



MANLIUS PEBBLE HILL SCHOOL

Syracuse, New York

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Start Date: July 1, 2023

mphschool.org



Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES

Manlius Pebble Hill School

Mission & Core Values

To inspire our students to think critically, act responsibly, and discover a passion for lifelong learning.

Manlius Pebble Hill School engenders a sense of belonging for all community members by honoring each individual. MPH supports the personal growth of every student and colleague, appreciating that each MPH member is freely bound in a social compact that ensures we are mindful of one another and that we act with our collective interest in mind. MPH has identified the following Core Values that shape and reinforce its positive culture and community: authenticity, respect, curiosity, kindness, and agency. Learn more about the [Core Values here](#).

OVERVIEW

Manlius Pebble Hill School (MPH), a coeducational day school for students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12, seeks a head of school to begin in July 2023 when the current head, David McCusker, will step down after a successful four-year tenure.

Over the last two years, the School has made progress developing a [new strategic plan](#), which includes six strategic priorities endorsed by the Board of Trustees in January 2022. At the same time, MPH has been developing a campus master plan, which includes a complete renovation of the historic Farmhouse building, a project that will be completed in April 2022.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, MPH has been fortunate to be in a position to deliver its exceptional educational experience in person throughout 2020/21 and 2021/22. This is largely thanks to an extraordinary partnership between the School and its families regarding adherence to a [Social Compact](#); to its innovative and committed faculty and staff who have pivoted and adapted as necessary in order to carry out their roles and responsibilities; and to community and board generosity making available the resources needed for the adults to deliver and the students to continue to receive an outstanding experience.

At a Glance

Founded: 1869

Total students: 353

Students of color: 32%

Total faculty: 74

Faculty of color: 8.5%

Faculty with advanced degrees: 48%

Student/teacher ratio: 9:1

Financial aid budget: \$1,630,722

Students receiving aid: 38%

Endowment: \$8,838,616



Enrollment at MPH has been stable, including 15 percent growth over the last three years. An already-strong academic program now includes a fully developed Student Life Program, a more-intentional advisory curriculum, and a newly launched Pre-K–12 “Core Health” offering that reaches far beyond a traditional physical education curriculum.

Core Health includes a range of age-appropriate personal health concepts, lessons, and experiences and appreciates the integrated nature of the many and varied aspects of human development, including emotional, intellectual, physical, and social. Significant upgrades in MPH's technology infrastructure — first prompted by necessity with the onset of the pandemic in the spring of 2020 — have been an asset to an enhanced focus on technology integration in the classroom and curriculum. The School now has dedicated in-house technology support, with the ability to address hardware, software, and instructional needs on campus.

The next head will join a school that has made remarkable progress and enjoys an excellent regional and state reputation. More than that, he or she will find an unusually optimistic and energized school community, and a kind and encouraging culture that inspires students to tackle big challenges and that celebrates each student's success. Faculty members honor student interests and develop them into powerful strengths. The curriculum provides students with the needed tools for success after MPH, whatever their course of study and career.



SCHOOL HISTORY

Manlius Pebble Hill School can trace its roots back to 1869, when the Rev. Frederick Dan Huntington founded the all-boys St. John's School in the Central New York town of Manlius. In 1879, the school added a military component. When the school struggled with enrollment in the 1890s, General William Verbeck took over as headmaster and recreated it as one of the nation's top military schools, serving as a thriving feeder school for West Point. In 1924, Verbeck changed the school's name to The Manlius School. In 1970, because of low enrollment and financial challenges, The Manlius School merged with nearby Pebble Hill School to form today's Manlius Pebble Hill School — a nondenominational, coeducational independent day school.

The Pebble Hill School started in Syracuse — on the current site of Manlius Pebble Hill School — in 1926 as an all-boys school. Twenty years later, it turned coeducational and continued to grow steadily. In 1970, the board was looking for ways to expand the program — and found the answer when approached by trustees at The Manlius School offering to merge. Although the merger did not go smoothly in the early years, good leadership helped the school weather the recession and energy crisis of the 1970s and emerge stronger in the coming decades.

Although MPH has evolved through various phases, its most important legacy has been the ongoing commitment to academic excellence. Today, with more than 4,500 alumni throughout the world, Manlius Pebble Hill School continues to provide an unparalleled education that prepares its students for the challenges of the future.

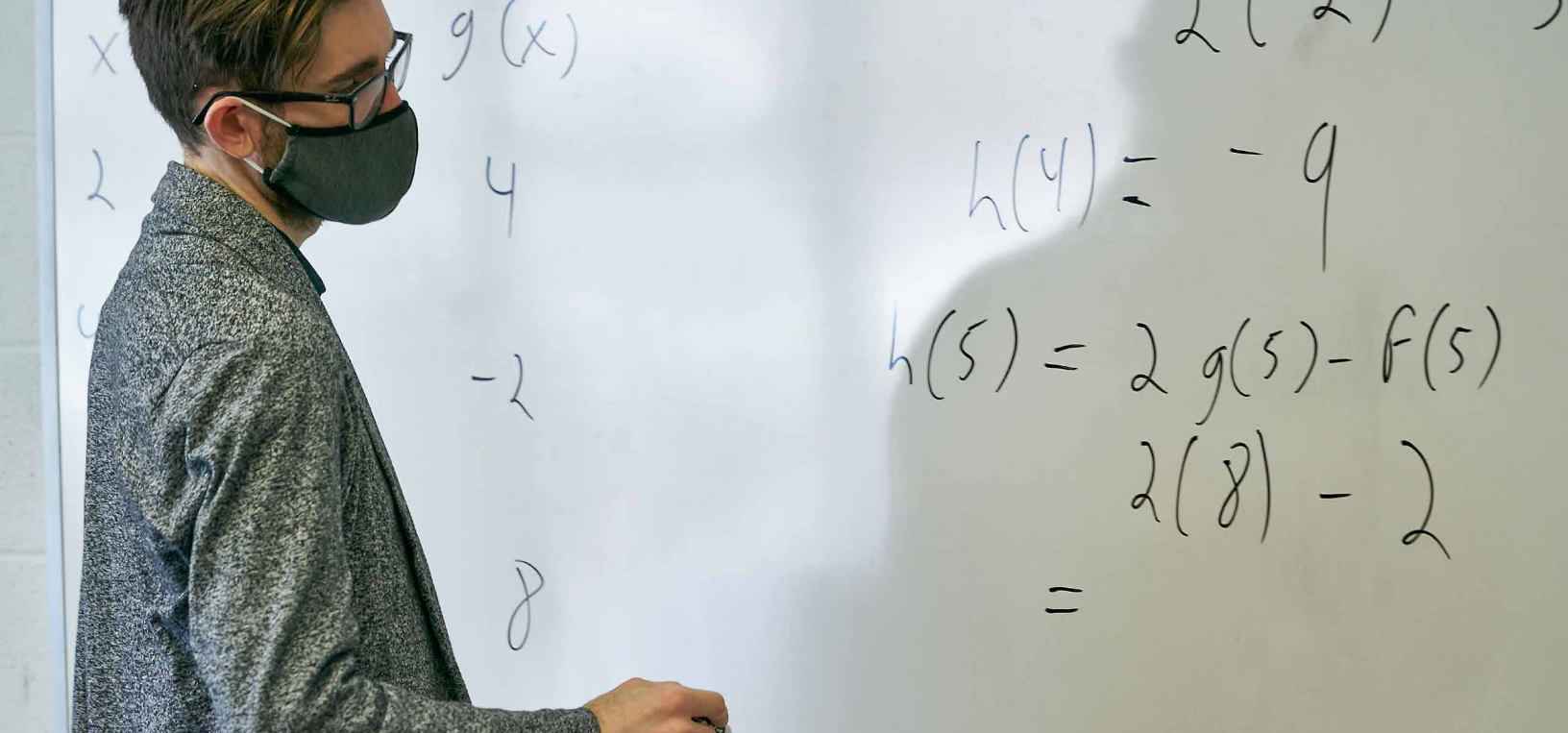


THE SCHOOL

MPH serves approximately 350 students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 from its location in Syracuse, New York. Students enroll from more than 30 neighboring school districts spanning several counties, as well as from other countries, bringing a wide variety of cultural, socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious experiences. Approximately 32 percent are students of color. The current enrollment includes 143 students in the Lower School (Grades Pre-K – 5; with 54 of those in Early Learning, Pre-K and K), 67 in the Middle School (Grades 6 – 8), and 137 in the Upper School (Grades 9 – 12). The student-to-faculty ratio is 9 to 1.

MPH has earned a reputation for academic excellence in a personalized setting that places a high value on the importance of developing healthy relationships. The School enjoys a distinctive combination of strong academics, a supportive culture, and an engaged community of learners, where students are encouraged to be curious, conscientious, and self-directed. At every grade level, students are developing positive habits of the mind — inquisitiveness, creative problem solving, hard work, discernment, independence, collaboration, and rigorous thinking, speaking, and writing — as well as habits of the heart — integrity, respect for others, self-confidence, moral courage, resilience, kindness, adventurousness, and leadership. The community is enriched by Upper School international students, who live with nearby host families.

MPH is accredited by the New York State Association of Independent Schools and chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. The School is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools, the New York State Association of Independent Schools, the National Association of College Admission Counselors, the New York State Association of College Admissions Counselors, The College Board, and the Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools. MPH is also one of 48 independent schools nationwide to receive an endowment grant of \$2 million from the Malone Family Foundation. Funds are drawn from the endowment to offer scholarships to gifted students with demonstrated financial need.



ACADEMICS

With enthusiastic, supportive teachers, MPH offers an environment of intellectual rigor and social engagement. Grounded in dialog, research, curiosity, and creativity, students first master the basics and then pursue excellence through advanced-level courses, challenging electives, and real-world offerings such as assistantships, independent studies, and international travel.

Following a two-year review of the curriculum, MPH has made the decision to transition — over the next three years — from offering traditional Advanced Placement (AP) courses to providing an “authentically MPH” advanced curriculum of its own design for Upper School students. This will enhance students’ preparation for collegiate academic demands and allow students to build multiple skills across the curriculum that cannot be measured through standardized testing. Moving to an advanced curriculum will allow MPH to offer challenging classes while being mindful of student health and well-being.

The arts are viewed as essential to a student’s intellectual and emotional growth and, therefore, central to the MPH academic experience across the divisions. Offerings in the visual arts as well as dance, voice, orchestra, band, and drama are varied and plentiful.

So that students become responsible citizens of the local and global community, MPH actively encourages and supports service activities, often through its Clubs Program, which has become an integral part of the Student Life experience.

Lower School

The carefully planned Lower School curriculum merges intellectual, social, and emotional learning so children come to know not just what to learn, but how and why. As early as Kindergarten, students are practicing forming hypotheses. With a focus on the whole child, students are encouraged to develop their academic skills and strengthen positive interpersonal relationships.



During Grades 4 and 5, students start their transition to Middle School, through increasing academic challenges, including STEM and humanities courses, as well as through developing greater independence and self-direction.

Middle School

Thoughtful and dedicated faculty, who draw on deep experience working with middle schoolers, provide structure and care to support students at this age of transition. Middle School students are focused on developing along academic and personal-growth lines. Through small, faculty-led advisory groups, MPH students engage in conversation and learning about kindness, friendship, and respect, as well as practical study skills, appropriate use of technology, and more. While the academic program is rigorous and appropriate for motivated middle school students, equal energy and time is devoted to helping these students develop both life and study skills.

Upper School

Students must take a minimum of five core academic credits per semester. To graduate, they must earn a defined minimum number of credits in each academic department. The Upper School also offers a wide range of electives, enabling students to plan a schedule that stimulates their intellect and encourages them to pursue their own interests. The latter work is particularly important. The faculty wants students to take charge of their learning, explore their interests, and develop their strengths.

College Matriculation

In 2021, MPH seniors were accepted to the following institutions, among others:

American University
Amherst College
Barnard College
Boston University
California College of the Arts
George Washington University
Maryland Institute College of Art
New York University
Northeastern University
Oberlin College
Purdue University
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Rhode Island School of Design
Ringling College of Art and Design
Savannah College of Art and Design
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
School of Visual Arts
SUNY Brockport, Buffalo State,
Canton, Cortland, Geneseo
Syracuse University
The New School
The Ohio State University
The University of Tampa
University at Albany
University at Buffalo
University of California, Davis
University of California Irvine
University of California, Riverside
University of California, Santa
Barbara
University of California Santa Cruz
University of Illinois at Urbana-
Champaign
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Massachusetts Amherst
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Villanova University
Yale University

[See the full list.](#)



To this end, students have the opportunity to engage in co-curricular opportunities that include independent study, assistantships, and both large and small performing arts ensembles. Seniors are required to complete a Senior Capstone, which includes extensive research in their senior English class, culminating in an in-depth research paper and public presentation.

In addition, MPH is the only school in New York State to be included in the Malone Schools Online Network (MSON), a consortium of some of the nation's most highly regarded independent schools. Together with its MSON partners, MPH offers students a deeply engaging interactive distance-learning experience.

MPH graduates consistently matriculate to excellent colleges and universities. Starting informally in Grade 9 and more formally in Grade 11, the college counselor meets regularly with students and their families to discuss educational goals and aspirations, to compose personal, individualized lists of best-fit colleges and universities, and to become familiar with the application process.



THE ARTS

MPH is known for a performing and visual arts curriculum that helps students discover and share their most imaginative selves. Starting in Lower School with a Suzuki strings program, students become comfortable performing in public at an early age. The visual arts program provides an integrated sequence of instruction and experiences intended to foster students' passion, as well as to develop the skills and knowledge that will ensure a lasting appreciation of the arts in their lives. MPH's student artists and performers also learn that creativity requires careful intellect, meaningful purpose, and thoughtful collaboration. As they progress through Middle and Upper School years, students participate in sophisticated dramatic productions, learn cutting-edge artistic techniques, and come to understand how the arts can shape individual lives as well as societal norms. MPH students participate in various local and national arts competitions, faring well on a consistent basis.

ATHLETICS

MPH believes that every student — at every skill level — grows stronger physically, intellectually, and emotionally through healthy athletic competition. While the Core Health program includes, among other focal points, regular physical activity within the academic curriculum beginning in Pre-K, Middle School and Upper School each offer a range of interscholastic sports as well, including soccer, cross-country, track and field, basketball, tennis, volleyball, and golf. In recent years, students have also joined teams that combine athletes from other schools in lacrosse, baseball, softball, hockey, and swimming. The School boasts a new and spacious gymnasium, outdoor tennis courts, and well-maintained playing fields.

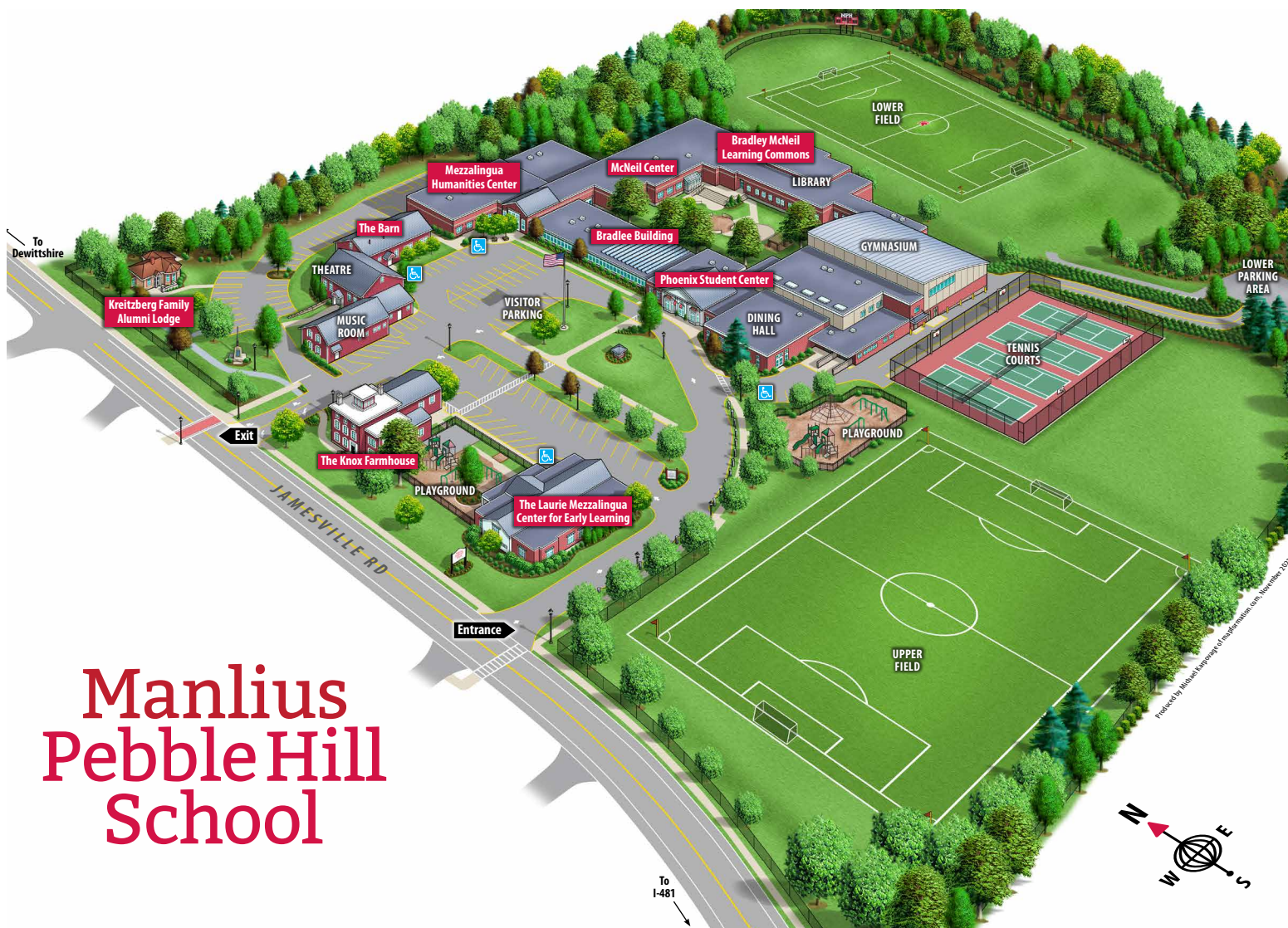


SCHOOL LIFE

By providing a broad range of programs, clubs, and activities, along with a nurturing school culture, MPH offers students daily opportunities to learn more about who they are, what they can do, and what their next steps in school and life might be. A signature MPH tradition that unfolds in numerous contexts brings older students together with younger students for mentoring and instructional opportunities, enriching the lives of all involved.

Appreciating that a great deal of learning and personal growth happens outside of the academic classroom and leverages the benefits of a tight-knit community, MPH has developed an extensive co-curricular program. Current Lower School activities include Yoga, Chess Club, Martial Arts, and Soccer Shots. Club offerings for Middle and Upper School students include Model United Nations (MUN),* Web Design, Bicycle Mechanics, Light & Magic (video production), Bluegrass, Far East, Middle School MUN, Pride and Progress, Meditation, Envirothon, Improv, Yearbook, MPH4MPH (service), Community Outreach (service), Math League, Ping Pong, Student Council, Scrapbooking, Student Choreography, Zonta International, Spanish, French, Latin & Greek, Chess, Dungeons & Dragons, and many more (some of which are season-dependent).

*Reflecting a distinctive commitment to understanding and grappling with global issues, MPH's Model United Nations (MUN) program goes beyond its being a second-semester extracurricular offering; MUN is included as a first-semester Upper School elective within the academic curriculum. The program places emphasis on critical thinking, research, respectful and strategic debate, oral communication, and compelling presentation skills. Participating in Model UN conferences during the year, MPH students consistently thrive and compete successfully with their counterparts at other schools.



Manlius Pebble Hill School

CAMPUS

MPH is located on 26 acres in the town of DeWitt, adjacent to Syracuse, and within a stone's throw of Syracuse University and Le Moyne College. The campus includes bright and inviting classrooms; well-equipped science laboratories; a Center for Technology Innovation; a large and new gymnasium (with accompanying workout facility and locker rooms); a welcoming student center and campus shop; spacious visual arts and design studios; a dance studio; an art gallery; an outdoor classroom area in its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Park; a beautiful and age-appropriate stand-alone Center for Early Learning (for Pre-K); and more.

Behind the academic building lies the lower athletic field. The School's acclaimed performing arts program has long called the black box-style Coville Theater home to many a fine performance. The upper athletic field, two playgrounds, and four tennis courts allow children and adults of all ages ample opportunity for outdoor fun and games. While there is great appreciation for the physical resources available at MPH, the School's commitment to reviewing and improving the campus is reflected in the ongoing work of the campus master plan.



SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

With approximately 150,000 denizens, Syracuse is the fifth most populous city in New York State; the surrounding metropolitan population is just over 600,000. Over the past two centuries, the city has functioned as a major industrial crossroads, first between the Erie Canal and the railway systems and today at the intersection of Interstates 81 and 90. Its recently renovated and expanded airport is the largest in the region, offering non-stop service to several U.S. cities. The city is home to Syracuse University, a major research university, and Le Moyne College, a nationally recognized liberal arts college. It's also home to SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and SUNY Upstate Medical University. The presence of these institutions of higher education drives much of the economic and cultural activity in Central New York. Other major economic drivers are hospitals, service industries, transportation, and various companies, including an Amazon distribution facility and 5G manufacturing plant currently under construction.

In essence, Syracuse comprises a network of neighborhoods, in addition to a robust downtown area, which includes the attractive Hanover Square and Armory Square. The city has a lively arts scene, including the I.M. Pei designed Everson Museum of Art, the Syracuse Symphoria, and Syracuse Stage. The city hosts numerous annual cultural and music festivals. It is also home to the new downtown Salt City Market—a hub of activity and culinary choices; a weekly three-season Farmers' Market; a seasonal outdoor skating rink in Clinton Square; the Creek Walk, which meanders through the city and extends for several miles; and numerous thriving restaurants and pubs. A favorite warm-season flea market called City Market and Destiny USA, one of the largest shopping malls in the country, can be found just on the outskirts of the city. Sports lovers will enjoy Division I athletic competition in numerous sports, while wearing orange. Baseball and hockey fans will appreciate downtown access to the Syracuse Mets (AAA affiliate of the New York Mets) and the Syracuse Crunch (AHL affiliate of the Tampa Bay Lightning). Otherwise, New York State's numerous beautiful parks, the Finger Lakes region, the Adirondacks, and the Thousand Islands area are just a short drive from Syracuse.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

In response to an existential crisis in the 2014-2015 year, when a confluence of systemic organizational and financial issues threatened the viability of MPH, the community demonstrated its great resilience and resolve, albeit while implementing painful and necessary leadership, staffing, and enrollment measures. Central to ensuring the School's survival was the extraordinary leadership and generosity of the then-new president of the Board of Trustees. There have been two heads of school since that watershed moment, both of whom were experienced in school leadership. MPH is now back on track, addressing structural and operational anomalies, improving business and finance practices, placing emphasis on program development and appropriate staffing, while nurturing the best elements of MPH's culture for students and professionals. The next head of school will have an opportunity to build on these important initiatives to further ensure the School's growing long-term financial sustainability. Looking ahead, the School will be guided by a thoughtful strategic plan, an attendant and appropriate campus master plan, and the creation of a comprehensive capital campaign.

The next head of school at MPH will join a warm and welcoming community that is inspired by the possibilities and empowered by recent initiatives that have been enlivened by the collaborative efforts of students and educators. As MPH has navigated the turbulent waters during a global pandemic, what has emerged as the community's greatest strength is the partnership and support of its families. The number of programmatic improvements made during the last two-plus years has been exceptional given the backdrop of COVID-19, a testament to the existing administrative leadership. Learn more in the video, [MPH: Making Pandemic History](#). Focus and attention on developing advancement capacities (admissions, communications, development, community programs) in recent years brings additional strength to the MPH formula.

Partnering with an exceptional Board of Trustees, everything is in place for the next head of school to continue to lead in the building of an impressive legacy for Manlius Pebble Hill School, which at present is gaining momentum on its "up and to the right" trajectory.

DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Successful candidates will possess most or all of the following qualities, skills, background, and experience:

- Dynamic, visionary leadership experience
- Strong personal and professional integrity
- An appreciation for the value of relationships
- High energy, enthusiasm, and passion
- School leadership experience in:
 - Program and staff development
 - Management
 - Governance
 - Admissions
 - Fundraising
 - Communications and marketing
- An accessible presence with an ability to easily connect with all members of a school community
- An eagerness to represent the School throughout the MPH and CNY communities
- The ability to be a “thought leader” in advocating for MPH as an independent school
- A demeanor that engages, inspires, and motivates
- Highly effective oral and written communication skills
- Financial acumen and strategic thinking
- The ability to build trust through transparency, openness, and honesty
- A sense of humor

TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing interest in this specific position
- A current résumé
- A one-page statement of educational philosophy and practice
- A list of five (5) professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission) to:

Peter O’Neill

Senior Consultant

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