

HEAD OF SENIOR SCHOOL SEARCH

SHADY SIDE ACADEMY

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

shadysideacademy.org

Start Date: July 2025



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission Statement

Shady Side Academy's mission is to challenge students to think expansively, act ethically, and lead responsibly.

Philosophy

Shady Side Academy is a vibrant learning community that values intellectual curiosity, personal integrity and diverse perspectives. Through a rigorous and balanced curriculum of academics, arts and athletics, our students are challenged to explore their passions and excel beyond expectations. Supported by active alumni and parents, our unique culture of faculty-student mentorship inspires students to become lifelong learners and engaged, thoughtful citizens of their communities.

Guiding principles

Honesty, Kindness, Responsibility, Respect and Safety.

At a Glance



Established
1883



Senior School enrollment
485



Faculty in the Senior School
72



Student-faculty ratio
8:1



Students of color
39%



Financial aid awarded
\$8M
(Includes Faculty Tuition Remission)



Faculty with advanced degrees
93%



Total Acreage of
Campuses
189 acres

Total enrollment: 1,260

Total faculty: 175

Faculty of color: 15%

Students receiving aid: 30%

Endowment: \$85M

Annual operating budget: \$52M

Athletic teams: 27



Overview

For over 140 years, Shady Side Academy (SSA) has been a beacon of academic excellence and character education in the Pittsburgh area and beyond. As a globally respected, co-educational pre-k through grade 12 independent day school with a small boarding program for grades 9-12, SSA offers a comprehensive education that is both rigorous and personal. Shady Side's mission challenges students to think expansively, act ethically, and lead responsibly, underpinned by the core values of honesty, kindness, responsibility, respect, and safety.

Shady Side Academy's Strategic Vision leverages its unique capacity to deliver a valuable education to families and students who seek deep relational connections with teachers while benefitting from robust programming, a balanced and informed worldview, and relevant real-world opportunities to apply knowledge and learn beyond the classroom.

Shady Side's pre-k through grade 12 program draws creative thinkers, leaders, and learners from 128 domestic ZIP codes, 13 states, and eight countries to be part of an engaging and forward-thinking community. SSA welcomes individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, cultivating a community of cultural understanding and respect. By the time students graduate, they possess critical life skills and are fully equipped to emerge as leaders in a rapidly changing, global society.

At Shady Side, teachers make room for students to make their move. Learning should be expansive and exciting for students, so they can be the architects of their own adventure. SSA empowers teachers who love teaching, so students can feel the joy in every classroom. Shady Side Academy goes beyond standard education, so graduates will be ready for college and everything after. Moving with intention. Moving with confidence. Shady Side moves with the world, so SSA graduates do, too.



Starting in July 2025, the next Head of Senior School will play a crucial role in shaping SSA's future. This leader will be an integral part of the SSA community and should be a collaborative, inspiring individual who is committed to the values that define Shady Side's diverse and innovative community. Reporting directly to the President, this senior administrative position is responsible for providing outstanding leadership for the students, faculty, staff, and families of the Senior School and building upon innovation of the current program.

Opportunities and Challenges

Collaborate on Campus Transformation Plan

As part of a campus master planning process, Shady Side has embarked on an ambitious plan to transform the current Fox Chapel campus by bringing the Middle School and Senior School together to form one Upper School campus for grades 6-12. In the spring of 2024, the Academy broke ground on the new 50,000-square-foot Rockwell Middle School with a projected opening date of January 2026. The next Head of Senior School will be an essential partner in welcoming grades 6-8 to the combined Upper School campus and partnering with the Head of Middle School to enhance cross-divisional learning and peer leadership opportunities across grades.

With the freedom to collaborate cross-divisionally in dynamic spaces, students and teachers will explore interdisciplinary learning to expand learning opportunities. Additional elements of the campus master plan include a new 20,000-square-foot Senior School student center—the Rockwell Student Commons—for dining, socializing, and community gatherings, and renovations to Bayard and Croft Houses for additional Senior School classroom spaces. The Senior School Head will play a central role in transitioning faculty, staff, and students into these [transformative learning spaces](#).

Continue Care for Dedicated Faculty and Staff

The Head of Senior School will build trust by leading the division with care, empathy, consistency, and curiosity. Faculty and staff appreciate clear communication, the opportunity to voice their opinions, and directness regarding decision making processes and the rationale behind changes to program and schedule. Understanding sophisticated change management in order to support educators who are trying new teaching structures and methods will be essential, as well as noticing and celebrating both the daily efforts and the major milestones in the work of the faculty and staff. The Head of Senior School will have a gregarious, strong, and joyful presence in classrooms, at games and performances, and in the residential life program.



Sustain Momentum around Programmatic Change

After careful research supported by a grant from the E.E. Ford Foundation and two years of planning, the Senior School is in the midst of exciting changes. In May of 2025, they will launch Immersives—a three-week program to support interdisciplinary learning and off campus engagement. All Senior School students will choose from a menu of two to three dozen interdisciplinary team-taught courses. Additionally, the Senior School has shifted recently from trimesters to semesters. The next Head of Senior School will champion the relevance, depth, and multidisciplinary learning afforded by these changes while seeking feedback and continual improvement. Ideal candidates will have familiarity with and enthusiasm for experiential learning, will actively support the faculty in adjusting to new cadences, and will enjoy sharing success stories with the broader community.

Develop Strategic Vision for Enhanced Residential Life Programming & Experience

Shady Side's Senior School has a small boarding component that serves roughly 70-75 students in any given year. The next Head of Senior School will collaborate with the Dean of Residential Life to strengthen the integration of the boarding program and ensure that all boarders pursue a high level of engagement in Senior School programs.

Optimize Teams

The Head of Senior School manages two key leadership teams—administrative leaders and department chairs. High functioning leadership teams are essential to the well-being of students and the clarity and momentum of the curricular and cocurricular programs, and the next leader will have the opportunity to bring fresh eyes to reporting structures and role clarity. The Head of Senior School will build a culture of leadership, trust, clear communication, delegation, and accountability while leveraging the wisdom of these groups to make the best possible decisions on behalf of the division.

Uphold Student-Centered, Whole Child Ethos

Shady Side seeks to graduate well-rounded students who welcome different points of view, value civil debate, and willingly participate in their communities. Shady Side's commitment to diverse and informed points of view allows students from all walks of life to seek understanding while tolerating nuance and ambiguity. The next Head of Senior School will support the Shady Side ethos of encouraging students to try something new – whether that be an activity or a point of view – in a supportive environment.



“Pride in Place”

Finally, Shady Side seeks a school leader who helps instill a sense of community and school spirit. A relational leader and adept communicator, the Head of Senior School will bring an authentic interest in the daily life of a high school and be that energetic presence in the classroom, on the athletic field, at an art exhibit, or during a community service initiative. Building on Shady Side Academy’s many strengths, the new leader will honor the good while continually seeking to build a better experience for the community and advancing SSA’s mission.

Qualifications and Personal Attributes

The Academy seeks the following in its next Head of Senior School:

- Proactive and effective communicator;
- Warm and engaging presence, relational leadership style;
- Teaching experience, and genuine appreciation of high school students and teachers;
- Empathy, emotional intelligence;
- Open door policy/ability to listen;
- Cultural competency;
- Strategic thinking and sound decision-making abilities;
- Practiced in appreciative inquiry;
- Collaborative within and across divisions.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Shady Side Academy.

[School Website](#)

[College Matriculation](#)

[School History](#)

[About Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania](#)

[Equity and Inclusion](#)



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:

John Faubert

Consultant

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Karen Whitaker

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