Leadership Opportunity at Thaden School

Director of College Counseling

Bentonville, Arkansas

In July 2015, the Walton Family Foundation announced the appointment of Clayton Marsh to serve as the founding head of a new independent school in Bentonville, Arkansas. Named in honor of Louise Thaden, a pioneering aviator who was born and raised in Bentonville, the school opened in the fall of 2017 with approximately 50 students in grades 7 and 9 and will grow incrementally over the next several years to serve approximately 500-550 students in grades 6-12. The school now seeks a Director of College Counseling to lead the development of a college counseling program that is aligned with its mission and that will inspire and empower students to think expansively about their educational journey beyond Thaden. Working with the Founding Head of School and the school's leadership team, the Director will play an integral role in the founding of a vibrant, well-resourced school in a rapidly growing part of the United States.

The School and the Region

A non-sectarian independent school under the direction of its own board, Thaden School offers a challenging and innovative educational program that ignites in its students a passion for discovery and learning, prepares them to succeed in college, and inspires them to lead lives of integrity, purpose and responsible global citizenship.

At the core of the school’s mission is a commitment to balance that takes many forms: a curriculum that integrates the sciences and the humanities; indoor and outdoor teaching spaces where sustainability is a tangible part of the lesson; hands-on programs for civic engagement; athletics and physical education programs that build confidence and character through competition and meaningful participation; and a diverse faculty and staff that empower students to think deeply and expansively about their potential and place in the world. The school’s remarkably robust indexed tuition program further supports the creation of a balanced learning community where students of many perspectives, talents, and interests come together.

Located on a 30-acre campus in downtown Bentonville, the school is walking distance from the town square, Brightwater Culinary Institute, The Momentary (Crystal Bridges’ center for contemporary arts), and a variety of other educational resources. With generous support from the Walton Family Foundation, the school has also engaged a nationally renowned team of architects to design an enduring and innovative campus that will spark curiosity, inspire creativity, and invite reflection. As featured in Architect magazine, the school’s first permanent buildings opened this fall with the doubling of its enrollment from 110 in AY 2018-19 to approximately 220 students in AY 2019-20. At full scale, the school will serve approximately 500 students.

With more than 500,000 residents, the region combines a thriving economy with the natural beauty of the Ozarks and a rich variety of cultural and recreational amenities such as the
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Razorback Regional Greenway, the Scott Family Amazeum, and the Bentonville Film Festival. Northwest Arkansas is also home to the world headquarters of three Fortune 500 companies (Walmart, Tyson Foods, and J.B. Hunt) as well as the University of Arkansas. For more information about the region and its national rankings, see Finding NWA and the website for the Northwest Arkansas Council.

The Thaden School website offers detailed information regarding its mission, leadership and faculty, educational programs, indexed tuition program, and campus plan.

**The Position**

College counseling is central to the school’s mission as it inspires and empowers students to think expansively about their educational journey beyond Thaden. The Director of College Counseling will lead the development of a college advising program that teaches students how to embrace the college application process as a constructive experience that requires patience, research, reflection, and an open-minded sense of adventure. The Director will also partner with the Founding Head of School in building strong relationships with institutions of higher education throughout the United States.

The specific responsibilities of the Director will include:

- Leading and effectively managing the college counseling office
- Advising students and families through the college research, application, and selection process
- Writing letters of recommendation
- Reviewing, adjusting, and improving the college counseling program each year
- Executing on-campus programs and workshops for parents, students, and college admissions representatives
- Advising on course selection and curriculum development
- Preparing regular mailings and electronic communication to parents
- Visiting college campuses to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with college admission staffs
- Representing Thaden School at national and regional conferences
- Attending weekly faculty and administrative meetings
- Attending regular curriculum committee meetings
- Advising faculty in their writing of college recommendations
- Working with various personnel who support the college counseling process
- Establishing and maintaining an annual budget
- Engaging actively in the Thaden School community, including attending student performances, athletics events, social activities, and serving as an advisor and a member of the Grade 11 team
- All other duties and tasks as needed to carry out the functions of the office
Experience and Qualifications

The school seeks candidates who have the drive, poise, and versatility to build a college counseling program from the ground up. The ideal candidate for this position will be:

- **A listener and counselor** who can build trust and confidence among students and families in a highly diverse school community

- **An educator** who can inspire students to embrace the college application process as a learning journey that holds intrinsic value

- **A writer** who can bring to life the story of each student’s growth at Thaden in terms that are authentic and compelling

- **An ambassador** who can be a great champion for the school’s mission, culture, and educational programs

- **A planner and a builder** who can anticipate the needs of a rapidly growing school and advance strategies for meeting them

- **An administrator** with strong organizational skills and attention to detail who can manage deadlines and deliver high-quality work product on time

Qualified candidates must have a bachelor’s degree as well as several years of experience in college counseling or a related field (e.g., college admissions). Experience building new programs is also preferred. Independent school experience is not required, but candidates should be prepared to speak about their commitment to and excitement for the mission of Thaden School.

Applications

Please submit applications to careers@thadenschool.org.

Applications should include a cover letter, resume, and statement of educational philosophy.

The start date is negotiable but must be no later than July 1, 2020.

Thaden is an equal-opportunity employer and complies with all federal, state, and local laws that prohibit discrimination in employment because of race, color, national origin, citizenship, age (18 or older), religion, disability, marital status, veteran status, and sexual orientation.