

HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

LAKE FOREST ACADEMY

Lake Forest, Illinois

lfanet.org

Start Date: July 2026



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission: Midwestern Heart / Global Mind

Lake Forest Academy strives to embody in its practices and to cultivate in its students excellence of character, scholarship, citizenship, and responsibility.

Character encompasses respect for others and their beliefs, dedication to honesty in every sphere of life, realization of moral clarity and conviction, and pursuit of virtue and value in life.

Scholarship encompasses acquisition of knowledge, development of critical thinking, enthusiasm for discovery and learning, and exercise of a powerful imagination.

Citizenship encompasses appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism, involvement in the LFA community, participation in service to others, and commitment to global awareness and understanding.

Responsibility encompasses development of self-reliance, ability to seek guidance, dedication to cooperation and teamwork, and action based upon informed decisions.

At a Glance



Established
1857



Enrollment
453



Total faculty
86



Student-faculty ratio
7:1



Students of color
57%



Financial aid awarded
\$6.4M



Faculty with advanced degrees
76%



Campus size
150 acres

States represented: 18
Countries represented: 40
International students: 110
Boarding students: 50%
Faculty of color: 27%

Students receiving aid: 35%
Endowment: \$72M
Advanced Placement courses: 24
Annual operating budget: \$29M
Varsity sports: 27

NICHE Rankings

#1 Private School in Illinois
#1 Boarding School in the Midwest
#13 Boarding School in the Nation



Overview

Founded in 1857, Lake Forest Academy (LFA) is an exceptional coeducational, college-preparatory day and boarding school for grades 9–12. Located on a scenic campus in Lake Forest, Illinois, LFA has a rich tradition of academic excellence. The school serves 453 students from diverse backgrounds, fostering a dynamic learning community that blends rigorous academics, vibrant arts, competitive athletics, and meaningful extracurricular activities. As a global institution, LFA cultivates an environment where students grow into thoughtful, engaged, and ethical leaders. The Academy's mission emphasizes character development, intellectual curiosity, and the pursuit of lifelong learning, while its values include responsibility, empathy, inclusion, and a commitment to community well-being.

The next Head of School will lead a talented and dedicated faculty and staff as well as a diverse and dynamic student body. This role calls for an inspirational leader who will uphold LFA's traditions, continue to foster its strong sense of community, while shaping a strategic vision for its future.

Lake Forest, Illinois, is a picturesque and vibrant community nestled along the shores of Lake Michigan. Known for its natural beauty, the town boasts a harmonious blend of lush landscapes, historic architecture, and a strong commitment to preserving its natural environment. Tree-lined streets, stunning lakefront views, and a welcoming small-town charm make Lake Forest an ideal setting for a premier boarding and day school like Lake Forest Academy. LFA is at the heart of a vibrant educational community, surrounded by institutions such as Montessori, Lake Forest Country Day, Woodlands Academy, Lake Forest College, Northwestern University, and The University of Chicago.

The town offers an exceptional quality of life, with abundant parks, walking trails, and access to outdoor recreation. Cultural opportunities abound in Lake Forest, which is home to galleries, performing arts venues, and a rich history of artistic and intellectual engagement.

Adding to its allure, Lake Forest is located just 30 miles north of downtown Chicago, providing easy access to one of the most dynamic cities in the world. The proximity to Chicago enriches the educational and cultural experiences of Lake Forest Academy's students, faculty, and families. Chicago's world-class museums, theaters, sports teams, and diverse culinary scene are just a short train or car ride away. This proximity allows the LFA community to benefit from the best of both worlds: the serenity and natural beauty of a close-knit community and the vibrancy of a global metropolitan hub.

Lake Forest and its surrounding region provide an inspiring backdrop for academic exploration, cultural enrichment, and personal growth, making it a truly special place to live, learn, and lead.



Opportunities and Challenges

The next Head of School will have the opportunity to:

- **Build on a Tradition of Excellence:** Strengthen the school's commitment to its core mission while adapting to the needs of a diverse and dynamic student body.
- **Enhance Community Culture:** Foster a welcoming and joyful environment that celebrates the unique contributions of all students, faculty, and staff while strengthening the day and boarding communities.
- **Champion Academic and Co-Curricular Excellence:** Support a balanced program that values academics, arts, athletics, service, experiential learning, and extracurriculars, ensuring students have opportunities to thrive in all areas of school life.
- **Lead Strategic Initiatives:** Articulate a compelling vision for LFA's future, addressing complex challenges such as resource management, technology integration, and institutional advancement while further enhancing LFA's value proposition.
- **Emphasize Student Well-Being:** Support the mental, emotional, and physical health of students while fostering a culture of care and respect.
- **Maintain Sound Fiscal Management Practices:** Guide the overall financial health of the school securing long-term sustainability with an emphasis on continuing to build the school's endowment.
- **Engage in Fundraising and Advancement:** Lead efforts to secure financial resources necessary for the school's success, including cultivating relationships with alumni, parents, trustees, and community stakeholders.
- **Faculty and Staff Development:** Oversee the hiring, development, and evaluation of faculty and staff. Provide leadership in professional development initiatives.
- **Admission and Enrollment:** Work with the admissions team to support recruitment efforts ensuring the continued attraction and retention of students who are aligned with LFA's mission, values, and pursuit of academic excellence.
- **Manage Complexity:** Navigate the unique dynamics of an international day and boarding school, ensuring equitable and meaningful experiences and a strong sense of community.
- **Collaborative Shared Governance:** Build on a long history of collaborative relationships with trustees, faculty, staff, and students to ensure transparency and inclusion in the decision-making process.



Qualifications and Personal Attributes

The ideal candidate will bring the following attributes and qualifications to the role:

- **Inspirational and Collaborative Leadership:** A visionary leader who empowers others, brings together stakeholders, and fosters a culture of communication and excellence.
- **Student-Centered Approach:** A visible, approachable, and empathetic presence who prioritizes the needs and well-being of students.
- **Team Builder:** Proven ability and demonstrated success to attract, retain, and support exceptional faculty and staff.
- **Understanding of Boarding and Day School Dynamics:** Familiarity with the complexities of a combined boarding and day school environment and the ability to foster a unified culture.
- **Strong Financial Acumen:** Competence in resource management, strategic planning, and operational oversight.
- **Fundraising Expertise:** Capacity to build and sustain relationships with donors, alumni, trustees, and community partners to secure the financial health of the school.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Strong Emotional intelligence, engaging personality, and strong social skills, with the ability to engage meaningfully and effectively with students, parents, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni.
- **Academic and Co-Curricular Advocate:** Deep appreciation for academics, arts, athletics, and extracurricular opportunities that contribute to the holistic development of students.
- **Unifier:** Commitment to creating a welcoming environment that reflects the diversity of LFA's community.
- **Effective Communicator:** A superb writer and speaker who can articulate a vision, build consensus, and inspire confidence.
- **Ethical and Transparent Leadership:** A leader with integrity who values accountability, ethical decision-making, and transparency.

Lake Forest Academy seeks a leader with a deep commitment to its mission, a passion for education, and the ability to create an even stronger and more connected school community. The ideal candidate will bring energy, vision, and inspire joy to this transformative opportunity.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Lake Forest Academy.

[School Website](#)

[Virtual Campus Tour](#)

[School History](#)

[College Matriculation](#)

[Inclusivity](#)

[About Chicago, Illinois](#)



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 their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- 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:

Robert D. Vitalo

Vice President, Search and Consulting Services
robert.vitalo@carneysandoe.com

Lisa Parsons

Consultant
lisa.parsons@carneysandoe.com

Charlie Britton

Senior Consultant
charles.britton@carneysandoe.com

Expected compensation for this role includes a salary within the range of \$350,000 - \$525,000, housing and comprehensive benefits.