HOLTON-ARMS SCHOOL
Bethesda, Maryland
DIRECTOR OF FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS
Start Date: July 2022
holton-arms.edu
Mission

The mission of the Holton-Arms School is to cultivate the unique potential of young women through the “education not only of the mind, but of the soul and spirit.”

OVERVIEW

Founded more than a century ago, Holton-Arms School encourages young women in grades 3-12 to approach the world with a thirst for challenge, unflinching curiosity, and a sense of responsibility to use what they learn for the greatest good. Holton is a vibrant place where students are deeply engaged in the process of learning. Since they are both challenged and nurtured, they develop self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of competence. The School offers rigorous and dynamic programs in the traditional academic areas, the fine and performing arts, and athletics. Students hail from Maryland, Virginia, and D.C.

The mission of the Holton-Arms School is to cultivate the unique potential of young women through the “education not only of the mind, but of the soul and spirit.” Founded in 1901 by two visionary women, Holton-Arms continues to cultivate a diverse, inclusive, and equitable school community, to tend to the health and wellbeing of its members, and to build a global curriculum that responds to the learners in its classrooms and the world around us. In this vibrant community committed to academic excellence, students are scholars, artists, and athletes who find their voices, take risks, learn from mistakes, pursue opportunities for leadership, and build lifelong friendships.

Holton-Arms emphasizes the values of respect, compassion, and service to others so that its students can participate effectively in school life, as well as in local, national, and global communities. In doing so, the School seeks to develop in its students’ personal integrity and sense of responsibility. The School lives out its mission through the Learn Well, Live Well, Lead Well (LW3) framework, a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach to supporting each student and ensuring that all students thrive in school and in life, growing into leaders who will make the world a better place.
Holton-Arms seeks a visionary Director of Fine and Performing Arts to begin the role in July 2022, supporting the arts’ integral role in the academic and personal development of students. The Director is a member of the Senior Leadership team, reporting to the Head of School, and working in close partnership with the Art Department and Performing Arts Department Chairs to support curriculum and innovation within the Fine and Performing Arts and advocating for the arts program both internally and externally. Strong candidates will be advocates for girls’ education and will have extensive experience directing visual and/or performing arts programs. The Director of Fine and Performing Arts will be equipped to build genuine connections with students, colleagues, and families to ensure all parties are working in harmony to prepare Holton-Arms women to be agents of change and citizens of the world as they strive to “learn well, live well, and lead well.”

SCHOOL HISTORY AND FACILITIES

In 1901, 19 years before women had the right to vote, Jessie Moon Holton and Carolyn Hough Arms founded the Holton-Arms School. The high academic standards for which Holton-Arms School is known today were set during the School’s early years. Small classes were maintained to afford a maximum amount of individual attention to each student, and only the most qualified teachers were invited to join a faculty dedicated to the education of youth—“not just to the education of the mind but of the soul and spirit.” Mrs. Holton’s dream was to create an “Open Door” where her students would be inspired to explore new ideas and develop their full potential. She also insisted that they give back to the community.
In 1963, the School moved to the River Road campus in Bethesda, Maryland. The expanded facilities allowed for increased enrollment, and new courses were developed to augment a strong traditional curriculum. In the following years, major additions included the Alice S. Marriott Library, a photography lab, an art studio, an art gallery, an infirmary, and the Advancement Center. Once again, with new facilities came new programs: the Creative Summer Day Camp and an after-school adjunct program offering art, music, dance, and drama classes. The student activities center, housing expanded dance facilities, a double gymnasium, pool, theatre, rehearsal rooms for chorus and orchestra, and several classrooms, was completed in 1989.

Holton celebrated its Centennial in 2001. The Centennial Building Project—providing students with a new science wing, expanded performing arts rehearsal and performance facilities, renovated academic spaces, and a new all-weather track and field—was completed in 2003-2004. Renovated in the summer of 2012, the main entrance and administrative building welcome students, faculty, alumnae, and parents to the School. Along with bright natural light and soaring ceilings, the space features thoughtful architectural details that reflect the more-than-100-year history of the School. As visitors enter, they cross over Holton’s timeless School seal and beneath the cherished motto, Inveniam viam aut faciam—"I will find a way or make one."

THE SCHOOL

For well over a century, Holton-Arms has maintained high academic standards while producing graduates who are also exceptionally conscientious, curious, and collaborative. It is a place where parents support the School by helping out in the library, on field trips, on committees of the Board, and at special functions. And it is and a place where outstanding faculty continue to give maximum attention to students individually.
Learn Well, Live Well, Lead Well is Holton-Arms’ philosophical approach to educating the mind, the soul, and the spirit. This approach is intended to be comprehensive and multi-dimensional so that every student can be seen for who they are and valued for what they bring to the community. Accordingly, the approach embraces excellence in academics, the arts, and athletics in concert with health and wellbeing; global competencies; and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, as they prepare to become leaders who will change the world for the better.

Across the board, Holton is a forward-thinking place that simultaneously honors tradition. It nurtures a love of lifelong learning, tenacity of purpose, and intellectual curiosity. The Holton graduate exemplifies strength of character and exercises moral courage; they value diversity of identity and thought and believe that trust, respect, and empathy are the keys to building relationships.

Holton-Arms believes that single-gender education is not merely a matter of separating girls and boys. As a girls’ school, Holton-Arms commits—through curriculum and culture—to ensuring girls take center stage, while drawing upon what is known about the way they grow and learn. By doing this in the classroom, as well as in the community, the culture, and the climate, a Holton-Arms education is a powerful and transformative experience.

The School is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the Association of Independent Maryland Schools, and the State of Maryland. Holton holds memberships with the National Association of Independent Schools, the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, the Association of Independent Maryland Schools, the Parents Council of Washington, the National Coalition of Girls Schools, The Heads Network, the Association for Middle Level Education, Council on Spiritual and Ethical Education, INDEX, EAB, and One Schoolhouse, of which Holton was a founding member.
ACADEMICS

Programmatically, Learn Well, Live Well, Lead Well (LW3) is the framework for building Holton’s curriculum. It allows teachers to stretch the work they do with students beyond traditional academics and is rooted in the institutional priorities of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; health and wellbeing; and global education. Gifted and devoted teachers create safe spaces for students to challenge themselves, explore new interests, and reach beyond their comfort zones. The faculty regularly reviews and revises the curriculum to keep coursework current with developing trends and technologies. School-wide competencies, rooted in the LW3 framework, are woven into all courses, programs, and assessments at the School.

While establishing a superb grounding in core and specialized subjects, the School is intentional and proactive in its approach to social and emotional wellness. Small Advisory groups provide safe spaces for students to interact with a caring adult on a regular basis. Seminar, an integrated, interdisciplinary, spiraling schoolwide curriculum, helps students build a solid and healthy sense of identity by developing skills of self-awareness and empathy. They tackle critical issues including gender, power, identity, bias, and difference, both in their own lives and in global contexts—whether linking classroom learning to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals or traveling with classmates to New Orleans or Belize. From grades 3-12, Holton girls experience a wide array of opportunities to explore and experience a variety cultures, environments, economies, and political systems through the School’s Global Education Program. Cultural immersion happens both inside the classroom and through travel in the U.S. and abroad. Upper School students with an interest in global issues and international affairs can pursue a specialized Global Scholars Program including a Junior Journey and completion of a capstone Senior Project focusing on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Ultimately, the goal is for students to graduate Holton-Arms as confident, creative problem-solvers who know how to iterate and are comfortable with failure—and who are able to do all of this with a global mindset.
THE ARTS

The arts and artists are thriving at Holton-Arms, challenging the mind, nurturing the soul, capturing the imagination, and celebrating the human spirit. The arts curriculum actively engages each student in the process of discovering their creative vision, while acquiring technical skills and gaining historical and cultural perspectives. The Arts program also aligns with and feeds the Learn Well, Live Well, Lead Well competencies; arts are central to students’ understanding of themselves and others and are an important way that community is built through collective creativity.

The Visual Arts program is presented in a sequential, spiraling curriculum, encouraging interdisciplinary connections, personal expression, and cultural understanding. Students in the Lower School receive a solid found of technical skills through hands-on discovery and play. By engaging each student in problem solving using a variety of media, the Lower School Arts Program capitalizes on children’s joyous affinity with art materials and activities of every type. It also encourages using the arts to help them build their sense of self-knowledge and identity with projects like the 5th grade Identity Boxes. The self-portraits students create in 6th grade, inspired by Frida Kahlo, encourage students to explore and find creative ways to represent their sense of self. As students progress to the Middle School, they grow in both skill and self-confidence. Visual art courses in the Middle School provide general introductions to studio art, photography, and ceramics and reinforce skills and concepts learned in Lower School. Once students reach the Upper School, they may specialize in one discipline to further advance their technical and problem-solving skills.
The Performing Arts program provides robust offerings for students to tap into their creative spirit and celebrate humanity. Dance begins in grade 3 and continues throughout grade 12. Through dance, students begin to see how the art form can support the skills of communication, collaboration, and community building. All Lower School students are required to participate in dance, and many continue to engage in a variety of dance offerings in the Middle and Upper Schools. Middle School dance opportunities include Dance Workshop, a one-trimester elective (offered twice per year), and the Middle School Junior Orchesis Dance Company, which develops student choreographers with a strong technical foundation in a variety of dance styles. In the Upper School, classes include Dance Composition and Choreography, Dance Technique, Intermediate/Advanced Dance Technique, and the audition-only Upper School Orchesis Dance Company (a two-season commitment).

In the Dramatic Arts one can see students building the competencies of open-mindedness and perspective taking. Holton offers classes in both acting and theater tech as well as several performance opportunities annually; with the exception of one Middle School play, Holton-Arms and Landon School, a nearby boys school, collaborate in all drama productions in grades 7-12 including an Upper School improv group. The program focuses on portraying characters broadly and boldly and on working together as a theatrical ensemble. Students explore diverse dramatic literature and participate in improvisation and devising work. Students involved in technical theater receive an in-depth education in techniques used to create scenery, lighting, sound, and costumes, as well as safety protocols, backstage procedures, and theater etiquette. Curricular study in drama occurs during the traditional school day and beyond.

Music is required for students in grades 3-6, where students develop a strong foundation for technical skills, learn to take creative risks, and work collaboratively. As a continuation of their exploration of instrumental music that begins in Lower School, students in the Middle and Upper School may join Chorus, Handbell Choir, String Orchestra, or Wind Ensemble. Holton-Arms also offers a Fine and Performing Arts Adjunct Program to provide additional support for students interested in instrumental and vocal music.
Original student work is showcased at the School’s annual Coffeehouse event. This unique event allows students, faculty, and staff to collaborate and present original works of art in welcoming and supportive environment.

**SCHOOL LIFE**

Holton’s community fabric is tightly woven because the School believes learning is at its best in an inclusive and supportive environment where students connect intellectually and emotionally with those around them.

Faculty and staff purposefully develop the culture of connectedness by working with students to develop Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies, conflict resolution skills, and restorative practice competencies that have been proven to increase students’ academic success and career readiness.

The Common Threads program, affinity groups for Lower and Middle School students, is another significant way in which Holton-Arms works to ensure every student feels their school is a safe and supportive space. Through Common Threads, students can explore and celebrate the dimensions of their identities to uplift and empower themselves towards action and positive change in the world. L.O.V.E. is at the center of this program and is designed to help students from minoritized communities examine oppressive systems of power and privilege and claim their connection with anti-racist resistors throughout history. L.O.V.E. is an acronym for the pillars of this approach: Looking Inside Oneself; Others and How I Intersect; Valuing Our Experiences; and Executing Positive Actions.
All of this exists and thrives in no small part because, in 2015, Holton designated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as a School-wide priority. Since then, the School has created a senior administrative position devoted to diversity (now the Director of Diversity, Wellbeing & Global Education), created a school-wide faculty and staff committee, TIDE (Towards Inclusion Diversity and Equity); established a Board level Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee; rewritten and approved the Diversity Mission Statement; established a Parent Association Vice-President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; created and implemented the Learn Well, Live Well, Lead Well Seminar; engaged in extensive professional development for faculty and staff (led by outside consultants as well as in-house leaders); established Lower School and Middle School affinity groups; and organized and implemented student-run annual diversity conferences.

Holton is beloved by its students and alumnae for facilitating a deep sense of school pride through numerous traditions. For example, each student is part of either the Blue Team or the White Team. The connection can go back generations: alumnae daughters are part of the same team as their mothers, likewise for sisters, aunts, and cousins. Over the course of the year, there are opportunities for girls to demonstrate Blue and White spirit to earn points for their team. Spirit week is celebrated early each fall with students always anticipating the Panther Pride Parade, during which each class dresses to fit a class theme, the jazz band plays from a float, and faculty and staff dress up.

No one knows the precise date that the Holton-Arms School first opened its doors, but it was sometime in February 1901. As a result, each February (usually on or near the 14th), the School celebrates another favorite tradition, “Happy Birthday Holton-Arms,” with a special lunch and a D.J. in the Dining Room.
Holton provides opportunities for students to interact with boys through its longstanding relationship with Landon School, a nearby school for boys in grades 3-12.

**CAMPUS**

The School is situated on a beautiful suburban campus of 57 acres of rolling woodlands on River Road in Bethesda, MD. The campus features two academic buildings connected by an administrative building, two libraries, a performing arts center, 400-seat theater, black box theater, natural light art and ceramics studios, photography lab, three dance studios, and multiple music education spaces. The athletics facilities feature a double gymnasium, indoor competition-size pool, seven outdoor tennis courts, two softball fields, a synthetic turf field, a Bermuda grass field, a fitness center, three dance studios, and an all-weather outdoor track.

The School is in the final stages of its Promise Campaign, which will provide funds for a new Learning Commons, including common gathering spaces and a renovated Upper and Middle School library.

**BETHESDA, MARYLAND**

Bethesda, Maryland, a family-friendly suburb of Washington, D.C., is one of the most highly educated communities in the United States. With an estimated 63,000 residents, it is a vibrant town and a destination for shopping, dining, and artistic and cultural events. The community features major entities like the National Institutes of Health, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and Lockheed Martin defense headquarters and is home to D.C. commuters, long-time residents, and foreign dignitaries, making for a diverse mix of cultures. Its central location and access to D.C.’s Metro (lightrail) system means quick access to the nation’s capital plus other popular neighborhoods like Georgetown and Silver Spring.
Bethesda is a health-conscious community, and there are many businesses that cater to fitness and a healthy lifestyle. The Capital Crescent trail links to Georgetown and Silver Spring and is a popular route for runners and bikers. The trail offers a unique, eye-level view of parts of D.C. and Montgomery County not seen from a vehicle. Another popular spot is the Carderock Recreation Area, a serene 100-acre park that is part of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. The area is a magnet for nature enthusiasts who love the park’s raw beauty and athletes who enjoy rock climbing, hiking, biking, and boating.

Many flock to nearby D.C. to discover what the halls of the 17 free Smithsonian museums hold—including the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the National Museum of the American Indian, the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Air and Space Museum—to paddle on the Potomac and Anacostia rivers, or to relish its extraordinary architecture. Over the last several decades, D.C. has experienced a cultural renaissance with nationally renowned restaurants, innovative gastropubs, locally owned shops, funky marketplaces, and people-watching hot spots, ranging from the Union Marketplace to pockets of bustling commercial activity in myriad communities such as Chinatown Gallery Place and Adams Morgan.

**CORE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Director of Fine and Performing Arts sits on the senior administrative team and reports to the Head of School. The Director is charged with providing vision for the School’s arts program as well as administering, representing, and increasing the visibility of the School’s art program. Core Responsibilities will include the following, among others:

- Collaborating with Program Leadership and the Division Directors Group on curricular leadership and strategic initiatives;
• Working closely with Art Department and Performing Arts Department Chairs;
• Encouraging and supporting curricular development and program evaluation
• Inspiring innovation and collaboration across arts disciplines and across divisions
• Encouraging work on school-wide initiatives within the Fine and Performing Arts Team
• Recruiting, hiring, supporting, and retaining arts faculty
• Assisting in annual budgeting process and overseeing departmental budgets
• Serving as the public face of the arts at Holton, promoting and advocating for arts programs;
• Serving as advocate, resource, sounding board, collaborator, and coach for thirteen arts faculty members;
• Coordinating and managing the Fine and Performing Arts Calendar;
• Supervising and collaborating with Theater Manager/Technical Director on short- and long-term facility maintenance and enhancement;
• Overseeing and insuring proper use and maintenance of rehearsal rooms, art and dance studios, exhibition spaces, Lewis Theater, and Beebe Black Box Theater;
• Overseeing capital budget projects and expenditure of capital budget funds in the arts areas;
• With the support of the Special Programs office, administering the Fine and Performing Arts Adjunct Program serving Holton students, families, and the greater Washington DC metropolitan area;
  • Hiring, supervising, and evaluating approximately 14 adjunct faculty members
  • Administering budget, including distribution of financial aid
  • Creating and marketing new courses and workshops to complement curricular arts program
• Serving as liaison with Landon School (boys grades 3-12) for coordinate programs in the arts; and
• Teaching in the Visual Arts or Performing Arts department.
DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

As the leader for the arts for grades 3-12, the director will be a strong advocate for the role of the arts at the Holton and in students’ lives. Competitive candidates will bring passion and energy for the arts and a commitment to collaboration with community members across the school. The strongest candidates will possess many of the following qualifications:

• Deep appreciation for Holton’s mission to cultivate the unique potential of young women through the “education not only of the mind, but of the soul and spirit”;
• Understanding of the mindset, curriculum, and pedagogy of multiple disciplines within the Fine and Performing Arts;
• Vision for the continued and future excellence of Holton’s arts program and the tactical and interpersonal skills necessary to bring that vision to fruition;
• Creative, communicative, student-centered, and collaborative approach to decision making;
• The ability to navigate complexity, in part through effective prioritization, delegation, and management of systems; and
• Experience managing adults and building collaborative working relationships with a range of stakeholders, preferably in a multi-division school.
TO APPLY

Interested candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

- A cover letter expressing interest in this particular position; and
- A current résumé.

Selected candidates will also be asked to provide 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.)

Candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence and to submit a résumé and cover letter as soon as possible to:

**Heather Flewelling**
Chief Talent Officer
heather.flewelling@carneysandoe.com

**Marsha Little**
Search Consultant
marsha.little@carneysandoe.com