



Head of School Opportunity - Bixby School

Boulder, CO July, 2018

Founded in 1970, Bixby is an independent nonprofit school, deeply rooted in the values of progressive education. Bixby seeks to serve a neuro-diverse community of students, each of whom is deeply known and loved as an individual. Our current 110 preschool through fifth-grade students are nurtured in a unique educational community on a child-centered campus. The committed teachers at Bixby are experts in their subject areas and create a customized curriculum emphasizing inquiry, critical thinking and deep understanding, while supporting individualized social-emotional growth. Bixby provides a dynamic, extended day continuum of learning that includes summer programming. Students' days are richly balanced with academics, play, movement, Spanish, music, art, swimming in our pool, and a nourishing, chef-prepared lunch.

Student progress is tracked through authentic, whole child assessments that include an in-depth, multi-dimensional rubric that was designed at Bixby. The three-acre facility includes an indoor swimming pool, two large sandboxes, an amphitheater, playing fields and a one-of-kind 3600 square foot playground known as Lower Yard - a maze of climbing structures and ropes, platforms and swings that make for a remarkable and imaginative play area. This is a close-knit community, permeated by a strong sense of trust and common purpose, striving to ensure that every member is respected, heard, and valued.

Bixby Overview

Founded: 1970

Design: serves pre-school - 5th grade, independent, progressive, neurodiverse

School size: 2017-18 enrollment: 70 K-5; 38 preschool. K-5 capacity is 150.

Mission: Cultivate critical thinking; promote independence and self-confidence; instill empathy, respect, and responsibility; and inspire a love of learning.

Average class size: 7

Faculty: 35

Evolution in Excellence: Bixby School 2020

In March of this year, Bixby's Board of Trustees unveiled a vision for Bixby's future. The board learned that preserving what is best and special about Bixby will require some evolution; but its core tenets will not change. Each Bixby student will continue to be seen and known. Bixby will continue to be a place where students have time to explore, play and learn. The amazing faculty will always be encouraged to be creative and share their passions. A current student summed up Bixby recently by saying: "the classes are fun in a learning way."

Part of the school evolution has been defining who the school will serve. Bixby is committed to the success of every child enrolled and strives to serve students who are gifted, typically developing, twice exceptional, and those with mild to moderate learning challenges. The school is not able to serve children with autism or whose primary challenge is behavioral or social-emotional.

Key Strengths

Bixby's approach to progressive learning sets it apart from other schools. At Bixby, faculty believe all children are exceptional human beings with unique strengths and opportunities for growth. Bixby believes intentionally educating a neuro-diverse student body improves learning outcomes for all students. The school embraces the intrinsic way children learn by providing them the freedom to venture out, explore, and experiment in an unimpeded journey to knowledge. Facts and skills have a context and a purpose. Problems and projects are designed to extend thinking, creativity and the authentic learning that comes from trial and error. Questions are prized. Bixby is a school where children can experience joy in something that is already in their nature.

In elementary, students are provided with a customized middle school-type schedule that includes a rich set of academic, arts and sports activities, as well as free time where students learn to exercise choice, agency and responsibility. Bixby's faculty members are each experts in their fields. Several faculty have decades of experience teaching at Bixby. This past year, Bixby also welcomed several new faculty, each expert in their respective areas of instruction. Bixby is not simply a job. It provides a professional family of colleagues to our faculty and administrative team.

The nine-member board of trustees is composed of dedicated members of the Bixby community. They are devoted to the school and the students it serves. In order to best govern the school and provide leadership, the board has hired a consultant to advise on governance. The board is committed to partnering with the Head of School in its evolution in excellence. A candidate with governance experience is desired.

A robust, competent and capable administrative team is currently being built to ensure Bixby fully emerges from founder-oriented leadership to a sustainable school with plenty of depth. The team, consisting of both new and returning members, will provide the Head of School with support and expertise. In turn, the Head will need to provide them with guidance on independent school leadership. This is a wonderful opportunity to nurture collaborative leadership within smart and committed individuals.

Challenges

Bixby has experienced several transitions in the Head of School since the resignation of its co-founder in 2013. Most recently, the 2017-18 school year welcomed Beth Suitor as the Head of School. Her knowledge of independent schools and educating the whole child were invaluable. Under her guidance, the school made significant strides to clarify who the school serves and its place in the Boulder educational setting. Beth will be leaving Bixby at the end of the year due to unexpected changes in her family life that preclude her ability to remain as Head of School. The successive changes in leadership will require the incoming Head of School to quickly develop strong relationships with the community that provide a sense of stability. Beth will leave the school with important work in governance, staffing and strategic planning in place.

As indicated in previous paragraphs, the school is in a state of transition, and a calm, strong and joyful leader is needed to navigate the waters and steer the school through the evolution. Since the first year will be focused upon implementing the new vision, previous experience with organizational change is critical. Gaining an awareness of the competitive independent and public school market in Boulder County will be important. This is a very exciting opportunity to

leverage Bixby's existing strengths and create an exceptional educational experience for students, families, and faculty. The Board of Trustees offers the highest level of support in the implementation of its vision.

The school has a history of prudent financial management. The Head of School will need to look at the various components of the school's financial sustainability including enrollment, fundraising, and compensation. Cultivating and continuing to nurture relationships with key donors both internally and externally will be a key component. An entrepreneurial leader who has financial acumen and strong business skills in order to oversee school operations is desired.

Leadership Qualifications

Our next Head of School will have the following characteristics:

Beliefs and Dispositions

- Unquestionable integrity and transparency
- Unwavering belief that each student is unique, with his/her own gifts, talents and the potential for making meaningful contributions to their community
- Infectious enthusiasm for the school's vision for its future, grounded in deep appreciation for its history
- Prefers to listen with intent, with an ability to truly hear what is being said
- Passion for providing a top-level progressive education that addresses the needs of individual students
- Deeply held commitment to the role of teachers as leaders and professionals
- Commitment to continuous self-reflection and personal learning
- Interest in learning about Bixby and the Boulder educational community.
- Innate ability to connect with people both at the school and in the community.

Skills and Knowledge

- Understands management of constituents and organizations, including parents, students, staff, and the Board of Trustees
- Ability to communicate with clarity and credibility to diverse audiences and foster commitments to shared goals
- Strong background in the business operations and financial aspects of running a non-profit or business
- Ability to create, monitor, and maintain systems that enhance organizational efficiency, effectiveness and accountability
- Demonstrated ability to lead and engage in recruitment, marketing and outreach activities designed to attract and retain student enrollment
- Demonstrated ability to lead and engage in recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty and staff
- Experience working with neurodiverse populations is desired

About Boulder

Boulder is located at the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and 30 minutes from downtown Denver.

Elevation: 5,430 feet

Population: 102,500 including 25,000 University of Colorado students

Recreation: Rated “#1 sports town in America” by Outside Magazine; 200 miles of hiking and biking trails, Eldora Ski Resort is nearby and world class skiing is within a 2 hour drive

Airport: Denver International Airport has direct service to many international destinations

Weather: average 300 sunny days

University of Colorado Boulder: Premier research institution with 85 undergraduate and 100 post-graduate majors.

Arts and Professional Sports: Denver is host to nationally acclaimed theater and museums. Professional sports include football, basketball, hockey, soccer, and baseball.

Relevant Experience

- Experience in nonprofit administration or prior board service is desired
- Proven success attracting, retaining, and motivating teaching staff is desired
- Three years of experience in independent or charter school in administration (Head of School, Principal, Division Head, Dean, Director) is desired
- Prior experience successfully managing organizational budgets and providing strong fiscal oversight preferred
- Experience in early childhood and/or elementary would be helpful
- Other relevant experience that would enhance the effective operation of the school or the provision of a high-quality education program (such as, but not limited to, child development, progressive education, counseling, gifted/talented education, differentiated instruction, alternative assessments, educational technology) is desired but not required

If Bixby is Right for You-

If you describe yourself as a joyful leader who is looking for a long-term home at a school with a passion for creating a unique educational environment for students, then you should apply. Additional information about Bixby can be found at <http://bixbyschool.org>. This position could start as early as July 1 but will consider candidates who can start at any point in 2018.

Please submit the following materials for consideration:

- Cover letter outlining what attracts you to Bixby and this Head of School position
- Resume which includes dates of previous employment
- Statement of educational philosophy
- Three or four professional references
- Please write a response to the following questions:

Please limit your response to no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ page per question.

- Bixby is an independent nonprofit school, deeply rooted in the values of progressive education for almost 50 years. Components of our educational model include small class size, inquiry-based learning, authentic learning opportunities, developmentally appropriate curriculum and alternative assessment.

Please explain how you would ensure the continued success of these components, using specific examples from your professional school or business experience.

- The school is in transition. Describe a situation where you were involved in an organizational change situation or a project that required a change of direction once the project started. Describe the situation and your role in the change.

Please send all documents in PDF or Word format to bixbyhiring@bixbyschool.org. Christine Lipson from HRConcierge is our search consultant. She will receive all electronic submissions and follow-up with the top candidates. Please, no phone calls to the school, regular mail or fax submissions - we strive to be paperless.

Applications will be reviewed upon submission. We do not have a deadline. You are encouraged to submit your materials as soon as possible to allow for adequate follow-up time.

Additional Dates:

- Phone interviews upon submission
- Semi-finalist interviews- April/May
- Finalist interviews- start in May until filled