a vision for excellence in teaching and learning, through the provision of guidance and direction to academic and co-curricular programs, through encouraging faculty members to develop continuously their own strengths and skills.
- Attracting, retaining, motivating, and developing exceptional teachers and staff.
- Staying knowledgeable and ahead of the curve on thinking about education in the 21st century, and on how to support different learning styles, and then leading the Montcrest community in pursuit of leading-edge educational programming.

Relationship Builder

- Taking a sincere interest in the students and their families, and maintaining the warm and open environment that is responsive to their needs, and the needs of the School's community at large.
- Growing and maintaining a culture of accountability, consistency, clarity, and transparency throughout the School community.



- Maintaining excellent relationships and excellent communications with various constituent groups which make up the School community – students, faculty, staff, parents, the Board, and alumni.
- Being a visible presence throughout the School – at events, with parents, in the classrooms, on camping trips, and in the parking lot!
- Being an active, dynamic, and high-profile spokesperson and ambassador for Montcrest, to the School’s neighbours, the local community, other independent schools, and various external stakeholders, including media, and government officials.

The Candidate Qualifications

Montcrest School is seeking an exceptional leader to build on the success that the School has enjoyed, and to move it upward and forward. This will require a Head with vision and a strong orientation to strategy and long-term planning. Above all else, the new Head will be the moral compass of the School, setting the tone, holding community members accountable, and clearly articulating and modeling the values that have made this School the exceptional community that it is.

The Search Committee recognizes the challenge and complexity of the position, and that no one individual will have all of these skills and attributes in equal measure; however, the following background, experience, and personal qualities will be sought in candidates:

Leadership and Vision

- Outstanding leadership qualities, the ability to see the big picture at all times, and the skills to articulate the educational vision and strategic plan for Montcrest, and then to inspire the community in its pursuit of the plan’s goals.
- An orientation to strategy and long-term planning, along with well-defined analytical capabilities.
- The ability to identify trends and anticipate developments in the rapidly changing education landscape, and to lead the community to stay ahead of the curve.
- A consultative yet decisive management style, and desire and ability to both mentor and empower others to reach their own potential.

Management/Administrative Skills

- The skills and attitudes required for prudent financial management, and the creative use of resources (earned and raised) to achieve the goals of the School.
- Experience in working with a diverse team of administrators and teachers, to ensure academic and operational excellence in a constantly changing environment.



- Strong organizational skills, and a business orientation that allows the School's resources – both financial and human – to be used to greatest effect in the education of Montcrest students.
- A demonstrated ability to embrace and communicate change, and the courage, judgement, and wisdom to make important decisions when they have to be made, and to delegate effectively to ensure that they are implemented.

Educational Leadership

- A passion for education and, ideally, a track record as an effective teacher and as a mentor of outstanding teachers.
- A strong academic background, and an impressive blend of teaching, administrative, and management experience gained in an educational institution.
- A deep understanding of, and continual curiosity about, trends in education, different learning styles, information technology, and the particular challenges and opportunities in educating young children.

Commitment to the Montcrest Community

- A demonstrated commitment to the education of the whole child, a deep and genuine affection for young students, and a record in their own life of active support of, and passion for, academics, athletics, arts, music, and global community service.
- An affinity for fundraising, and a powerful commitment to growing the School's annual fund and endowment, and ensuring that students from many backgrounds can attend the School.
- The capacity to understand and appreciate the importance of community, to value diversity, to encourage the development of students as global citizens, and to respect and embrace the unique traditions, philosophy, and values of Montcrest School.

Personal Qualities

- A natural personal style that connects easily with others, balances firmness and fairness in problem resolution, and demonstrates an active interest in students' development as individuals in a community.
- A deep interest in, and affection for, young children and an eagerness to engage in all aspects of school life – from driveway duty, to pancake flipping, to Outward Bound trips – and to be a warm and loving presence in the lives of all Montcrest students.
- Warmth, approachability, authenticity, unassailable integrity, and the capacity to engender respect and loyalty from all in the Montcrest School family.
- An excellent listener, with superior public-speaking and communications skills.
- A high level of personal strength, stamina, energy, and a good sense of humour.



The Opportunity

The new Head will take office in July 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter; the committee will begin consideration of candidates in the late summer 2018.

All inquiries regarding this position will be treated in strict confidence and should be directed to Colleen Keenan or Laura Brannan at Odgers Berndtson.

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Confidentiality

Odgers Berndtson respects the privacy and confidentiality of personal information provided by candidates in our search assignments. In accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (“PIPEDA”), a copy of our Privacy Policy is available for your review on our website at:

<http://www.odgersberndtson.com/en/privacy-policy/>

By providing us with a copy of your resume and any subsequent personal information directly or from third parties on your behalf such as references, you understand that it has been furnished with your consent for the purpose of possible disclosure to our client, who has agreed to comply with our Privacy Policy. We will not disclose your personal information to clients without your prior knowledge and consent.