

# HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

## BROOKLYN WALDORF SCHOOL

Brooklyn, New York

[brooklynwaldorf.org](http://brooklynwaldorf.org)

Start Date: July 2025



Brooklyn  
Waldorf  
School



Carney  
Sandoe  
& ASSOCIATES

[CARNEYSANDOE.COM](http://CARNEYSANDOE.COM)

# Mission

The Brooklyn Waldorf School provides an education that meets the needs of each student in a developmentally appropriate manner, integrating critical thinking, emotional intelligence and the arts through the curriculum founded by Rudolf Steiner.

## Overview

While actually 20 years old, in many exciting ways Brooklyn Waldorf School (BWS) is a new school with all the ingredients in place to seize a bright future. After suffering pandemic challenges that many schools experienced; after a significant amount of turnover in faculty and staff; the school now has a stable team in both academic and administrative positions that the widely-experienced interim Head calls the best group he's ever worked with.

The school is an oasis of calm and warmth along with energy and joy, plus what many describe as an incredible community, amidst the hustle and bustle of Brooklyn and the greater New York City area. Remarkable ingenuity has adapted what was originally an iconic 1930's-era community center, to the needs of Waldorf pedagogy and values and education. In an eclectic mix of students, faculty and staff, some walk two blocks from home to the school and others commute an hour each way on the subway.

As Waldorf education is becoming better known, demystified and appreciated across the country and the world, BWS offers a distinct alternative to the many other educational options in the area. The school has 140 students EC-8 (as well as a parent/caregiver- child program). BWS is well aware that it does a better job of giving students an excellent experience than it does marketing itself to the external world of prospective families, the local community and more. Indeed, self-promotion is decidedly NOT a Waldorf value! And yet, the school opened in the Fall of 2024 with 13% more students than had been anticipated when the budget was created. So even as the school is just scratching the surface of better marketing and outreach, something is working! The BWS team knows that the best is yet to come.

There is work to be done for sure. But with the essential foundation of an excellent student experience and a fantastic faculty that is always the first thing off the lips of those asked about the school, this is a great opportunity for a new Head to start in the summer of 2025. While prior experience with Waldorf education is ideal, a strong commitment to progressive education and willingness to embrace Waldorf is essential for the new head. The paragraphs that follow will outline the strengths of the school as well as the challenges and opportunities.



## A Word About Governance at BWS

Going back to its roots in Germany in 1919, Waldorf schools were traditionally faculty-run. Literally. Teaching faculty would attend to administrative functions “in their spare time,” so to speak. As the challenges of school leadership have grown, many Waldorf schools, are migrating to the model of a Head of School as the single employee reporting to the board. Most often, that Head is paired with a pedagogical leader, reporting to the Head, but with a great deal of autonomy to oversee the full student-facing program of the school, as well as the faculty who teach it; and assure faithful adherence to Waldorf pedagogy and values. Per its by-laws, BWS’ Head of School reports to the Executive Committee of the Board. As this transition settles in, schools tinker with the precise structure to make best use of the talents of all in positions of leadership. At BWS, while there is a desire for policies, procedures and communications that bring more clarity to operations, there is also a welcome willingness by most staff members to pitch in and help out wherever and whenever needed. The new Head will have the opportunity to structure the school around what they see as the best utilization of talents in order to achieve the mission.

## Strengths of the School

Among many strengths of Brooklyn Waldorf School, the new Head will find:

- As noted above, EVERYONE has high praise for the faculty. Their dedication, caring, educational skills, warmth and collegiality are exemplary. Their desire to always be learning and strengthening their craft, stands out.
- Even though students come from a broad catchment area, there is a sense of community and warmth that welcomes everyone into the school. In fact, one parent described the culture of BWS as “intoxicatingly kind.”
- While BWS is faithful to Waldorf pedagogy and values, the school also strives to adapt its program to the realities of 21st century life in New York and the US. This desire to make sure that the program is both true Waldorf and 21st century-relevant, gives the school the reputation of being a more modern rather than traditional Waldorf school.



- Brooklyn Waldorf School graduates go to a full range of public and private high schools. They are regarded as very well prepared for the next level, not only academically, but especially in terms of their character, their kindness, their social-emotional strengths.
- BWS stands out in the areas of music and foreign languages, even compared to other Waldorf schools. Music is everywhere and by third grade, all students are playing in the orchestra. Instruction in Spanish and Mandarin begins in the Early Childhood program.
- The school has an excellent learning support program for those students who learn differently.
- The board and school leadership believe in the potential to return enrollment to prior levels and have chosen to invest in programming to continue to make the school as attractive to students and families as possible. This short-term intentional deficit-spending along with some deficits from under-enrollment, are funded from reserves and there is a firm belief that budgets will be balanced in relatively short order. Better-than-budgeted enrollment in the new school year validates this approach.
- Uniquely in such an urban school, connection with the outdoors, nature, the seasons, movement and experiential learning are a significant part of the BWS curriculum.
- The Board of Trustees is in a stage of redevelopment with a number of exciting new board members and a commitment to board best practices.
- While there was some internal unrest at the end of the last school year, the current Interim Head of School has had a very positive effect and most of that unrest is in the rear-view mirror. The Interim Head has an ambitious-but-doable to-do-list that will pave the way for success for the new permanent Head.
- The school facility, while quirky, is well adapted to Waldorf education. From a bright solarium on the roof, to outdoor garden spaces and decks several stories above ground level, to a full-sized gym (complete with a dormant velodrome – yes, really!) the space feels both Waldorf-y and safe and welcoming. The expansive music spaces in the basement used to be a bowling alley!



## Challenges and Opportunities

Chief among the current challenges is continuing to rebuild (post-Pandemic) enrollment to financially-sustainable levels. The school is not as well known as it could be, and it is essential to create and deliver the compelling messages that distinguish BWS in a crowded and competitive educational landscape in Brooklyn. A number of people within the school community observe that the school needs clearer language around who it is, its mission, how it differentiates itself. That clarity, well communicated, should significantly strengthen the enrollment.

Also of significant importance are:

- Since Waldorf education is THE differentiating characteristic of the school, it is important to always strengthen and deliver the very best Waldorf education possible through faculty professional development, parent education and more.
- Continued creativity in tuition and financial assistance policies will help assure greater access and affordability for mission-appropriate students and families, some of whom have been unable to attend in the past due to lack of financial ability.
- In some ways, the school behaves like a startup and there is a desire for more professional operations. Among things often cited are:
  - There is work to be done in curriculum design, mapping and the ability to articulate a clear scope and sequence.
  - With many new administrative staff, work is underway to create more systematic policies and operational procedures, which will continue to require attention from the new Head. At the same time, it is important to retain the informal and comfortable culture of the school and avoid over-regimentation.
  - Both internal and external communications would benefit from better organization and coordination.
- The school has a strong social-justice culture. At the same time, there is much work to be done in areas of DEIB, both in creating a more diverse school community and in integrating DEI into the school curriculum as well as building on the Undoing Racism work already begun. The school does have a newly created position of Director of Equity.
- Many in the school community would like to see BWS become more integrated into and reflective of the diversity of the local Bedford-Stuyvesant community, connecting with neighbors, becoming a welcome and positive part of the community at large.
- Waldorf education includes many community events, festivals, performances, in addition to the holistic pedagogy that tends to the academic, spiritual and character development of children. Some aspects of Waldorf education were impossible during the pandemic. There is a real desire to bring those back as part of the school's effort to be an exemplary modern Waldorf school.



## Qualifications and Personal Attributes

Among the characteristics desirable in the next head are:

- Ideally, prior experience with Waldorf education. But while that is not required, a commitment to progressive education and an eagerness to learn about and embrace Waldorf education is essential.
- Understanding of and a commitment to nurturing the spiritual and character development as well as the academic skills in children.
- A personal commitment to equity and social justice, and experience leading DEIJ efforts in schools.
- A collaborative and inclusive leader who engages all stakeholders whenever possible; but also able to be decisive when necessary. Committed to and holding everyone accountable to standards of excellence in all aspects of a school.
- Committed to ongoing professional development and support of faculty
- An organized systems-thinker familiar with policies and procedures in a well-run school, but also able to embrace the informality and warmth of the school. As someone said “We need someone to professionalize us...but not too much!”
- A calming bridge builder, able to unite and collaborate with the full range of backgrounds, personalities and opinions within the school community.
- A visible presence in the daily life of the school from the front door to the classroom to the activities and school events.
- An excellent communicator who can also assure that internal and external communications are accurate, timely and clear.
- Able to be both: visionary leader, coalescing the community around a compelling common vision and mission; as well as a skilled manager, leading the administration to efficient and effective school operations.
- Financial literacy sufficient to partner with the Board and the Finance Director to develop and implement effective and sustainable budgets.
- Familiar with fundraising practices and building a culture of philanthropy in schools.
- Experience working in partnership with a best-practices board of trustees.

# Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Brooklyn Waldorf School.

[School Website](#)

[High School Placement](#)

[School History](#)

[About Brooklyn, New York](#)

[Diversity and Inclusion](#)



## To Apply

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

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- Statement of familiarity with Waldorf and/or progressive education in a diverse urban environment;
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

### **Skip Kotkins**

Senior Consultant

[skip.kotkins@carneysandoe.com](mailto:skip.kotkins@carneysandoe.com)

*The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$240,000-\$275,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors that include years of experience, education level, and expertise.*