

Independent School Job Search Guide

Advice from the Boston College Career Center

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OVERVIEW

Independent school teaching offers much to the prospective faculty member. You have a great deal of autonomy in designing and teaching curriculum. You are part of a community that values subject expertise, teaching, and learning. Classes are generally small. The students you teach are committed to learning and are generally quite able academically, and their families are usually committed to and involved in their children's education.

The perceived downsides of teaching in an independent school are now the exception rather than the rule. On average, "25% of the student body of a typical independent school receives financial aid and around 20% of the student body is comprised of students of color."¹ And there are many different types of independent schools serving a wide variety of needs, including students with cognitive or behavioral special needs. Teachers' salaries are typically lower than in the public schools, but in recent years, many top independent schools have made an effort to bring their salaries more in line with those in the public schools.

You'll find an expanded discussion of these topics at [Why Teach in an Independent School?](#)

A FEW KEY ISSUES:

1. **No certification required at the secondary level** - you can teach in most independent schools without state certification or enrollment in a teacher training program. **NOTE** that most independent elementary schools do require coursework in teaching methods, and some require state certification.
2. **Non-teaching jobs and roles** – include admissions, financial aid, alumni relations and development (fundraising).
3. **The hiring calendar** - starts much earlier in independent schools than in public schools - most of the activity occurs from January through April.



BOSTON COLLEGE
Career Center

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

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4. **Teaching fellowships** - some independent schools offer fellowships or co-teaching programs for new teachers, where you are matched with a mentor teacher and may have a reduced course load initially. [More information on teaching fellowships below.](#)
5. **Teacher placement agencies** - much of the hiring in independent schools occurs through teacher placement agencies like Carney, Sandoe & Associates (located in Boston, but with a national clientele of schools). You register with one or more agencies to which you submit your application materials, which are then forwarded to schools with appropriate openings. [More information on agencies below.](#)
6. **Sports and extracurricular activities** - Teachers at most independent schools contribute to students' growth outside the classroom. The ability to coach one or more sports or to advise a major extra-curricular activity such as theater or a student publication is highly valued in applicants.

ARE YOU QUALIFIED?

Laurence Boggess, a former independent school teacher and headmaster and author of [Everyone's Guide to Job Searching in Private Schools](#), has this to say: *"The basic qualities that make a good teacher are universal. They are: love of children, communication skills, expertise in a subject or method area, and confidence."*

1) *Love of Children* - "You must enjoy being with children if you want to teach school. Period.... Love of children means giving them your patience, watching them discover, figure things out, fail and succeed, and being the adult on whom they try things out.... Love of children means taking a personal interest in your kids without taking their insults personally.

"More than any professional qualification, independent schools look for signs that a candidate has a rapport with children. During your interviews you will probably be asked to interact with students in a classroom, in the halls between classes, at lunch, or during recess or break time. I am always swayed by a candidate who is willing to be with children in an unstructured situation, hanging around and talking or playing, comfortable with a group of children he or she doesn't know."

2) *Communication Skills* - "The successful teacher must speak effectively to a wide range of people in many settings: with children in the classroom, with parents in conferences, with adult groups during open houses and parents' nights, with your colleagues in faculty meetings, with visitors and potential new students and families during admissions tours. Teachers must also be able to effectively express themselves in writing. Independent school teachers do a fair amount of writing."

3) *Expertise* - "Your college or graduate school degree says you are expert enough in your field to teach school. If you possess a degree in science, history, math, a social science, foreign language, or any subject area, you likely possess the knowledge to teach that subject up through high school."

- If you have a Master's degree in one of these subjects, you will have the advantage.
- If you have written a senior thesis or will graduate with honors in your major, that is also a plus.
- If you wish to teach at the elementary level, most independent schools will not consider you as a candidate unless you have taken some courses in teaching methods and pedagogy and have some practice teaching experience. (NOTE that teaching fellowships offer promising candidates a way around this requirement.)

4) **Confidence** - "Confidence is not cockiness or aggressiveness; it is the assured feeling that you can do a good job. It is belief in yourself. In most teachers I know, confidence waxes and wanes, and the best teachers are the ones who have periodic bouts of self-doubt.... Confident teachers, like everybody else, have feet of clay, but they quickly bounce back from setbacks and usually maintain a healthy sense of humor about themselves and their teaching."

HOW TO GET STARTED

1. **Register** with one or more independent school teacher recruiting agencies.
2. **Put together your application materials** - have your resume and cover letters critiqued at the Career Center; talk to potential references; write any essays that the recruiting agencies require.
3. **Get some classroom teaching experience** - this can make a huge difference. Volunteer for an after-school program or teach English to immigrants. The Volunteer and Service Learning Center at BC can provide you with some possibilities.
4. **Learn all you can** about independent schools and the hiring process - get a copy of [Everyone's Guide to Job Searching in Private Schools](#) (though it's old, the advice is still useful); read some of the articles from the NAIS link below.

TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS

Some independent schools offer teaching fellowships for new teachers. These fellowships usually offer promising teacher candidates

- the opportunity to be closely mentored by an experienced teacher;
- to participate fully in the life of the school;
- and, in some cases, to start with a reduced teaching load.

See this [comprehensive list of the teaching fellowship programs in public, public charter, independent and Catholic schools.](#)

Featured Teaching Fellowships

Independent Schools Teaching Fellowship

- The Independent Schools Program is a masters degree program created by independent schools faculty for independent schools faculty at Mt. Holyoke's [partner schools](#).
- This two-year fellowship selects graduates to teach, coach, advise extracurricular activities, and fully immerse themselves in the vibrant community life of one of our independent school partners. Fellows receive professional salaries, **a graduate degree (free for most teachers!)**, mentorship from experienced educators, and—most importantly—the chance to develop leadership skills that will serve them throughout their careers.
- Seamless transition from college to career: **Most of our partner schools provide housing, meals**, and a structured environment that supports both personal and professional growth, freeing the Fellows from the stress of living expenses like finding a place to live, paying rent, commuting, utility bills, buying groceries and preparing meals.

- Learn more and apply online. (Before 12/30/24, you can use this [Handshake link](#) to apply.)

Independent School Teaching Residency

An innovative two-year fellowship program between the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education and 19 of the country's top boarding and day schools. ISTR is ideal for individuals who have the ambition and drive to earn a master's degree in education while completing intensive teaching fellowships at host partner schools. **Significantly reduced tuition for the Master's degree.**

The Greenwich Country Day School Co-Teacher Program

If you are a college senior interested in exploring the teaching field at the elementary level, after graduation we offer a co-teacher internship. Co-teachers work for one or two years with a mentor teacher in a classroom, learning teaching skills and techniques. We provide housing on our 80-acre campus. Compensation also includes \$27,000 in the first year of the program, \$29,000 in the second year, and up to \$5,000 annual tuition assistance for graduate school, generous medical and dental benefits. Many prestigious graduate programs are located within commuting distance of Greenwich, CT. The school is located just thirty miles east of New York City.

Pingree Fellowship Program - A Program to Increase Faculty Diversity at Independent Schools

Pingree School generally hires two teaching fellows for the 2017-2018 academic year as part of the Pingree Fellowship Program. The Program is designed to work with talented, developing professionals by introducing them to the crafts of teaching, coaching, and advising at independent schools. Fellowship positions are available in Arts, English, History, Languages (Spanish, French, Chinese), Math, Science, and Technology. The Fellowship runs for a one-year term with the option to extend to two years.

The Pingree Fellowship Program seeks candidates from underrepresented populations in independent schools with a record of strong content preparation and demonstrated interest in working with youth. The Fellowship welcomes those who have recently graduated from undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as career changers. Formal teacher training is not required.

Other Teaching Fellowships

Cotting School, Lexington, MA - Cotting Fellowship Program

Day school for children with a broad spectrum of learning and communication disabilities, physical challenges, and complex medical conditions. 2 years, full salary of \$40,000 per year plus \$30,000 towards a Masters Degree in Special Education

High Mountain Institute, Leadville, CO - Apprentice Program

A professional residency in traditional and outdoor education. Unlike most teaching fellowships or internships, you must pay tuition of \$4,900 per semester to cover room and board, all class materials, and wilderness gear rental. Financial aid is available.

Philips Academy Andover, Andover, MA - Teaching Fellowship Program

At Andover on a one-year teaching fellowship, the recent college graduate (at the bachelor's or master's level) is introduced to teaching in a program of guided work in the classroom, professional seminars, and

exposure to theories and methods of experienced faculty. The school seeks applicants who are new to the vocation of teaching.

Nobles and Greenough School, Dedham, MA - The Teaching Fellow Program

Each year Nobles hires three to six Fellows to work in academic, artistic, or administrative departments depending on the School's needs for the coming academic year. Candidates with fewer than two years of teaching experience are eligible.

TEACHER RECRUITING AGENCIES

Many independent schools rely on teacher recruiting agencies to find teacher and administrator candidates. Registering and working with one or more agencies should be a central part of your independent school job search plan.

There is generally no fee to the applicant, as the agency is paid by the school when a candidate provided by the agency is hired.

The National Association of Independent Schools suggests considering **these issues** when looking for a recruiting agency:

1. What specific services do they give you?
2. Are there fees?
3. Do they specialize in certain types of candidates, schools, or geographic areas?
4. What restrictions are placed upon you? Can you simultaneously register with other agencies or pursue leads?
5. In your field, what were the numbers of openings, candidates, and placements in recent years?

United States Placements

ATOMS Placement Services

Search and placement agency for STEM educators and independent schools. Client schools in 38 states.

Cal / West Educators Placement

Specializes in the placement of qualified teachers and administrators for independent, private, and charter schools throughout California and the West.

Carney, Sandoe and Associates

Provides faculty and administrator recruitment, leadership search, and strategic consulting services to independent, international, and like-kind schools. *The nation's largest agency.*

Educators Ally, Inc.

Search and placement service for teachers and administrators in the greater New York/Connecticut area. They have been expanding into New England for several years now.

Faculty Diversity Search - NYC and vicinity

FDS seeks to recruit and select an outstanding pool of candidates of color and other under-represented

minorities who demonstrate current excellence or future promise as independent school educators. Openings are for teachers of all grades k-12, both entry-level and experienced.

[Independent Thinking](#)

Placement and retained executive search services for *school leaders*—heads and other administrators. Located in Newton, MA.

[Selected](#)

A teacher match agency focused more on charter schools and public school districts, with some independent schools among their clients. **They offer some great resources for teacher candidates** in their [Courses](#) and [Blogs](#) sections.

[Southern Teachers Agency](#)

A free placement service that works with college seniors and recent graduates in their search for education jobs in private and independent schools throughout the South.

[Teachers On Reserve, Inc.](#)

A substitute placement service serving California's private, independent, and charter schools. They provide teachers for schools in, Greater Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, Greater Los Angeles, Orange County and San Diego.

[The Education Group](#)

Placement and retained executive search services for *school leaders*—heads and other administrators. Located in Texas.

[International Placements](#)

[Cultural Vistas](#)

Provides visa sponsorship for experienced kindergarten through 12th grade international teachers for up to three years, and short-term overseas opportunities for U.S. educators

[International Schools Services](#)

Placed over 15,000 qualified teachers and administrators in 200 American and international schools around the world.

[Search Associates](#)

Places over 1500 teachers, administrators and interns in international schools throughout the world each year.

JOB LISTINGS AND ASSOCIATIONS

[Nemnet - The National Employment Minority Network](#)

View over 1,000 job opportunities in education, as well as the public & private sectors. Teaching candidates of color can search for teaching jobs and post their resume to the database, which employers then search.

National Association of Independent Schools - Job Board

Academic Employment Network

This Web site offers free access to a database of jobs in education (secondary-school listings are mixed in with higher education and public-school listings). For a fee, job searchers can post résumés or get access to a more comprehensive job-search database.

Association of Christian Schools International - jobs database

American Association of Christian Schools

Placement Service Candidates pay a \$25 registration fee to use the service.

The following state, regional, and national associations also offer job boards:

Christian Schools International

"Advancing Christian education and supporting schools in their task of teaching students to know God and His word and to glorify Him through obedient service."

Council for American Private Education

Links to many sites that list jobs in independent schools, primarily those with a *religious* affiliation.

Independent School Management

Job board for administrative and leadership roles in independent schools.

- [American Montessori Society](#)
- [Association of Independent Schools in New England](#)
- [Canadian Accredited Independent Schools](#)
- [Conference of Independent Schools \(Canada\)](#)
- [Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education](#)
- [The European Council of International Schools](#)
- [The Florida Council of Independent Schools](#)
- [Georgia Independent School Association](#)
- [Independent Schools Association of the Central States](#)
- [Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools](#)
- [Southern Association of Independent Schools](#)

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DIRECTORIES AND RESOURCES

Print directories

- [Peterson's Private Secondary Schools](#)

Profiles of 1500 schools worldwide.

- [ISS Directory of Overseas Schools](#)

A comprehensive guide to over 550 American and International schools around the globe.

Online resources

National Association of Independent Schools

Over 1000 schools, searchable by criteria such as grade level, coeducational or single-sex, and boarding or day.

Boarding Schools Online

Search hundreds of independent boarding schools.

American Montessori Schools

An incomplete listing of Montessori schools (may only include accredited schools).

American Association of Christian Schools

Approximately 1,050 member schools throughout the United States and in several foreign countries

Association of Christian Schools International

International Boys' Schools Coalition and **National Coalition of Girls' Schools**

These Web sites feature directories of member schools, with links to some school home pages.

¹ Independent School Association of the Central States