



# **THE MIQUON SCHOOL**

Conshohocken, Pennsylvania

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**HEAD OF SCHOOL**  
Start Date: July 1, 2023  
[miquon.org](http://miquon.org)



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES



## Mission

*The Miquon School treasures and celebrates childhood. We give our students time to play and grow. Our program and our environment encourage wonder, inquiry, independence, and discovery. We seek to create confident, life-long learners who will move out into the wider world with strong academic and social skills, intense personal interests, a love for the arts, and a commitment to building inclusive and peaceful communities. We are dedicated to learning together in the rich tradition of Progressive education that is our founders' legacy.*

*For more on Miquon's beliefs and philosophy, read about Miquon's 10 Tenets [here](#).*

## OVERVIEW

The Miquon School is seeking a dynamic and collaborative leader as its next Principal (Head of School) for a summer 2023 start. The school is nestled in the forested Wissahickon Valley, just a few miles outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Miquon provides a student-centered, nurturing environment for roughly 150 children, ages 3 to 12.

## SCHOOL HISTORY

The Miquon School was founded in 1932 by two mothers, disillusioned with their own traditional educations, who discovered the [Progressive education model](#) captured better the curiosity, abilities, and potential for growth within each child. From its one-room beginnings in the old farmhouse that now serves as the office building, the school grew steadily. Miquon intentionally remains a small school, hovering around 150 students (or more) for the past 50 years in order to best foster the close relationships that promote effective learning and teaching.



## At a Glance

Founded: 1932

Total students: 150

Students of color: 26%

Total faculty: 15 classroom teachers,  
7 specialists, 1 fellow

Faculty of color: 26%

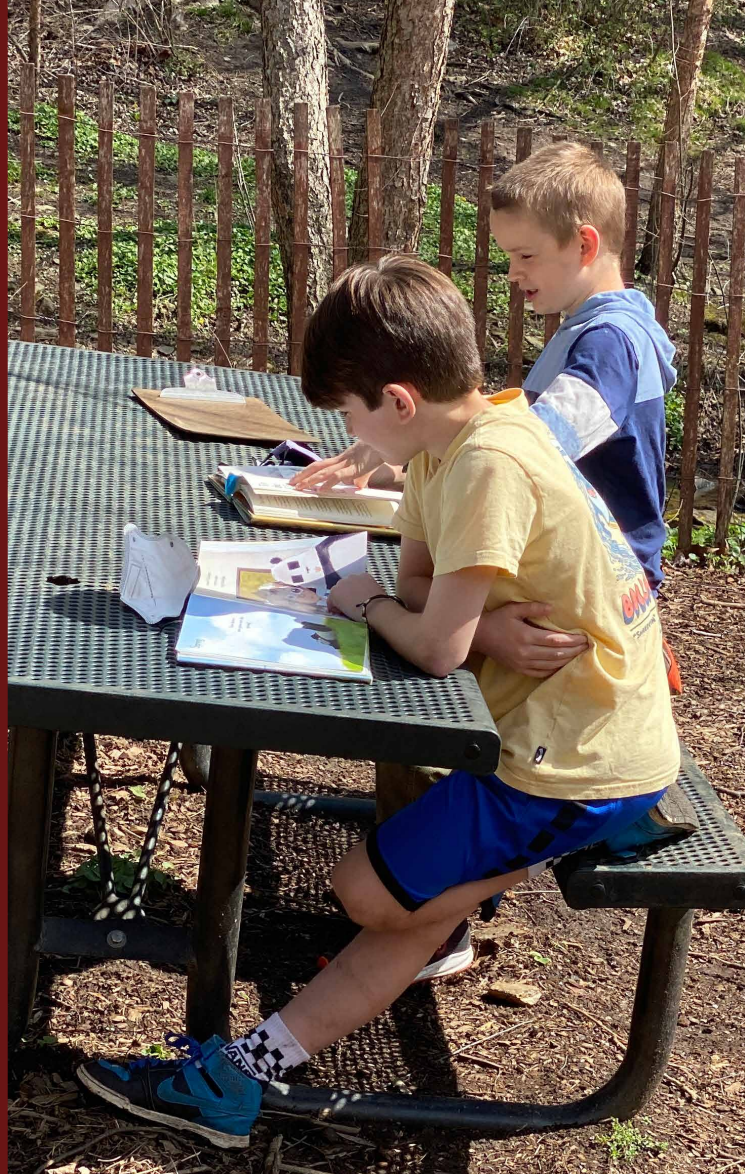
Faculty with advanced degrees: 74%

Student/teacher ratio: 7:1

Financial aid budget: \$752,589

Students receiving aid: 41%

Endowment: \$2.4 million



## THE SCHOOL

Miquon is dedicated to celebrating childhood, using innovative student-centered teaching practices, and developing children's knowledge of and appreciation for the natural world. Located just outside Philadelphia, the school is composed of eight mixed-age groups, typically 18 to 22 children in size, with two dedicated teachers in each classroom.

Every day, students experience the value of both structure and flexibility. Structure is provided through clearly articulated goals and expectations for ages, close observation of individual needs, and intense teacher involvement in each child's progress. The flexibility necessary for children to develop independence, self-motivation, and a passion for learning comes from the space to experiment, make choices, and take risks. Time spent outside on the 10.5-acre, wooded campus that includes fields and a creek is an integral part of every student's experience at Miquon.

Miquon is accredited by the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools and a member of the National Association of Independent Schools, the Association of Delaware Valley Independent Schools, and the Progressive Education Network.





## ACADEMICS

Across all grades, Miquon seeks to create confident, lifelong learners who will move into the wider world with strong academic and social skills, intense personal interests, a love for the arts, and a commitment to being upstanders and building inclusive communities.

### Nursery

The youngest children at Miquon are the three- and four-year-olds in the Nursery. Like all of Miquon's classrooms, the Nursery is a haven for curious, imaginative thinkers and learners. The academic program is led by teachers who are committed to building literacy and numeracy through a play-based program. Students spend most of the day outdoors, playing in the creek, digging in the dirt, climbing play structures, and planting gardens. Nursery is integrated into the life of the rest of Miquon with schoolwide programs and activities.

### Kindergarten

Kindergarten students at Miquon develop in important physical and emotional ways. Throughout the year, teachers work with Kindergarteners to improve self-care skills such as hand-washing and dressing appropriately for the weather. Students practice communication skills such as listening to others and playing cooperatively, and teachers guide students through the work of school-day transitions, group meeting participation, and campus stewardship.

### Grades 1 to 6

Elementary students receive a well-balanced education grounded in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology, the arts, library, and Spanish. At Miquon, teachers integrate language arts experiences throughout the day. Children exchange ideas, listen and respond to one another, and interact with texts in all subject areas.



The overall goal of mathematics learning at Miquon is to enable children to understand and apply mathematics throughout their lives. Inquiry, discovery, reasoning, and application across curriculum areas provide the foundation of math instruction. Miquon's science curriculum is an adaptable and evolving resource focused on using the scientific process to help students better understand their world. It provides a scaffold for learning experiences while also remaining flexible enough to incorporate student interests, new opportunities, and emerging ideas in science education. Science instruction at Miquon draws from its sylvan setting and rich traditions, current research on science literacy, Progressive education practices, and student and staff interests.

Each spring, the Art and Science Show showcases work from every child in the school. The art presentation is curated by the students and their art teacher. The science show has evolved over the last few years but always features reflective learning exhibitions from fifth- and sixth-grade students. These exhibitions may feature inventions developed by students, extensions of science projects completed earlier in the year, live demonstrations, or creative exhibits that educate visitors about a specific topic.

While every grade level has its own thematic study focus that is developmentally appropriate, the social studies program also makes space for the passions of individual students.

## School Placement

Miquon students go on to attend top-ranking secondary schools, colleges, and universities. Recent graduates have attended the following institutions, among others:

### Middle and High Schools

Abington Friends School  
 AIM Academy  
 Baldwin School  
 Center School  
 Crefeld School  
 Colonial School District  
 Frankford Friends School  
 Friends Central School  
 Friends Select School  
 Germantown Academy  
 Germantown Friends School  
 Lower Merion School District  
 Kimberton Waldorf School  
 Masterman Laboratory and  
 Demonstration School  
 Norwood-Fontbonne Academy  
 Project Learn  
 Science Leadership Academy  
 Springfield Township School District  
 Springside Chestnut Hill Academy  
 William Penn Charter School  
 Wissahickon School District

### Colleges and Universities

Berklee College of Music  
 Brown University  
 Emerson College  
 Harvard University  
 New York University  
 Northeastern University  
 Rhode Island School of Design  
 Temple University  
 Tufts University  
 Tulane University  
 University of Pennsylvania  
 University of Vermont  
 Vassar College  
 Virginia Commonwealth University  
 Wesleyan University



Know all people by these presents that

**Sylvie**

For seamlessly weaving her personality through every creation and endeavor—meticulously building an A-frame, intricately doodling on every inch of paper and skin, transforming into Pancho and igniting laughter at skit night—a composed, yet hilarious, performer transforming the commonplace into the complex and hysterical;

For drawing deep connections as a scientist, researcher, and mathematician—enthusiastically diving into brain science and mindfulness, welcoming every math challenge and then craving more, finding meaning and purpose in the design of earthships—a deep thinker whose perseverance through projects and puzzles is limitless;

And for creating an inclusive community bound by a love of storytelling—getting lost in books perched atop the monkey bars or a tree, serving as co-editor of “The Miquon Star,” collaborating on lengthy fictional tales, and authoring “Archie Smith, Boy Wonder”—a supremely detailed writer whose breadth of work is created out of love and understanding...

Is hereby declared a graduate of  
**The Miquon School**

Sneamul June 10, 2022



Know all people by these presents that

**JAMES**

For skillfully bringing people together as a coveted teammate on the field and in the classroom—co-leading a games minicourse, starting friendly tag competitions, happily joining any team in PE as long as everyone gets to play, and leaving his mark on a “hamster class” production—a stellar collaborator who puts emphasis on the memories made with a beloved community;

For leading by example, full of grace and optimism—astutely reading the room as an adept conversationalist and active listener, seeing situations from all perspectives, commanding attention as a gifted performer, hilariously donning wigs and costumes—a solid and silly presenter captivating us all with his empathy, wit, and kindness;

And for putting every ounce of himself into passion projects—taking photographs for “The Miquon Star,” crafting poetry about baseball, documenting adventures in building a wooden chest, and writing letters to overturn outdated mascots—a dedicated worker, always willing to do extra as he strives to make personal and meaningful connections...

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In the social studies program, the interests, heritage, and experiences of the children in a group—as well as the interests and expertise of the teachers—influence the topical content through which skills and concepts are developed. Social studies is also the primary vehicle through which the program teaches social justice. Theme work is approached with an anti-bias lens where children are encouraged to research and consider the experience of “the other” in any given situation.

During the pandemic, Miquon’s faculty made further refinements to its curriculum, adapting it to increase academic choice for students. Giving children even more ownership over their topics of study has proved so successful that such an approach has now been incorporated in the curriculum and schedule.

## THE ARTS

Art and music are integrated into the curriculum across all grades. All children from Nursery through sixth grade visit the Art Room for a dedicated art curriculum designed to help children grow as artists, problem-solvers, and thoughtful members of a community. Teachers introduce students to a range of artists, from the masters to contemporary artists, to expand their knowledge of art history, art movements, and art criticism. Children express themselves confidently through their art and know that this expression is a valuable and necessary component of a healthy community. A “learning by doing” approach is the central and guiding ideal at Miquon.



The music curriculum develops music literacy and enables students to use music as an expressive language. Developmentally appropriate activities for each age group guarantee that all students receive the fullest musical experience possible. Students progress through musical skills in a spiral curriculum that covers the nine standards identified by the National Association for Music Education. Ensemble opportunities emphasize the importance of spaces where everyone participates and for which everyone is responsible. And community Sings at the play barn help ensure that students have fun, laugh, and share in singing together.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The overall objective of the physical education program is to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to make active living a way of life. Cooperation, fair play, sportsmanship, communication, and respect are emphasized in all forms of activities and sports.

Every year, the school begins with [Cooperative Games and Problem Solving Activities](#). In these activities, the group confronts a specific scenario or problem to solve, such as escaping a sinking ship or crossing a poisonous or toxic swamp. The focus of these activities is to foster cooperation, to encourage strategic and supportive dialogue and listening to different opinions, and to have fun at the same time. Some groups spend just a few classes on cooperative activities, while others spend a lot more time and do a wider variety of them.





## SCHOOL LIFE

Embedded in the school's mission and philosophy is the belief that a strong school community includes a rich mix of individuals who contribute a variety of talents, experience, and opinions to the learning process. The school continues to build on its efforts to reach out to families and staff from varied economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds and welcomes a diversity of personalities, perspectives, and learning styles.

Supervised care is provided from 7:45 to 8:15 a.m. on school days for all grades, including Nursery and Kindergarten. Children in grades 1 to 6 are welcome to play independently at the lower end of the wood chip field, while Nursery and Kindergarten children meet at the play barn for play and read-alouds until the buzzer rings and they are escorted to their classrooms. After-school care is also available. Most of the afternoon is spent in free play in the creek, the woods, and on the wood chip field. Miqon also provides games, dress-up clothing, art projects, and toys.

## CAMPUS

Miqon's 10.5-acre campus is tucked into a wooded valley and located on Lenni-Lenape land. The school considers the outdoors an integral part of its instructional facilities, with the flora and fauna providing a natural classroom for witnessing and delving into many subjects such as the biology of woodland creatures or a first-hand study of ecosystems. The outdoors also lends itself to children's development of independence, in that students are allowed to experience the campus—their boundaries start small but expand each year—with relatively little supervision. As a result, students build confidence in themselves, feel entrusted by their teachers, and develop agency. While many families come to campus because they fall in love with the campus, families stay because they fall in love with the community.





## WHAT MAKES MIQUON UNIQUE?

- Students spend countless hours playing in the creek and building forts in Creekwood Hollow.
- Generations of students have learned “Miquon in my Heart” and other folk songs, and participate in schoolwide “Sings” at the play barn.
- Sixth graders lead monthly “For the Good of the School” assemblies, where they facilitate problem solving discussions among all students. At all levels, students lead occasional “For the Good of the Group” meetings in their classes.
- Children look forward to “snow days”—not days that school is closed for the weather but days Miquon is open and has enough snow for students to tube down the hill during P.E. Likewise, excitement builds in May when the weather warms and P.E. takes place in the outdoor pool.
- Fifth and sixth graders run weekly lunch sales and care for a small flock of hens on campus (buy a dozen eggs for \$5!). Students use these funds to plan and realize an annual end-of-year trip.
- Families descend on campus for twice-yearly work parties where they plant trees, paint buildings, build playground structures, and do whatever other physical work is necessary to maintain areas of campus.
- At Miquon’s graduation, each graduate is presented with a unique illustrated 18 x 24 diploma chronicling their time at the school, including their quirks, talents, interests, and school projects.
- In general, Miquon students—and families—are celebrated for their endearing originality.
- Miquon students are known for pursuing their interests; secondary schools often comment that they can pick out “Miquon kids” because of their passion for learning and earnest curiosity.





## CONSHOHOCKEN AND PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Conshohocken is a one-square mile borough located in southeast Pennsylvania about 15 miles from downtown Philadelphia on the Schuylkill River. Historically a large mill town and industrial and manufacturing center, Conshohocken has developed into a center of riverfront commercial and residential development.

Miquon is located just up the road from the Miquon train station on the SEPTA Regional Rail System. The extensive SEPTA system can be used to access the Philadelphia International Airport (23 miles from Conshohocken) and many of the towns in the Philadelphia metro area. SEPTA also connects with New Jersey Transit, which can be used to reach hubs such as New York City, Atlantic City, and Newark.

The Philadelphia metropolitan area is the eighth largest in the United States. As a thriving economic center, it is home to major U.S. corporations, including Comcast, Cigna Insurance, Sunoco, Aramark food service, GlaxoSmithKline, Urban Outfitters, and others. The city is also growing as a center for biotechnology and information technology.

Philadelphia's historic and cultural sites make it one of the nation's major tourist destinations. Philadelphia offers a plethora of cultural amenities. Museums include the Franklin Institute, the Museum of the American Revolution, the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the impressive Barnes Foundation at its new location in Center City. It is a wonderful town for sports fans with collegiate games and professional offerings in baseball, hockey, football, and basketball.





With its historic neighborhoods, parklands, and remarkable building murals, Philadelphia is a good city for walking. It's also a great city for dining out, with restaurants offering everything from continental to farm-to-table cuisines.

The city is home to some of the oldest independent schools in the country and, thanks to the presence of the University of Pennsylvania, Saint Joseph's University, Temple University, and Drexel University, among others, has the nation's third largest concentration of college students.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR MIQUON IN THE YEARS AHEAD

Miquon's current Principal, Susannah Wolf, has led her alma mater capably for the past seven plus years, and during the COVID era has focused on what the school feels has been best for student learning and wellness while also continuing to move the school towards the future. On the verge of breaking ground on a new building and landscape project that the school is calling the new "Heart of Miquon," the school is poised for further evolution in what is already an excellent, mission-true program. Read [Susannah's letter to the school community](#) from May 2022 for additional insights on the "state of the school" heading into this search. Opportunities ahead for the school include:

- **Teaching and Learning:** Partner with staff to further enhance a successful Progressive program with a special focus on the intentional integration of Diversity and Action (D&A).
- **Physical Plant and Campus:** Manage and steward Miquon's beautiful, sylvan campus, envisioning the future use of its land and enhancing school facilities.
- **Fundraising:** Grow the endowment to help ensure continued improvements to the campus and competitive salary and benefits for Miquon's extremely committed staff.

- **Management and Leadership:** Collaborate with the leadership team to clarify roles, policies, and procedures to better leverage the expertise and innovation of the school's dedicated staff.
- **Community and Relationships:** Reunite a close-knit community after the intensity of the pandemic, leading with heart and empathy.
- **Communication:** Articulate the value of a Miquon education clearly to prospective and current families, explaining what rigor looks like within a Progressive educational model.
- **Recruitment and Retention:** In line with the strategic plan, recruit qualified candidates, especially from underrepresented minorities, and retain the talented staff already employed at Miquon.

## DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The community has a clear identity and feels it imperative that someone first understands the school's philosophical approach and culture (which places a premium on collaboration and consensus building). That said, new perspectives and ideas that may move Miquon in new directions and that remain aligned with the mission are desired, and indeed consistent with the school's openness to following best practices in educating children. Desired qualities and qualifications for its next Principal include:

- Experience as a leader of peers, someone who can manage and empower staff;
- Experience in a Progressive educational environment;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills;
- Experience as a teacher, preferably at grade level;
- A student-centered outlook on decision-making;
- An ability to prioritize projects and maximize resources;
- Experience in or aptitude for overseeing a budget and school finances;
- Proven ability to create meaningful change, relying on process and input;
- An appreciation of the outdoors, a sense of humor, and the ability to connect with others.

## TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

### John Faubert

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