



Head of School | July 2027
Easton, MD





Rooted in nine core values and a 90-year tradition of excellence, The Country School balances academic rigor with deep personal nurture, cultivating resilient, compassionate, and confident learners while preserving the joy of childhood. As it approaches its 2034 Centennial, The Country School seeks an approachable, relationship-centered, and strategic Head of School to provide long-term stability and continuity. The ideal leader will blend genuine empathy and professional gravitas with sound financial acumen and pedagogical vision—honoring cherished traditions, supporting an exemplary faculty, and confidently leading The Country School into its second century.

At the core of the educational experience at The Country School is a thoughtfully designed PreK–8 program that balances academic rigor with character development, ensuring students build essential critical thinking skills while remaining grounded in empathy and integrity. The curriculum pairs strong foundational academics and differentiated instruction with vibrant arts, athletics, and experiential learning, encouraging students to stretch intellectually and grow personally. Complementing this academic framework are time-honored traditions that thread through every grade level—from the Dorothy Andrew Day competitions and Kindergarten-Grade 8 buddy pairings to community assemblies and performing arts productions. Together, these hallmarks reinforce a joyful school culture where childhood is honored, individual potential is realized, and every student feels a deep sense of belonging.

This close-knit school environment is further enriched by its setting in Easton, the historic seat of Talbot County and one of the Chesapeake Bay region's most charming communities. Consistently recognized for its high quality of life, Easton combines small-town warmth with a sophisticated cultural landscape featuring institutions such as the Academy Art Museum, the historic Avalon Theatre, and world-class environmental research facilities. Nestled along Maryland's Eastern Shore, the area offers rich maritime heritage, scenic waterways, and abundant outdoor recreation, all within comfortable reach of Annapolis, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. For an incoming Head of School, The Country School and its surrounding region offer a rare combination of professional fulfillment, institutional strength, and an inviting place to call home.

The Country School’s Philosophy & Mission

The Country School is an independent, coeducational, PreK-8 school founded in 1934. We offer a challenging, enriching program in a nurturing environment with individual attention and outstanding teachers as our hallmarks. We believe in educating students academically, socially, emotionally, and morally. By fostering excellence, developing strong character, valuing diversity, and instilling a lifelong love of learning, we help develop confident students who strive to do their best always, and we encourage students to be resilient learners and leaders, prepared for an ever-changing world.

9 Core Values

Honesty ★ Respect ★ Responsibility ★ Compassion ★ Generosity
Commitment ★ Cooperation ★ Fairness ★ Moral Courage

The Country School’s Diversity & Inclusion Statement

The Country School believes that seeking and valuing diversity of ideas, experiences, and identities, developing meaningful connections, and fostering a sense of belonging are vital to each student’s education and growth. A diverse, inclusive, and equitable school community is critical for preparing students for a role in a complex, pluralistic, and interconnected society. We actively see and value the differences of our school community, among them ability/disability, age, ethnicity, faith traditions, family composition, gender identity and expression, learning styles, race, sexuality, and socio-economic status. We aspire for all - students, parents, caregivers, faculty, staff, graduates, and Trustees - to live our core values, especially to:

- Show respect for all, within our school community and beyond
- Demonstrate compassion with both words and actions
- Apply standards of fairness and equity
- Join hands in cooperation
- Strive to meet the challenges that call us to moral courage as we support our students to bring positive change in the world while at The Country School and in their lives beyond.



The Country School Quick Facts

Enrollment: 321
Lower School (Prek-4): 178
Upper School (5-8): 143
BIPOC Students: 15%

Faculty: 45
Total Faculty/Staff: 65
Administrators: 9

Student-Teacher Ratio: 9:1

School Founding: 1934
Mascot: Cougar
of Sports/Athletic Clubs: 8
of Recesses Each Day: 2
Playing Fields: 2

Miles to Annapolis: 42
Miles to Washington DC: 70
Miles to Baltimore: 61

Annual Budget: 8.5M
Endowment: 9.1M
Annual Fund: 523K
Annual Fund Parent Participation: 92%

Building Square Footage: 75K square feet
Campus: 12 Acres

History

The school's story began in 1934, when Headmistress Dorothy Startt opened its doors to five students. After several moves, the school settled into its permanent home on Goldsborough Street in 1946. Mrs. Startt led The Country School for 43 years, steadily growing enrollment and expanding its facilities, including new classrooms and a library.

The 1980s and 1990s were a period of celebration and growth. The school marked its 50th anniversary and completed its first capital campaign, which funded the arts, music, and the Dorothy E. Startt Field House. In 1990, Neil Mufson was appointed Head of School, a role he held for 30 years. Under his leadership, enrollment grew, the school's financial position strengthened, and three capital campaigns transformed the campus. Those campaigns supported the endowment, additional classrooms, a library, air-conditioning, renovated locker rooms, a Lower School wing, science classrooms, and an Upper School wing. His tenure also brought curriculum alignment, the PK Program, community service, and Upper School advisories.

In recent years, the school has continued to move forward, strengthening its Extended Care program, launching a multi-county transportation program and renovating its athletic fields in 2023. Since 2020, the school has been served by two Heads and two interim Heads. The Board and school community are now seeking a long-term Head of School who will build on The Country School's strong reputation, provide continuity and stability, and lead the school into its second century.

Traditions

Every morning at The Country School begins with a **handshake**. The Head of School greets each student at the door, a simple ritual that families and students cherish as a symbol of welcome and a signal that it is time to learn. Along the way, students master a skill that will serve them for life: looking someone in the eye and offering a firm, friendly greeting.

Other traditions that mark the rhythm of the school year and knit the community together:

- **Bell Tower** Each year opens as the 8th graders ring the Bell Tower, a moment that celebrates the start of a new chapter for the whole school.
- **Kindergarten and 8th Grade Buddies** The youngest and oldest students are paired for activities throughout the year, building friendships and leadership across the grades.
- **Dorothy Andrew Day** A favorite among students and the entire school, this field day honors an iconic physical education teacher who served Country School for 33 years. Students unite to compete for their Black and Gold teams in a spirited celebration of sportsmanship and school pride.
- **Seasonal and community events** The Holiday Breakfast, the Halloween Assembly and Parade, the Upper School Musical, and Outdoor Education field trips, among many others, add to the warm, family atmosphere that defines the school.

Secondary School Placement

Over the last three years, The Country School graduates have been accepted to 32 different secondary schools in 6 different states. They have matriculated to more than two dozen of those schools.

Avon Old Farms ★ Eagle Hill School ★ Easton High School ★ Edmund Burke School ★ Episcopal High School ★ Foxcroft School ★ Garrison Forest School ★ Georgetown Prep ★ Madeira School ★ McDonogh School ★ Mercersburg Academy Middlesex School ★ North Carolina High School ★ Peddie School ★ Phillips Exeter Academy ★ Saint James School Saints Peter & Paul High School ★ Severn School ★ St. Andrew's School ★ St. Michael's High School ★ The Boys' Latin School of Maryland ★ The Gunston School ★ The Hotchkiss School ★ Westover School ★ Westtown School ★ Woodberry Forest School ★ Wye River Upper School

Strategic Priorities & Leadership Opportunities

Affirm Academic Excellence, Curriculum Alignment, and Technology Integration

- Solidify and maintain a consistently rigorous, articulate PreK–8 curriculum that establishes clear academic benchmarks, ensures alignment grade-to-grade and division-to-division, and strengthens secondary school placement.
- Articulate clear admissions criteria to ensure mission alignment, and construct a transparent framework for evaluating, accommodating, and supporting diverse learning needs within the framework of the school's academic and behavioral standards.
- Establish a clear policy on educational technology and AI that balances modern tools with traditional pedagogical fundamentals—prioritizing writing, critical thinking, deep reading, and human connection.

Attract, Support, Evaluate, and Retain Exemplary Faculty

- Build upon competitive compensation structures to attract and retain top-tier educators, affirming classroom autonomy and recognizing teacher dedication across both divisions.
- Serve as a strong advocate for teachers, build bridges across divisions, encourage continuous professional development and cross-curricular collaboration, and support faculty to do their best work with every student.

Ensure Financial Sustainability, Stewardship, and Advancement

- Develop a strategic 10-year financial plan that balances tuition pricing with operating expenses, controls program headcount growth and manages financial assistance strategically.
- Invigorate the vibrant philanthropic culture among parents, alumni, grandparents and the Easton community by implementing major advancement initiatives and capital fundraising that grow the endowment per student and optimize facilities in celebration of the 2034–35 Centennial.
- Oversee prudent capital allocation and deferred maintenance plans to ensure campus facilities and infrastructure support the school's long-term vision.



Strategic Priorities & Leadership Opportunities

Unify the Community, Preserve Traditions, and Bolster Institutional Trust

- Serve as an approachable, present, and deliberative Head of School who engenders long-term stability and confidence across the school community following past administrative transitions.
- Preserve and nurture cherished school traditions—such as the morning handshake, outdoor education trips, K–8 buddies, and community assemblies—while thoughtfully evolving programs to reflect contemporary needs.
- Build partnerships with parents and staff based upon open and direct dialogue that establishes consistent boundaries around school policies, discipline, and governance to foster mutual respect and trust.

Define Strategic Enrollment, Regional Identity, and School Culture

- Define and market The Country School's unique PreK–8 value proposition across Talbot County and the broader Eastern Shore.
- Maintain strong enrollment and minimize student attrition.
- Cultivate an inclusive, welcoming environment that emphasizes core character values, integrity, and mutual respect within a diverse community.
- Represent the school actively in Easton and regional civic life, building strong connections with local institutions and alumni networks.
- Strengthen the TCS position in secondary school acceptances through outreach and the sharing of the TCS story, program hallmarks and student achievements.

Build a Collaborative Board Partnership and Operational Excellence

- Establish a transparent, strategic partnership with the Board of Trustees by maintaining robust and clear communication.
- Build, develop, and empower the administrative leadership team by utilizing data-informed insights and trends to guide school management.



Professional Qualifications & Attributes

- Proven record as a Head of School or senior administrative leader (or strong executive/business background) with professional gravitas, the capacity to provide inspiring leadership and to demonstrate deep understanding of PK–8 education.
- Strong financial discipline and data-informed decision-making to manage the development and administration of an annual operating budget, balance financial aid/tuition pricing, control costs, manage debt, and advance the endowment toward long-term growth.
- Track record or strong capability in fundraising, capital campaigns, and building authentic relationships with donors.
- Demonstrated ability to attract, develop, mentor, and evaluate exceptional teachers, while maintaining clear performance expectations and accountability that advance the mission of TCS.
- A deep understanding of school governance and policy that are essential for an open, transparent, and collaborative partnership with the Board of Trustees.
- A clear vision for elevating academic excellence, cross-curricular/vertical alignment between grades and divisions, and strengthening secondary school placement relationships.
- Ability to establish clear criteria for admissions and learning accommodations, ensuring the school effectively serves mission-appropriate students while providing reasonable learning support.
- Commitment to fostering the nine core values, discipline, empathy, and character development, keeping the focus on letting "kids still be kids" in a safe environment.

Personal Characteristics & Leadership Style

- Relationship-centered leader who exhibits genuine warmth and care for students, maintains high visibility in all aspects of school life, and engages with families, staff and alumni in a personal, informed and professional manner.
- Inspirational leader who personifies a culture of what a great independent school can be for children and the community.
- High moral standards, humility, a student-first outlook, and transparent, honest communication.
- Consistent, firm, and decisive decision-maker with the strength to hold boundaries, make tough choices, and handle challenging interpersonal dynamics with calm authority.
- Exceptional communication and deep listening skills, with a willingness to listen to all constituencies, empower administrative teams, and build and foster trust.

Community & Cultural Alignment

- Understanding of the Local Community: Appreciation for the unique culture and dynamics of Easton, Talbot and surrounding counties (Dorchester, Caroline, and Queen Anne’s), and the Eastern Shore community.
- Long-Term Dedication: Commitment to staying long-term to provide needed stability, continuity, and trust following recent leadership transitions.

Salary and Benefits

The base salary range for this position is \$250,000-280,000. A competitive benefit package including medical, dental, vacation and sick leave, paid holidays, and retirement contributions is offered. A housing allowance may also be provided as part of the compensation package.

Application Process

The Country School's next Head of School will begin on July 1, 2027. The Board of Trustees has appointed a search committee to conduct the search and has engaged the search firm, Educational Directions, to assist the committee.

Please direct all inquiries and nominations in confidence to: Highley Thompson at highley.thompson@edudx.com, and Mike Murphy at mike.murphy@edudx.com.

Interested individuals should speak with the consultants and email a resume *before* submitting other materials. Prospective candidates must contact the consultants and share a resume at least seven days prior to the deadline below in order to be considered as a candidate in this search.

After an initial conversation with the consultants, applicants should submit the following documents, in the following order, in a single PDF via email:

- A letter addressed to Members of the Search Committee explaining their interest in becoming the next Head of The Country School
- A resume detailing current and previous roles and accomplishments
- A statement of educational leadership philosophy
- The names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers of five references with an explanation of their relationship to the candidate. Candidates are asked to provide at least one reference with whom they have navigated and resolved a conflict.

Search Calendar

November 15, 2026

Application Deadline

December 12 & 13, 2026

Semifinalist Interviews (in person)

January 7-15, 2027

Finalist Interviews (on site, 2 days)

Timelines are flexible and may be adjusted based on the progress of the search.

References will not be contacted without the prior agreement of the candidate, and finalists will be expected to furnish five additional references.

