



Sarasota, Florida

Head of Upper School

Introduction

Located on two campuses totaling 90 acres in beautiful, Sarasota, Florida, The Out-of-Door Academy (ODA) is an independent, coeducational, college preparatory day school serving over 750 students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. At ODA, students are happy, engaged, and excited about their academic and personal growth. Talented and dedicated faculty members challenge students to reach their maximum potential while also supporting them with a high level of support. The school's rigorous and innovative academic program ensures that learning is both meaningful and lasting. Offerings in the arts and athletics enrich the ODA experience and provide opportunities for students to discover and develop their unique interests and talents. Graduates leave ODA not only academically prepared but also with the strength of character and passion for learning that provide a strong foundation for their future success in college and in life.

MISSION

As an independent, college preparatory school, we provide an environment in which students strive to achieve their highest academic goals and to build character through a balanced program of academics, the arts, and athletics.

VISION

To create an educational foundation and passion for life-long learning that will give our students a competitive advantage in higher education and help them realize their full potential in a rapidly changing, complex, and increasingly interdependent world.

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ODA was founded on Siesta Key in 1924 to serve students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. In 1996 a second campus in the Lakewood Ranch area of Sarasota was acquired to accommodate the addition of an upper school. Over the past ten years, the school has experienced steady and impressive enrollment growth from 550 to over 750 students. The campuses have also evolved and developed in response to the growth. Today, the five-acre Siesta Key campus is home to the Lower School (PK-5), and the 85-acre Uihlein Campus in Lakewood Ranch houses the Middle and Upper Schools. Facilities include interactive technology in every classroom, a fine and performing arts center with a black box theater, a full-size gymnasium with a wellness center, a lighted stadium, tennis courts and playing fields. The campus's newest building, the Dick Vitale Family Student Center and Dart Foundation STEM Center, which opened in August of 2015, provides a collegiate atmosphere with flexible indoor and outdoor spaces where students can work, collaborate, and socialize. On the second floor of the building are state-of-the-art science laboratories, math classrooms, and a STEM project lab that provide students with a variety of research and project-based learning opportunities that integrate the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The Out-of-Door Academy is accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools (FCIS) and the Florida Kindergarten Council (FKC), and is a member of the Cum Laude Society, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and a number of other professional associations.

The Upper School

The Out-of-Door Academy's Upper School is comprised of 300 students in grades nine through twelve and 25 full-time faculty members. The Upper School curriculum fosters skills in critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. The inclusive and close-knit community of the division reflects the school's core values of respect, integrity, service, excellence, and responsibility—values which are lived every day by students and faculty alike. In addition to bringing expertise in curriculum and pedagogy, teachers develop meaningful

ODA
At a Glance

Head of School: David Mahler
since 2004

Founded: 1924

Expanded to Lakewood Ranch:
1996

Campuses:
PK-5: 5 acres on Siesta Key
6-12: 85 acres in Lakewood
Ranch

2016-17 Enrollment
Grades K-12: 750
Upper School: 300

Students of Color: 14%

Full-Time Faculty and Staff:
PK-12: 55
9-12: 55

Upper School Tuition:
\$21,950

Financial Aid: \$1.71 million to 22%
of students

Budget: \$15.6 million

Endowment: \$16 million

Annual Giving: Over \$1million

SAT Middle 50%: 1030-1310
(CR+M)

AP Passing Rate: 91%

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relationships with students in the classroom, on the stage, on the playing fields, and beyond, and as a result, students are known and cared for throughout their time at ODA. Accordingly, students feel the intellectual and emotional security necessary to explore new areas, take reasonable risks, and ultimately make the most of the educational opportunities afforded to them. Adults and students enjoy a mutual respect, feel a sense of ownership and pride in the school, and consistently strive for excellence both personally and as members of the broader Upper School community. The Florida Council of Independent Schools Visiting Team lauded the school in January 2016 for its “exceptionally positive learning environment characterized by mutual respect between faculty and students, carefully maintained facilities, and a demonstrated commitment to the core values.” Teachers and staff, who bring a breadth and depth of experience from both local institutions and the best independent schools across the country, are committed to their ongoing professional development. ODA provides generous support for professional growth ranging from funding for regional and national conferences to 100% tuition reimbursement for the pursuit of advanced degrees. A leadership development program provides a curriculum, mentoring, and coaching for aspiring leaders.

CORE VALUES

Respect
Integrity
Service
Excellence
Responsibility

Academics. The Upper School's college preparatory curriculum is grounded in high academic expectations, interdisciplinary work, and collaboration. The development of critical thinking skills, the ability to communicate and collaborate, and creativity are emphasized over the pure acquisition of information alone. Technology is integrated throughout the curriculum, with classrooms outfitted with Mimio interactive learning technology and teachers utilize traditional, blended, and online learning formats. All upper school students bring Macbooks or iPads to every academic class. Twenty Advanced Placement courses and many Honors courses allow students to pursue a variety of interests and the highest level of academic excellence. At the same time, the school is mindful of the importance of balance in students' lives and limits enrollment in AP classes to one course for sophomores, three courses for juniors, and four courses for seniors. In 2015, 99 students took 216 Advanced Placement exams, and 91% scored a 3 or higher. That same year ODA had 9 AP Scholars, 2 AP Scholars with Honors, 16 AP Scholars with Distinction, and 2 National AP Scholars. A comprehensive curriculum guide can be downloaded online [here](#).

The Arts. Participation in music, theater, and the visual arts through both arts-focused classes and interdisciplinary curricula allows students to hone their problem-solving and critical thinking skills, exercise their imaginations, collaborate with peers and adults, develop independent thought, and express themselves creatively. Additional goals for students include developing a deep appreciation for the arts, gaining the ability to speak with confidence about a given craft, and understanding the influence of the arts on the world both currently and historically. ODA's arts faculty, all accomplished artists themselves, is diverse in its pursuits and seriously engaged in the arts community on the local and national level. A sample of course offerings include studio art, sculpture, film studies, graphic design, video editing, photography, theater, vocal music, wind and jazz ensembles, and orchestra.

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Athletics. Athletics play an important role in the life of The Out-of-Door Academy and its students. Consistent with the school's core values, student-athletes bring the same dedication and discipline to athletics that they take to their classrooms and performance venues. In return, they take away not only great skill development and accomplishments but also critical lessons in sportsmanship, teamwork, healthy competition, and winning and losing with grace. Upper Schoolers can participate in 13 interscholastic team sports, including football, cheer, soccer, volleyball, tennis, basketball, swimming, lacrosse, tennis, golf, baseball, softball, cross country, and track and field. Since the varsity athletic program's inception in 1996, teams have won 52 District, 11 Regional, and 8 State individual championships. Notably, the school was awarded the Rozelle Sportsmanship Award by the Florida High School Athletic Association in 2014 for exemplary sportsmanship among its players, coaches, and spectators.

The Student Experience. Beyond the school's three pillars of academics, arts, and athletics, Upper School students benefit from additional opportunities in a variety of different extracurricular areas. Students build relationships and gain leadership experience in over 50 student-run clubs and activities, including the Investment Club, Literature Magazine, the Spirit Club, and the Gay Straight Alliance, to name just a few. Service, one of The Out-of-Door Academy's five core values, is a critical component of the Upper School experience. Internal and external community service and service learning opportunities help students connect with people of different backgrounds and encourage them to become positive leaders who give back to their community. Finally, although ODA's Upper School is still relatively young, a number of important traditions bind together generations of current students and alumni. Convocation begins the academic year with formal recognition of seniors as the leaders of the school; Homecoming and the Family Picnic bring together students, families, faculty, and alumni to celebrate the strength of The Out-of-Door community; and senior-kindergarten buddies and Big-Littles, which pairs seniors with freshman, reinforce ties across grades and divisions.

Student Support. The Upper School's four-year advisory program, based on best practices and current research, is a hybrid design with a dedicated ninth-and-tenth-grade team of advisors and rotating eleventh-twelfth-grade teams. Advisors connect daily with their advisees, allowing them to come to know this small group of students well and to be the primary advocate, counselor, and point of contact regarding each student's overall well-being. Students' social-emotional health is further reinforced through the counseling and wellness programs, which work directly with students in individual and group sessions and also offer campus-wide programs for students and parents in the form of speakers, seminars, and workshops on adolescent development topics. In addition, the Director of Academic Services and Counseling provides support for all students directly and through partnerships with classroom teachers. Students with specific learning needs also receive additional support and targeted programming to ensure their academic success.

College Counseling. The Out-of-Door Academy employs a five-year developmental college counseling program that was specifically designed to help deconstruct and de-mystify the college admission process. Three full-time college counselors and one staff member work with students and families beginning in their eighth grade year to begin general education about the college process. Over the next four years, the program becomes increasingly in-depth and detailed as counselors meet and partner with students to help them discover which colleges and

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universities will fit their academic and professional aspirations but also ensure they are happy and connected as they embark on their college career. ODA students go on to a variety of institutions ranging from Ivy League universities to highly selective liberal arts colleges to universities around the country and overseas. Recent college acceptances can be found online [here](#). The Class of 2016 matriculated 75% to private institutions, and 80% of seniors will venture out of state for their college experience. Since the inaugural graduating class in 1999, 100% of graduates have been accepted to a four-year college or university, and since 2009, over 90% of graduates have been awarded unsolicited academic scholarships.

The Opportunity

A member of the ODA community for more than ten years, Ms. Noel Dougherty served in a variety of administrative capacities, including Dean of Students, Assistant Head of Upper School, and, from 2013 through 2016, Head of Upper School. She left Sarasota in July 2016 to become Head of Upper School at The Cranbrook Schools in Michigan, and Mr. Adam Seldis, current Assistant Head of Upper School and Dean of Students, is serving as Interim Head of Upper School during the 2016-17 school year while the school conducts a national search for a new permanent leader of the division.

The next Head of Upper School will join The Out-of-Door Academy at an exciting time and will be instrumental in the ongoing, qualitative progress in the division. Following a period of robust enrollment growth under the leadership of visionary Head of School David Mahler, it is anticipated that the Upper School will reach its maximum enrollment of 320 in the 2017-18 school year. The division's facilities and program have grown alongside its enrollment, with the aforementioned opening of the new STEM and Student Center as well as the addition of numerous Advanced Placement and Honors courses. The next phase of the Upper School's growth and evolution will bring continuous improvement to a number of program areas. The academic program will be further enhanced by leveraging the new facilities with more faculty and course offerings in STEM subjects, the expanded use of technology to enhance classroom experience, and additional avenues for students to experience learning in real-world, hands-on settings. A new academic schedule, which has been implemented for the 2016-17 school year, includes longer class periods and dedicated time for student clubs and activities. This integration of student activities during the school day, combined with a larger enrollment, will create more offerings and increased involvement in the arts, athletics, service, and other extracurricular opportunities. Other strategic priorities for the Upper School include creating a more inclusive school community; increasing the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the student body, faculty and staff; and strengthening the school's commitment to wellness.

Responsibilities

Reporting to the Head of School, the Head of Upper School will be responsible for the continued academic, programmatic, operational, and cultural excellence of the Upper School. He or she will oversee all aspects of the division, including faculty recruitment and supervision, curriculum and extracurricular program development, admissions, college counseling, and student life. As a

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member of the Leadership Team, the Head of Upper School will participate in setting and achieving school-wide strategic priorities. This person will also manage the department chairs and oversee the Upper School Leadership Team, which consists of the Assistant Head of Upper School, Directors of College Counseling, the Director of Student Activities, the Director of Collaborative Learning and Educational Outreach, and the Director of Academic Services & Counseling. Other specific responsibilities include the following:

- Modeling the school's core values of respect, integrity, service, excellence, and responsibility and fostering a culture in which students, faculty, and staff are known, valued, challenged, and supported along their unique educational journey.
- Promoting a growth mindset and encouraging the achievement of professional goals among faculty and staff, through the use of Folio and other formal development plans and by promoting ongoing conversations about best practices and important trends in curriculum, pedagogy, educational technology, and extracurricular activities.
- In collaboration with department chairs, hiring, evaluating, mentoring, and otherwise supporting experienced and talented faculty members who bring subject matter expertise, an understanding of how adolescents learn, and awareness of the skills and knowledge that students need in order to be well prepared for success in higher education and in life.
- Leading the ongoing development and refinement of the Upper School curriculum and pedagogical approaches consistent with ODA's commitment to providing an academic program that is rigorous, engaging, interdisciplinary, and aimed at cultivating students' critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creative skills.
- Collaborating with faculty and staff to build upon and enhance the school's current offerings in arts, athletics, community service, and other extracurricular programs and student activities.
- Ensuring that the Upper School maintains an appropriate balance between high expectations for achievement and wellness and holistic growth for all students and faculty.
- Maintaining positive relationships and ongoing communication with parents regarding current initiatives in the division and general information about the education and development of their children.
- Playing an active role in all aspects of the administration of the division, including admissions, budgeting, and college counseling.

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Candidate Qualities

Leadership

An educator who leads by virtue of being an active and engaged presence in the daily life of the division and whose style is rooted in transparency, honest communication, and collaboration.

A visionary educator who promotes excellence, innovation, continuous improvement, and risk-taking.

An adept manager who is comfortable delegating and who empowers faculty and staff while also holding them accountable to the high expectations of the division.

Experience

At least ten years of experience in teaching and administrative roles in an independent, upper school setting.

Experience in the development of curriculum, arts and athletic offerings, and extracurricular activities.

Ideally, exposure to responsibilities such as faculty hiring, scheduling, policy development, admissions, and budget management.

A successful track record of working effectively with a wide range of school constituents, including faculty, staff, parents, students, and trustees.

Skills and Knowledge

A broad and deep knowledge of traditional and emerging curricular and pedagogical trends, current thinking about best practices in teaching and learning, and the use of technology to enhance the student experience.

The ability to develop and generate buy-in for a compelling vision for the Upper School, to create and execute plans for achieving short- and long-term goals, and to move seamlessly between matters of strategic importance and day-to-day operations.

Well-developed problem-solving skills, awareness of organizational dynamics, sensitivity to the school's existing culture, the ability to effectively manage the pace of change, and the integrity and diplomacy necessary to successfully navigate the complex issues that can arise in an independent school.

An understanding of adolescent development, different learning styles, and strategies for meeting the various social-emotional and educational needs of upper school students.

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Skill in supporting the faculty and staff's ongoing professional growth while striking a healthy balance between accountability and the preservation of an appropriate level of freedom and autonomy within the classroom.

The ability to work successfully with a wide range of people from different backgrounds and to understand, respect, and acknowledge their unique perspectives, ideas, aspirations, and needs.

Personal Attributes

An honest person who will live the school's values and who effectively blends candor, care, and empathy in dealing with others.

A flexible, open-minded individual who is comfortable with ambiguity, sees the "grays" rather than simply the "black and white" of various issues, and possesses the courage to follow through on his or her convictions.

A thought leader who embraces managed risk-taking, is not afraid to experiment with new ideas, and is excited by the opportunity to help a well-established and thriving independent school reach new levels of success.

An educator who delights in working with adolescents and is committed to their holistic growth by balancing academic achievement with involvement in the arts and athletics, character development, and wellness.

An approachable person who builds meaningful relationships, listens well, and respects differences of opinion.

Someone who thrives in a fast-paced environment with high expectations.

About Sarasota

Located in a metropolitan area of approximately 720,000 people, Sarasota is a well-established city on the west coast of Florida. The region is known for its sunny climate and pristine beaches, and is served by two airports, one in Sarasota and one in nearby Tampa. The economy is largely service-based, with tourism, health care, retail trade and hospitality—together with attendant real estate, construction, and professional services—as primary drivers. Formerly known as a favorite destination for retirees, the Sarasota area is experiencing a steady and manageable growth in population and, in the process, is becoming largely intergenerational, with a number of young families who comprise a healthy demographic and demand for independent education. Blending the convenience and affordability of a smaller city with the amenity of a larger urban area, Sarasota is known for the internationally recognized Sarasota Opera, the Sarasota Orchestra, the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Mote Marine Laboratory, the Ringling Museum of Art, the Sarasota Film Festival, and several other museums and not-for-

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profit institutions. As a result, the region has a highly educated and sophisticated population benefiting from a stimulating intellectual and cultural environment.

Other Considerations

<u>Compensation:</u>	Competitive with comparable independent schools across the country
<u>Travel:</u>	Minimal
<u>Education:</u>	Master's degree required
<u>Location:</u>	Sarasota, Florida
<u>Website:</u>	www.oda.edu
<u>Candidates May Now Be:</u>	A Head of Upper School in an academically rigorous college preparatory school who is open to a move for professional growth and development reasons.

In a senior or mid-level administrative position—such as Assistant Head of Upper School, Academic Dean, or Dean of Faculty—that includes regular interaction with an upper school community.

A Head of School in a smaller, high quality institution.

Aspiring Heads of School are strongly encouraged to apply.

For more information, contact:

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