



The Gregory School

Head of School

Tucson, AZ

Overview

The Gregory School (TGS) is an independent, coeducational school in Tucson, Arizona serving 365 students in grades 5–12.

Our Mission

The Gregory School, as a diverse learning community, challenges and supports students to achieve excellence in character, scholarship, leadership, and innovation and prepares them to make a positive impact in the world through pursuing their passions, appreciating and creating beauty, and solving problems.

Character

The Gregory School honors the development of student character built on personal integrity, compassion, and respect. We promote the dignity, self-worth, and potential of each individual within a supportive, connected, and caring community that embraces a diversity of students, families, faculty, administrators, staff, trustees, and others.

Scholarship

The Gregory School learning community is committed to educating the whole child intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, artistically, and ethically. Our students' disciplined scholarship is instilled and developed in an environment that values the rigors and joys of learning. This scholarship is grounded in intellectual curiosity, critical and creative thinking, and effective communication.

Leadership

Leadership at The Gregory School affirms the civic responsibility of students and encourages using skillful facilitation and collaboration to positively influence the action of others. We recognize our school's public purpose to use our resources to serve our own students and others in our region and beyond.

Innovation

At The Gregory School, we cultivate a mindset of innovation, open-minded inquiry, divergent thinking, and purposeful action. As innovators, our students develop creativity, ingenuity, inventiveness, and originality of thought to tackle and resolve the challenges facing our world.

Guiding Principles of the Academic Program

Each of seven departments (English, social sciences, mathematics, sciences, languages, arts, and physical education) has designed a curriculum sequence for grades five through twelve, with a goal of maximizing the potential of every student and fostering academic and personal success, both now and for the future. Toward that same end, a leadership curriculum is integrated into The Gregory School program, creating robust experiences for students in every grade.



Our faculty, coaches, counselors, and librarians incorporate the guiding principles of the 6 Cs (**critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, compassion, communication, and community**) throughout a student's time here, providing an educational experience of the whole child that is both global and closely personalized. A quick glance at the [Curriculum Guide](#) reveals a rich program throughout the school's seven departments.

Environmental Sustainability

The Gregory School recognizes the importance of sustainable living both for now and for our students' futures. Among our sustainability practices we:

- Generate 141kW from 608 locally manufactured solar panels, fed directly to the power grid in collaboration with Tucson Electric Power Company
- Use only reclaimed water for our fields
- Participate in a paper-recycling program
- Designed and built campus water collection basins as part of a student project with hydrologist and former Upper School teacher Dr. Erika Gallo
- Offer a garden to table class, which provides food to our dining hall and maintains a compost system. Our campus also hosts a Tucson Community Garden
- Participate in a student-initiated plastic recycling program in conjunction with the City of Tucson.

Rarely will you see such variety of programming at a school of TGS's size, a signal of its ambition, its mission, and its desire to create meaningful experiences for students. A sampling of these programs includes the [Friday Explorations](#) (funded by the EE Ford Foundation and matching donations from within the community), [MIT Fab Lab](#), [Entrepreneurial Institute](#), [Farmyard](#), and [Writing Center](#).

There is a broad sense of inclusion, of all types, at TGS – it is a school that goes well beyond the norm in making all feel welcome on campus.

Food service at TGS is provided by the community-minded team of Sage Dining. You will see students eating at both indoor and outdoor tables as they take advantage of the temperate Tucson climate.

The Gregory School's Strengths and the Work Ahead

Community members identified many of TGS's strengths when responding to a discovery survey at the beginning of the search. Among these strengths, five were mentioned most frequently:

- Small class size and individualized attention: the average class size at TGS is fifteen and the average full-time teaching load is 57 students
- Strong academic programs
- Comprehensive extracurricular activities
- Dedicated faculty and staff
- Positive school culture and community

In the words of one faculty member, "The level of respect among employees is like nothing I've ever seen before."



It has been an impressive decade of growth and success for TGS under the widely praised leadership of Dr. Julie Sherrill. When Dr. Sherrill arrived, opening enrollment had declined to 274 but has now increased to 365. Turnover in the business office has stabilized under the leadership of Mary Babbitt. Draws on the school's line of credit ended in 2020-2021 and have not resumed. The Annual Fund grew from \$87,000 in 2014-2015 to this year's \$200,000 goal, and numerous specific donations have supported program growth and excellence.

Building upon this success, the new head of school will be called upon to:

- Build the financial stability of the school, through all means. The Gregory School is the only ISAS accredited independent school in Tucson, and there is not yet a deep independent school tradition in the region. This means that there is more concern than elsewhere about tuition increases (though the school's tuition is modest compared to other schools of its quality). There is also a relative lack of awareness about how the Annual Fund supports excellence at the school. An important part of this work will be to build a strong alumni program to support the growing alumni body and ask for its financial support in return.
- TGS's deep commitment to the whole child and to supporting talented neurodiverse students. These students and their classmates are some of the strongest students in the state (there were six national merit finalists in a class of 48 this year). This leaves some wondering about the school's identity. Is such broad personalization for students sustainable for a school of TGS's size and budget? Conversely, can a school in the Tucson market define itself more narrowly?
- Along with the rest of the independent school world, TGS will need to increase its efforts to recruit, retain, and support excellent faculty members. TGS's excellent school culture and the attractiveness of the Tucson region will be key components of this work.
- The breadth of TGS's program inevitably raises questions about the balance of academic and extracurricular programs. Of note is the excitement one hears about the Friday Explorations program alongside the maturation it will need to go through to reach its full promise.



Tucson

Stunning sunsets and the unique beauty of the Sonoran Desert make Tucson a beautiful place to live, work, hike, play sports, and indulge in all aspects of an outdoor, active life. As the second-largest city in Arizona, Tucson offers the benefits of a larger city with the comfort and feel of a smaller town. With mountain ranges on all sides, Tucson is a hiker, bird-watcher, mountain biker, and camper's paradise.

Tucson is the proud home of the University of Arizona, the Arizona-Sonoran Desert Museum, a vibrant arts community, and is the first North American city to be designated a UNESCO City of Gastronomy. As a result of decades of work by community leaders, Tucson boasts a revitalized downtown, a growing business community that is attracting more employers, and a high quality of life.



In addition to the many nearby locations to golf and play tennis or pickleball, TGS is located along The Loop, Tucson's 131-mile network of car-free trails and paved paths. The Loop has been voted the best recreational trail in the country by USA Today readers, and Tucson was named by Bicycling Magazine as one of the top 25 bike cities in the country. Tucson's location also serves as a hub for great road trips, whether it is to the mountains of Northern Arizona, the beaches in San Diego, or across the border to Mexico.

Position

The Head of School reports to a board of twelve trustees and two honorary trustees and has six direct reports while overseeing and leading the work of the entire school.

Qualities and Competencies

There is important work ahead for the next head of school, but it comes with a community belief that "things aren't broken." A wise approach to change will serve the new head well, with time well spent learning about the school's culture and traditions. At the same time, there is an urgency about supporting the school and its families by increasing the financial resources needed to do so.

Returning to the results of the community survey, the personal qualities most sought by the community are effective communication skills, positive attitude, good listening skills, and empathy. And yes, a visionary leader as well. Candidates with independent school leadership, budgeting, financial, curriculum, and strategic planning experience will be best prepared for the position.

Beyond these attributes, DRG's proprietary Competency Generator identified six most important competencies for TGS's next head of school:

The Gregory School - Head of School Competency Model



Communicates Effectively

Developing and delivering multi - mode communications that convey a clear understanding of the unique needs of different audiences.



Collaborates

Building partnerships and working collaboratively with others to meet shared objectives.



Instills Trust

Gaining the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity, and authenticity.



Interpersonal Savvy

Relating openly and comfortably with diverse groups of people.



Financial Acumen

Interpreting and applying understanding of key financial indicators to make better decisions.



Resourcefulness

Securing and deploying resources effectively and efficiently.

Application Schedule and Requirements

[DRG Talent Advisory Group](#) is conducting this search on behalf of The Gregory School. To discuss this opportunity in more detail, contact our consultants:

Andrew Watson
Senior Search Consultant
awatson@drgtalent.com

Jennifer Fleischer
Senior Search Consultant
jfleischer@drgtalent.com

Candidates should submit, as soon as possible, materials including the following:

- A cover letter indicating what interests them and how they are qualified for the position. A current resume.
- The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of five references, to include the relationship with the references. (We will obtain permission from candidates, at the finalist stage, before contacting references.)
- Optional: other supporting material (articles, speeches, videos, or letters of recommendation) that would be useful to the Search Committee.



Candidates can apply by uploading material on the [DRG Talent website](#).

Anticipated Search Calendar

Application Deadline: August 23, 2024

Semifinalist Interviews (on Zoom): September 7-8, 2024

Finalist Visits: September 12, 16, and 19

Starting Date: July 1, 2025

This position description is based upon material provided by The Gregory School, an equal opportunity employer.

Andrew T. Watson, Senior Talent Consultant

Jennifer Fleischer, Senior Talent Consultant