THE Siena SCHOOL®

Head of School – Silver Spring
July 2023

Coed, grades 4 – 12 with 145 students

The Siena School in Silver Spring, Maryland, seeks an educational leader eager for an opportunity to work in an inspirational, mission-driven school with an exceptional team of professionals who are continually seeking transformational experiences for their students. Since its founding in 2006, The Siena School has steadily grown into a nationally recognized leader in educating students with dyslexia and language-based learning differences. The school has a strong and consistent history of stable leadership, academic excellence, organizational growth, and financial stability. With the opening of a second campus in Northern Virginia in the fall of 2021, Siena is poised for the next stage of organizational development. Siena has begun a national search for a dynamic leader to serve as the Head of School for its Silver Spring campus.

The next Head of School will continue the practice of offering the highest quality, research-based program that has been a hallmark of the school's exceptionally talented and hard-working team. Professionals at Siena are known for their commitment to continuous improvement and the unrelenting strength-based focus on each individual student. Together, they provide the necessary tools and strategies that help students become life-long learners. The next Head will be an engaged educational leader who understands dyslexia, along with other language-based learning differences, and who enjoys leading and being a member of a highly collaborative, mission-focused team. Reporting to the Executive Head of School, the Head of School will have the overall responsibility of the day-to-day operations of the Silver Spring campus. Along with reviewing this introductory position profile, candidates will want to explore the embedded links and The Siena School website.

HISTORY OF THE SIENA SCHOOL

The Siena School was established in 2006 to provide students with language-based learning differences a rich and meaningful education that prepares them for college, and success in life. As the program took shape, a larger opportunity and its mission became clear: create one of the nation's finest schools for bright students who learn differently. The school takes its name from the town Siena, Italy, in part to emphasize its strong focus on the arts. In addition, Siena's patron saint, St. Catherine, was a highly regarded Renaissance scholar who only learned to read later in life. Siena's logo, two Italian cypress trees, represents the school's focus on the personal dialogue between teacher and student that helps inspire learning and motivation.

Since its earliest years, Siena has offered educational workshops and training to parents, teachers, tutors and other professionals on the many aspects of educating students with language-based learning differences. In 2020, Siena was part of the International Dyslexia Association's national webinar series on Innovative Online Teaching, and has also recently extended its tutoring services online. Furthermore, Siena's faculty annually presents at local and national conferences.

MISSION + CORE VALUES

The Siena School prepares bright, college-bound students with language-based learning differences, such as dyslexia, to become confident, curious learners who understand their personal strengths and gain the tools and strategies to excel.

Siena Core Values

- Engage the Individual
- Expand Possibilities
- Honor Creativity
- Cultivate Collaboration

Explore The Siena School

(each icon links to a different component of Siena's program)

Curriculum

Executive Function

Experiential Learning

Homework

Individualization

Literacy

Multisensory

Schedule

Self-Advocacy

STEM

Strengths

Technology

THE PROGRAM

The Siena experience is designed for students in elementary, middle, and high school with mild to moderate needs who experience a discrepancy between their intellectual abilities and academic achievement in one or more areas such as reading, writing, oral expression or math. The Siena School serves nearly 150 students. The learning needs of the individual student are the primary focus of the program, working to provide students with the strategies and tools to fully understand their individual learning profiles.

Siena establishes high academic expectations for all students by using national standards and research-based practice as a framework for an academic program that emphasizes individualized instruction while integrating organizational techniques and study skills throughout the curriculum. Visitors to the school will quickly experience the transformational nature of the school – students focused on their work, individualized instruction, and engagement in learning that is captivating. Siena provides in-depth and individualized college advising, specifically designed to assist students in the exploration of a variety of colleges and universities that offer appropriate support for students with learning differences. The objective is to help each student to find a college that best fits their learning style and, more importantly, their vision for their future.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is woven into the fabric of the program and all students have an advisor who serves as a coach/mentor with whom they formally meet weekly. Advisors are, of course, available daily for their advisees, and are the first point of contact for parents. At Siena, it is about stretching, challenging boundaries, and building high expectations through strength rather than through remediation. The mission alignment throughout the school day is evident. Candidates will want to thoroughly explore more about Siena's Educational Principles.

Siena's commitment to diversity and equity is consistent with the school's focus on serving students with different and various learning styles. Siena's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) mission is "to promote a culture of belonging where students, staff, and families of The Siena School feel heard, seen, supported, and valued, so that all members of the community can thrive." Siena's DEIB Five Commitments are: Diverse Community; Education; Equitable and Inclusive Community; Equitable Experiences; and Accountability.

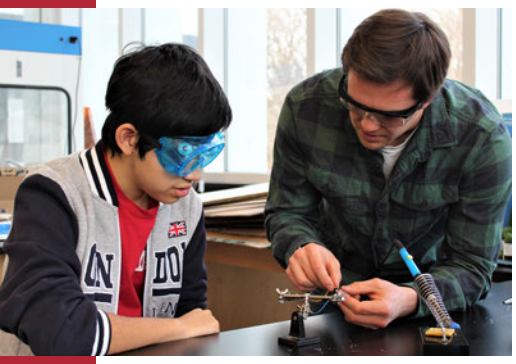
STUDENTS

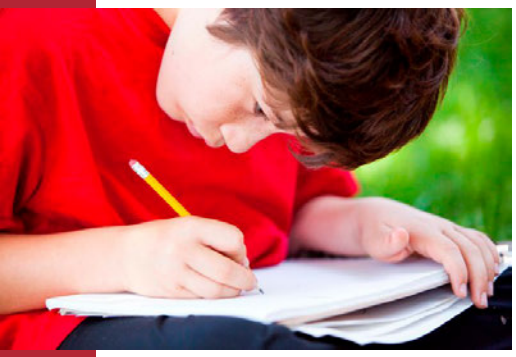
Led by an experienced Director of Admissions, the enrollment process seeks bright, college-bound students with language-based learning differences such as dyslexia. The ideal Siena student desires to become a confident, curious learner who understands their personal strengths and will work to gain the tools and strategies needed to excel in an ever-changing global community. Siena's curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of students who have one or more of the following primary diagnoses*:

- Dyslexia
- SLD (Specific Learning Disability or Specific Learning Disorder)
    - With impairment in reading
    - With impairment in written expression
- Expressive Language Disorder
- Auditory Processing Disorder

Many of Siena students have a secondary diagnosis of executive function weakness and/or mild ADHD.

With an increasing demand for schools that work with language-based learning differences, there is a strong need for a Siena education. The school has intentionally grown slowly and developed a comprehensive admissions process to ensure it enrolls mission-aligned students in grades 4 to 12 at the Silver Spring campus. During the 2021 – 2022 school year the school has approximately 36 elementary (4 – 5) students, just under 70 middle school students (6 – 8), and nearly 50 high school students (9-12). Students who identify as BIPOC represent 39% of the student body. There are plans to grow the Silver Spring enrollment closer to 200 students. The next Head of School at Silver Spring will be an important member of the admissions team.





THE PROFESSIONAL TEAM, LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

There are 39 individuals working directly with students on a daily basis; these include an Assistant Head of School who works with department chairs and teachers, and a school counselor. There are teachers who serve as Deans in each of the three divisions with the responsibility of managing student life and low-level disciplinary concerns. Siena has an exceptional recruiting and onboarding process for engaging new teachers that includes a mentoring and professional development program to ensure consistency with instructional strategies in the classroom. The school has a strong admissions process, and the Director of Admission also leads marketing and communications. In addition to overseeing the work of the two school Heads, the Executive Head of School works closely with the finance office. Follow the link to learn more about the team.

The Siena School is a for-profit organization, but operates in substantially the same manner as most traditional non-profit independent schools. The school's founder is the sole owner, is dedicated to mission-driven social impact work, and reinvests 100% of any profits into the school. Siena maintains a small independent Board of Directors, which includes local and national leaders with specific expertise, along with the Executive Head of School in an ex officio role. Siena is also supported by a strong Board of Advisors with a diverse array of talented professionals. Siena is focused solely on the vision to provide the best research-based education for students with dyslexia and language-based learning differences.

In 2008, Siena became fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and follows the Sustaining Excellence Protocol. This accreditation protocol is afforded to schools that are recognized as what Doug Reeves calls "leading schools." (Leading schools are those schools that are achieving high levels of student performance, have an excellent understanding of the necessary antecedents for those results, and are likely to continue achieving those high results over time.) Siena is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), and the International Dyslexia Association (IDA). In 2009, a group of parents established The Siena School Scholarship Fund to further and support Siena's mission by providing scholarship funding. To date, the Scholarship Fund has raised over $1.5 million in charitable giving to support students at the school.

The Siena School opened a Northern Virginia campus in Oakton, VA this past fall with its own Head of School while the Executive Head of School has served the Silver Spring campus. With the growth of the school the Executive Head of School will assume broader responsibilities for the entire Siena organization with the Head of School – Silver Spring and the Head of School – Northern Virginia responsible for all day-to-day aspects of their respective campuses. The Executive Head of School will oversee the central services support team (which in turn oversees all non-instructional aspects of operations) freeing up the Head of School to focus on instruction and culture. The Head of School collaborates with appropriate central support staff with regard to financial, legal, human resources, technology, marketing and other functions.

THE HEAD OF SCHOOL—SILVER SPRING

The Head of School embodies the school's mission, articulates it for all school community stakeholders and operationalizes it within all aspects of the school's program. The Head of School is responsible for the overall management of the school and is the primary spokesperson for the campus with all its internal and external constituencies.

The Head has overall responsibility for curriculum implementation and instructional delivery, student life, and business affairs on their campus; serves as a key member of the admission team; and supports advancement activities. The Head of the Silver Spring campus must be highly analytical, committed to continuous improvement, and embody a can-do spirit and work ethic. Through language, actions and decisions, the Head of School demonstrates that students who learn differently can learn at a high level and maintains, through the complexities, minutiae and challenges of running a school, unwavering optimism and a focus on excellence. The Head of School ensures all faculty and staff follow and live up to the Siena Way, and bring rigor, organization, high standards, and joy to the classroom each day.

The Head's responsibilities will include:

Leadership

- Models Siena's core values and sets the standard for professional behavior.
- Communicates a clear and compelling vision of rigorous academic, operational, and behavioral expectations and inspires staff to embrace it.
- Establishes and facilitates a school-wide culture of collaboration and continuous improvement, in which faculty, staff members, parents and students give and solicit constructive feedback.
- Creates a culture of professional growth and opportunities for ongoing learning and advancement among the faculty and staff.
- Hires, supervises, evaluates, and dismisses all administrators, faculty, and staff members.
- Provides feedback to all staff on their strengths, areas of growth and overall performance.
- Holds teachers and administrators accountable for results.
- Meets weekly with leadership team members and shares the duties of running the campus effectively.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Upholds the academic and ethical standards of the school.
- In collaboration with the Executive Head of School, manages the selection and implementation of curricula, assessments, graduation requirements, and all aspects of the school's academic program.
- Identifies, develops and implements ongoing professional development and learning opportunities for the faculty, in collaboration with the Executive Head of School.
- Establishes class schedules and other aspects of the school instructional operations.
- Fosters professionalism, collegiality, and ethical conduct in the faculty.
- Ensures multisensory, authentic, experiential learning is the foundation for instruction.
- Optimizes the physical learning environment and technology in all instructional areas.

Student Life

- Organizes student activities and extracurricular opportunities.
- Administers the school's discipline policies and standards of conduct.
- Develops and manages after-school, enrichment, summer school, summer camp, and athletic programs.
- Supervises the school's support systems, such as counseling, health and wellness, etc.
- Oversees the school safety programs including building security, emergency procedures, transportation regulations, tornado and fire drills, etc.
- Promotes a healthy student culture in and out of school.
- Optimizes all-school gatherings including assemblies, sporting events, performances, etc.
- Provides for character education and ethical teachings in keeping with the mission of the school.
- Reports student progress to parents on a timely and helpful basis.

Business, Finance and Plant Operations

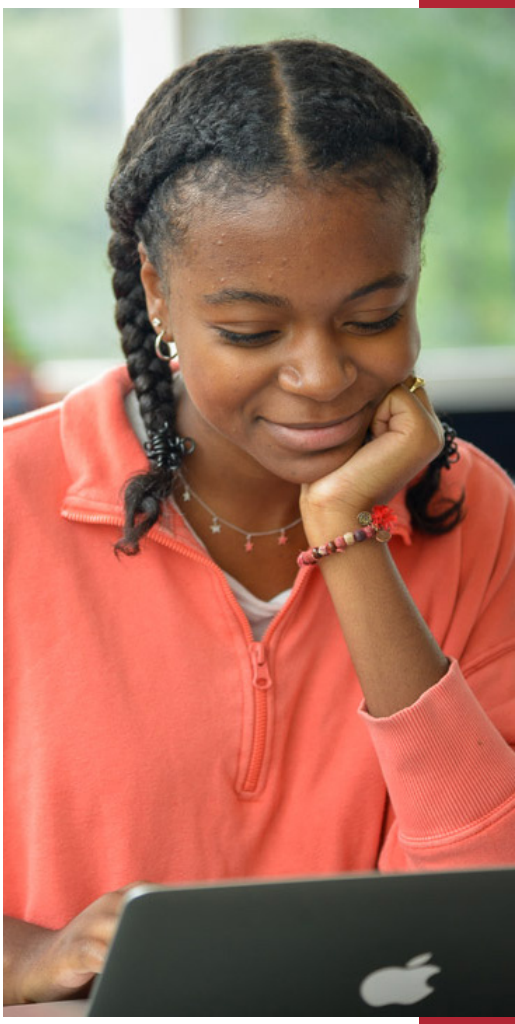
- Develops the school's annual budget for board approval in collaboration with the finance office and Executive Head of School.
- Coordinates, manages and supports campus-level business office functions as needed, including accurate maintenance of appropriate records.
- Is responsible for overall fiscal performance of the school and ensuring adherence to approved budgets.
- Oversees maintenance and cleaning of the buildings, grounds and vehicles, and all plant operations.

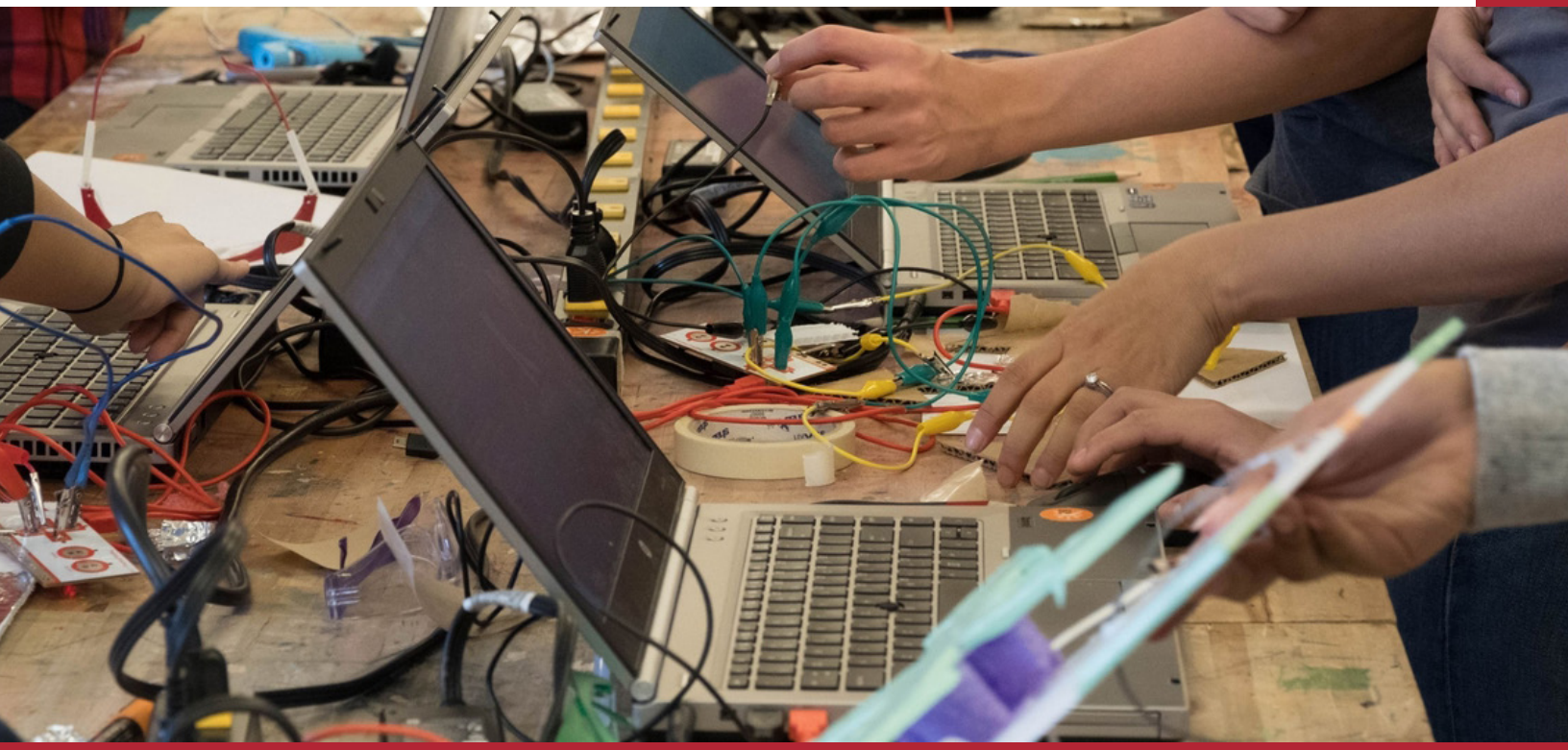
Admissions, Marketing and Financial Aid

- Key member of the Admissions Committee; works closely with the Director of Admissions and participates in all admissions decisions.
- Works with the Director of Admissions in the marketing functions of the school, including recruitment programs, internal marketing, external outreach, website development and maintenance, information dissemination, and interviewing.

Advancement

- Responsible for maintaining and supporting diversity initiatives within the faculty, student and parent communities.
- Facilitates and encourages parent participation in school activities such as parent meetings, field trips, Siena Parent Association, and as volunteers.
- Supervises all volunteer efforts such as the Siena Parents Association.
- Leads Silver Spring campus advancement activities for The Siena Scholarship Fund.





PREFERRED CANDIDATE ATTRIBUTES AND EXPERIENCES

The Siena School seeks an accomplished educator and leader who is energized by the school's mission, size, educational philosophy, location, and potential for growth. Its new Head will be a collaborative, skilled manager who understands school administration and how to develop the true potential of all faculty and staff. The Head will be highly organized and someone who loves to roll up their sleeves and do what is necessary to serve the professional staff, students and families.

Candidates should be prepared to deal with the broad range of school matters and be able to demonstrate successful experience in most of the following:

- Leading a vibrant academic program serving bright, motivated students who have mild language-based learning differences.
- Recruiting, developing, managing, and supporting talented faculty and staff.
- Modeling and inspiring educational vision and innovation.
- Developing and implementing operational and strategic initiatives.
- Building an exceptional community by forging strong relationships with multiple constituencies, including parents, students and faculty.
- Advancing school identity with the broader local community and national professionals.

Candidates will also have a broad range of leadership and management abilities, including:

- Proven ability to think strategically and be a thought leader in dyslexia and language-based learning difference education.
- Excellent organizational and operational skills, ensuring accountability throughout the organization. Very detail-oriented.
- Strong verbal and written communication.
- Strong interpersonal skills with exceptional follow up.
- A collaborative, inclusive, and transparent leadership style.
- Strong aptitude for enrollment, financial management, and curriculum development.

Personal qualities are very important to the Siena community and the Head of School must be:

- Excited to understand and embrace the language-based learning difference mission and guiding principles of the school.
- A warm, approachable person who is fully engaged with both the internal and external communities.
- Exceptionally committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- An authentic leader who works collaboratively with administrators, faculty, students, parents, and the Board to further the mission and vision of The Siena School.
- A skilled and empathetic listener and outstanding communicator who approaches the work with joy, a sense of humor, and a deep respect for the dignity of children.
- A humble leader who embodies excellence without arrogance and has the skills and wisdom to empower others in the Siena community.

INFORMATION ON THE SEARCH PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The Head of School Selection Committee for The Siena School will begin accepting nominations and reviewing applications immediately. Requested application materials include a letter of interest addressed to the search committee, curriculum vitae and a personal statement that includes a description of educational and leadership beliefs. **For best consideration, all candidates should submit materials to SienaHOS@storbecksearch.com by Friday, September 30, if not sooner.** **

For more information about The Siena School, please visit https://www.thesienaschool.org/.

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**The Siena School reserves the right to accelerate the calendar for highly qualified candidates with applications being reviewed upon being submitted.

The Siena School is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and shall treat all applicants for employment equally and fairly based upon job related qualifications and in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal laws.