
Head of School Opportunity

Established in 1972 by educators, Art and Nancy Baxter, The Pathfinder School is a non-sectarian independent day school for children from age 3 through 8th grade. The school merged with the Interlochen Center for the Arts in 2000, and in June 2007 Pathfinder parents organized to purchase the school, property and assets to once again re-establish autonomy.

Pathfinder is characterized by its warm and caring atmosphere, small classes, dedicated teachers, the pursuit of academic and creative excellence, and respect for the integrity of children. The Pathfinder School serves the Grand Traverse area as its only ISACS accredited independent elementary and middle school, and there exists a strong sense of community.

Located just north of Traverse City, Michigan on a 22-acre wooded campus nestled between the shores of West Grand Traverse Bay and Cedar Lake, the school provides a natural workshop for environmental studies and outdoor education.

Many Pathfinder graduates and transfer students place in advanced level classes at their new schools. For four decades Pathfinder students have succeeded in academics, athletics, the fine arts and as community leaders; and as alumni they are, in turn, proud, supportive and loyal to their school.

During this past year, the school conducted a self-review as part of the accreditation process and approved a new five-year strategic plan. Once a new master plan is completed, capital and endowment campaigns will be initiated.

A dedicated Board of Trustees, a passionate parent community and an engaged faculty and staff committed to the long-term health and vitality of the school, will support the new Head of School.



The
Pathfinder
School

Traverse City, Michigan

*A school without hallways.
An education without limits.*

www.thepathfinderschool.org

Application Deadline: September 30, 2008

Who Should Apply

The Pathfinder School is seeking a visionary leader who can embrace and guide a passionate school community in fulfilling the school's mission, while dealing with the financial challenges of an independent school in Northern Michigan. Exceptional communication skills and a desire to be fully engaged are critical.

Search Coordination Services Provided by:



Pathfinder

At a Glance

Founded: 1972

Location: In Leelanau county,
between Cedar Lake and
West Grand Traverse Bay north
of Traverse City

2007-08 Enrollment: 134

Faculty: 21

Average Faculty Tenure: 10 years

Average Class Size: PreK-K – 10
1st-8th – 16

Overall Student-Teacher Ratio: 6:1

Endowment: \$117,000

2007-08 Operating Budget:
\$1,071,000

Total Giving, 2006-07:
\$218,000

Total Giving, 2007-08:
\$227,000

Full-time Tuition 2008-09:
PreK-4th: \$9,797
5th-8th: \$9,997

Financial Aid Award 2007-08:
\$239,000

% of Students Receiving Aid: 40%

Accreditation: ISACS

Member: ISACS, AIMS

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Mission Statement

Our mission is to discover and develop each student's individual abilities by investing in a community of families and teachers in which serious study flourishes alongside creativity, responsibility and enthusiasm. At Pathfinder, children feel safe to be themselves, think independently, work cooperatively, become avid learners and strive to make a difference in the lives of others

Core Values

Independence

Creativity

Collaboration

Competence

Confidence

Critical Thinking

Scholarship

Leadership

Adaptability



The Pathfinder Culture

A school without hallways. An education without limits.

But more than a school: A community.

*And more than a community: A culture where high ideals
and dedication to the arts, music, strong citizenship and
unencumbered learning are the fabric of our students' daily lives.*

Woods. Water. Heart. Integrity. Excellence. Inclusion. Teamwork.

The Pathfinder Experience.

Defining Strengths & Unique Attributes of The Pathfinder School

The School Community

At The Pathfinder School, the seeds are planted for meaningful growth in scholarship and lifelong learning. Its foundation is based on the importance of making authentic connections. Through Pathfinder's small classes, integrated experience-based curriculum and a nurturing environment, children from the earliest ages develop the skills and confidence it takes to approach the world with well-rounded sensibilities.

The learning at Pathfinder nurtures this creative impulse, builds character, engenders accountability, and builds a skills and knowledge base for a lifetime of learning. Pathfinder teachers daily embrace the whole child and achieve impressive results in a joyfully energized environment.

Instructional Philosophy

The success of our graduates and the passion of our community are derived from the excellent educational environment constructed by Pathfinder faculty. The teachers and staff are committed to seeing each student as a unique person, with his or her own set of talents, intelligences and learning styles. Teachers recognize the emerging curricular needs of individual students as they develop lessons and assessments.

Instruction is thoughtfully designed to allow for differentiation within a cooperative setting. Pathfinder teachers engage in common planning to assure a well sequenced, developmentally appropriate and adaptive curriculum. Academic and behavioral expectations increase appropriately as students progress, so the student is always challenged in his or her learning.



Our academic program is designed to engage students with a variety of teachers, starting at the earliest grades. In addition to the foundations of language arts, math, science and social studies, Pathfinder students have separate instructors for science, foreign language, visual arts, music, physical education, media and computer technology.

In the middle school, additional electives are added to the program. All course work is successfully integrated to avoid fragmentation and isolation of knowledge. Integration not only occurs across content, but also across grade levels. Teachers take advantage of the cooperative atmosphere to engage students in multiple-grade activities. Upper grade students serve as mentors to younger students, and students demonstrate their developing skills across a school-wide audience.

School field trips are often constructed as multi-grade experiences, hallmarked by an annual three day overnight trip to the Leelanau Outdoor Center. For our students and teachers, the natural setting of the campus and the historical, scientific and cultural opportunities in our community serve to extend the classroom. Learning at Pathfinder is never attached to a single place or single instructor, but instead is defined by the collective imagination of the students, teachers and community members.

The Pathfinder approach to curriculum and instruction serves all students well. The environment draws strength from the diverse community of learners it supports. Learning differences are identified and supported as a matter of course. With the faculty's focus on whole child development, all students achieve their full potential.

Traverse City

At a Glance

The Grand Traverse Area consists of four counties, including Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Benzie and Kalkaska. Grand Traverse County is the economic and retail center of northwest Michigan. This growing, diverse community is situated on beautiful Grand Traverse Bay. The strong and growing local economy is driven by manufacturing, professional and financial services, retail, tourism, a leading hospital, medical facilities, Northwestern Michigan College and more.

The neighboring counties' economic strengths include a burgeoning agriculture industry, agri-tourism, oil & gas industry, alternative energy opportunities, wineries and vineyards. A newly constructed regional airport supports this community with direct flights to several major metropolitan airports.

Residents of the Grand Traverse Area enjoy the activities centered around the numerous inland lakes and rivers, plus Grand Traverse Bay and Lake Michigan. Many outdoor sports and recreation activities are available including boating, canoeing, fishing, hiking, skiing, snowmobiling, horseback riding, golf, etc. Furthermore, this area provides many cultural attractions including leading concerts, community and professional theatre, symphony orchestras, National Cherry Festival, Traverse City Film Festival, Epicurean Classic and many more.

Grand Traverse County Quick Facts:

<i>Population (2006).....</i>	<i>84,952</i>
<i>Median Home Price (11/07)</i>	<i>\$164,900</i>
<i>Median Household Income (2004) ..</i>	<i>\$45,542</i>
<i>Growth Since 1990</i>	<i>32.20%</i>

For more information on the Traverse City area, please visit the web sites listed below.

www.michigan.org/City/Default.aspx?city=G3602

www.ci.traverse-city.mi.us

www.tcvistor.com

The Student Body

The Pathfinder School seeks students who can contribute to and benefit from its program. It is the policy of the school not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, or disability that is unrelated to the ability to enjoy the benefits of the school's programs, facilities or services.

Faculty, Administration & Governance

The Pathfinder School currently employs 21 teaching faculty, an Office Administrator, two maintenance and grounds personnel and three administrative staff. These resources are augmented by the volunteer efforts of parents to support school functions. The administrative team is flexible, overlapping and regularly assist one another in the accomplishment of our mission.

Our faculty is one of the school's greatest assets. Most of our teachers have been with Pathfinder for many years. While a teaching certificate is not necessarily a condition of employment, many of our faculty have or have had Michigan teaching certification and have obtained advanced degrees.

The Pathfinder School Board of Trustees provides leadership and direction. The Board of Trustees has 11 members, plus three ex-officio members: the Head of School, the Business Officer and the Director of Admissions and Development.

Board standing committees actively pursue the work of the school. These standing committees are executive, trusteeship, admissions and marketing, finance, strategic planning, campus, development, personnel, endowment and audit. The Head is a non-voting ex-officio member of all committees and attends all committee meetings. The board's emphasis is that it is a "working" board.

Location, Campus & Facilities

Nestled between Grand Traverse Bay and quaint Cedar Lake, the Pathfinder campus spans 22 acres about two miles north of Traverse City, along route M-22 in the Leelanau Peninsula. The region is distinguished by its proximity to Lake Michigan and its freshwater bays, numerous inland lakes, orchards and outdoor recreational opportunities; its rural flavor, however, may belie the high achievements in culture and art of which the school is a part and so actively promotes.

Opportunities and Challenges Awaiting the Next Head of School

Pathfinder's challenges are similar to those of many independent schools. Crafting a long-term sustainable business model will entail building an endowment that can help to fund operations, support physical plant restoration and secure the future.

While Pathfinder is acknowledged to be an exemplary educational offering in this area, tuition levels are barriers to access for many. A robust financial aid program is a goal for addressing this disparity.

The Grand Traverse region is replete with educational alternatives including parochial, Montessori and public charter schools as well as a popular talented-and-gifted magnet program. Pathfinder must market itself effectively by providing evidence of value that warrants the significant financial investment required.

The school is housed in a group of historic log cabins located at the edge of a deep old-growth forest with 900 feet of beachfront on Cedar Lake, graceful cultivated gardens, expansive green spaces for soccer fields and tennis courts and panoramic views of Cedar Lake and West Grand Traverse Bay.

The extraordinary physical assets carry with them enormous challenges. Deficiencies in the various instructional facilities constrain school programming. Space is limited throughout. The goal is to create a master plan that will inform future upgrades and expansion and still honor the "sacred spaces," preserve the natural environment and support optimal teaching and learning in the future.

The new Head of School will be supported by an enormously committed Board of Trustees, a passionate and skilled professional instructional staff and highly engaged parents and students.



Opportunities Abound

The Board of Trustees undertook a strategic planning process in the spring of 2008. Board members, faculty, parents and administration enthusiastically supported the process, which involved surveying constituencies via focus groups, interviews and questionnaires, then transforming the collected information first into action items, then to "tasks" assigned to committees and chairpersons. The five year strategic plan document outlines these initiatives.

Professional Development

The administration and board believe that professional development opportunities for faculty are critical to the school's success. There is money raised specifically for professional development, part of which allows more teachers to attend Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. In addition, we have earmarked 10% of the funds raised from the Annual Fund for faculty professional development.





Who Should Apply: Qualities & Qualifications

The Pathfinder School is seeking an exceptional leader in education who can be entrusted with securing the legacy of the school, while maintaining its unique culture and engaged community. The ideal new Head of School will possess the following qualifications and traits:

Professional Qualifications

- ▶ Advanced degree
- ▶ Background in educational leadership and/or school administration
- ▶ Independent school experience
- ▶ Strong financial acumen
- ▶ Demonstrated success in fundraising
- ▶ Experience in PreK-8th grade educational spectrum



Leadership Traits

- ▶ Exceptional communication skills across all constituencies
- ▶ Ease in representing the school to the broader community
- ▶ Visionary leadership to coalesce the school community to advance the school's mission
- ▶ Innovative thinking
- ▶ Skill to serve as an effective mentor and evaluator of the professional staff
- ▶ Respect for the school's heritage while marshalling the passion of the school's community
- ▶ Agility in balancing varying points of view in the process of decision making
- ▶ Commitment to providing a consistent presence on campus and at school functions



Personal Traits

- ▶ Enthusiastic, passionate, and optimistic
- ▶ Appreciates the magic of working with children
- ▶ Commitment to academic excellence and lifelong learning
- ▶ Kindness, compassion and joyfulness
- ▶ Integrity, civility and stewardship
- ▶ Well-cultivated sense of humor
- ▶ Invites opportunity to engage with people
- ▶ Confidence without arrogance



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Anticipated Search Calendar

Application deadline:
September 30, 2008

**Search Committee
selects semifinalists:**
October 7, 2008

Semifinalist interviews:
October 20 – 24, 2008

Finalist visits:
Early November 2008

Appointment:
Early December 2008

Start date:
July 1, 2009

Application Requirements and Process

Applicants should submit as soon as possible but no later than Tuesday, September 30, 2008, the following:

- ▶ A cover letter explaining their interest in and qualifications for this position.
- ▶ A current resume.
- ▶ A statement of educational philosophy and/or other supporting material (e.g. articles, speeches or presentations) that would be useful to the Search Committee.
- ▶ The names, address, email and telephone numbers of three references. We will obtain permission from the candidate before contacting references.

This information should be sent via email to: **Curtis D. Kuttner**
curtis@kuttner.com
Kuttner Search Group, Inc.
234 Midtown Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684

After an initial review of applicants, the Search Committee will select semifinalists, who will be interviewed October 20-24, 2008. Finalists (and their spouses, if applicable) will be invited to the school for a more comprehensive series of interviews with representatives of the school's constituencies. Kuttner Search Group will keep all applicants informed of their status throughout the process.

Ideally, a final selection will be made in early December. The successful candidate will become Head of School of The Pathfinder School on July 1, 2009.

Prospective candidates interested in learning more about this opportunity or search process are invited to call Kuttner Search Group at (231) 922-9380 x300.



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