ACE Academy
Austin, Texas
Head of School
Position opens Summer 2021
www.austingifted.org
ACE Academy

Mission
ACE Academy provides a personalized education for gifted learners within a nurturing community.

Vision
ACE students embrace a complex and progressive curriculum, thrive in academic environments and confront challenges with creativity and flexibility.

Overview
Led by an exceptional faculty, the school offers a personalized, student-centered, and academically engaging program that nurtures and challenges students to reach their fullest potential.

ACE Academy is an 501(c)3 non profit, private school that offers gifted programming from K to 8th grade. Established in 2005, ACE Academy educates an underserved community of learners in Austin, Texas. A commonly accepted statistic is that gifted learners are those who score in the top 5% of IQ tests. A GT student can vary radically in specific abilities or areas (asynchronous development). Because GT children process information differently from the average student, they need a learning environment flexible enough to meet and encourage these differences. Their unique ways of thinking are assets that must be valued and encouraged, or they may be suppressed, hidden, or lost.

ACE Academy seeks a dynamic, perceptive and unifying leader as its next Head of School starting Summer 2021. The successful candidate will be devoted to the school's mission and vision.

ACE Academy’s Head of School will foster a climate of excellence and promote growth among students, faculty and staff. This is an exceptional opportunity to help lead a school through its next phase of growth.
Fast Facts

Year established: 2005
Total current enrollment: 80 students
Student / teacher ratio: 12 / 1 or 12 / 2
Number of employees: 30
Employees with advanced degrees: 6
Students receiving aid: 6
Parent Annual Fund participation: 53%
WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT

Philosophy
At ACE Academy, we strive to encourage critical thinking and creativity in every discipline. Through a classroom culture of curiosity, growth mindset, collaboration and support, we are able to respect the journey that is inherent in seeking knowledge. We provide authentic experiences in each discipline, encourage interdisciplinary connections, and provide flexibility for differentiation and student interests. As a result, our students are invested in their work and gain confidence as learners.

Personalization & Depth
Keeping our classes small allows us to personalize the educational experience for individual students by differentiating the curriculum based on their prior knowledge, needs, and interests. We focus on the nuances of subject matter and provide thematic experiences to allow for a deeper connection with the content, which in turn helps to instill a love of learning and provides an authentic experience for everyone involved.

Innovative Practices & Qualified Teachers
Staying on the cutting-edge of research and best practices in gifted education allows our teachers to push the limits in what they can provide students. Establishing practices that create an emotional space for students to take risk and find their voice is the perfect foundation for traditional and progressive practices to take shape. Our teachers understand our students and believe that a partnership with the entire family is the best way to approach education.

Redefining Success
Success isn’t measured by the hours of homework that are assigned or completed, nor is it measured by how one student compares to another in a particular subject. Success comes in small victories, both academically and socially. Empowering students to recognize their strengths, celebrate their successes, overcome their challenges, and encourage them to take risks while failing with humor and humility are the cornerstones of how ACE Academy redefines success on a daily basis. Our assessment and evaluation protocols are firmly in place so that we know where a student is, within a given school year, and can meet their needs every step of the way.
The possibility and promise represented by this leadership opportunity is palpable. ACE has negotiated a new lease at their current location that includes updating and innovating the space with outdoor construction and new design. The community shares a commitment to the best interests of each child enrolled at the school. The teachers are well-trained and experienced. They exude a dedication to the well-being of their students. They work in genuine partnership with one another and the parents to ensure that each child’s needs are met. ACE’s students are engaged and joyful and classrooms are vibrant with movement and laughter.

In the summer of 2016 the community overcame a huge challenge when the Board let the two heads of school, the Founders go. New leadership was put into place to guide the school through the major transition. The new Head of School and Dean of Faculty paid special attention to the well being of the faculty, and the schools financials and made shifts where it was necessary. After two years, the Head of School left for a position at a University and the Dean took over as the Head of School. COVID-19 and some challenges in the lower grades (centered around staffing issues, and identification of young gifted learners) impacted enrollment for the 2020-21 school year. This challenge was initially met with some admission protocol changes, targeted job postings centered around working for a nonprofit, and teacher certification requirements.

There are ample reasons for optimism as ACE Academy faces these challenges. As referenced above, the school boasts remarkable teachers and parents who share an enthusiastic dedication to ACE’s future. The school’s history is robust and its reputation for excellence and innovation has been well earned since its founding.

This is a position for a passionate, enthusiastic, and determined leader. The job also represents an incredible opportunity: join at a time of exciting changes, help refine the STEAM/STEM curriculum, implement plans and promote them with vigor and confidence. The school community is eager to partner with a new Head of School and possesses the financial resources, the affection, and the enthusiasm necessary to accomplish great things together. Our growth opportunities are endless.
Desired Qualities and Qualifications

The next Head must become a passionate advocate for the school – both internally and across our city, state and country. They must be an engaged and authentic presence at school and in the community. This person will work in partnership with the Head of Operations, Dean of Faculty, the Board of Trustees, parents, alumni, and parents of alumni to envision a vibrant future for the school and then implement that plan. The successful candidate will possess positive energy, optimism, superb communication skills, and a long-term strategic perspective to help grow the school.

The ideal candidate should embody the spirit of kindness, warmth, and acceptance that permeates the school. As well as being communicative, approachable and responsive. The successful Head will be a collaborative, consensus-building leader who actively solicits input and asks powerful questions; builds relationships first; listens well; communicates with inspiration and clarity; and effectively delegates and empowers other team members.

They will bring passion for creating the next generation of education programs and can cultivate a culture of innovation and creativity. This person will be able to propel ACE Academy into its next phase of growth.

ACE Academy has defined the following additional priorities for preferred candidates:

• Experience in education and evidence of a commitment to lifelong learning.
• A sophisticated understanding of private, independent school business curriculum models and ability to adopt best practices.
• Ability to build a culture of philanthropy.
• Long-term commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
• Superb interpersonal and people management skills.
• A strong understanding of gifted and the twice exceptional population.
• Ability to build systems to maximize retention.
• Ability to authentically embody the joy of learning in an Early Childhood to Grade 8 setting.
• Leadership and decision-making experience; operational savvy, entrepreneurial mindset.
To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically the attached documents (preferably PDFs) below to:  
Dkimball@AustinGifted.org

• A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position

• A current résumé

• A one-page statement of educational or leadership philosophy and practice

• A list of five professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission).