

Rock Creek Quaker School Agency History

Mission Statement



Founded in 1784, Rock Creek Quaker School provides a coeducational, college preparatory program guided by the Quaker values of truth, equality, simplicity community and peaceful resolution of conflict.

By setting high standards of excellence for a diverse and caring community, Friends seeks to develop in each student the spiritual, intellectual, physical and creative strengths to make a positive contribution to the world.

Recognizing that there is that of God in each person, the School strives in all its programs, policies and affairs, to be an institution that exemplifies the ideals of the Religious Society of Friends.

On January 29, 1784, five Friends were appointed by Rock Creek Friends Meeting to oversee classes for children. Friends had already been in the area for 128 years at this time. The earliest location of classes was the Meetinghouse downtown. A thirty acre campus existed there. The school was one of the few coeducational schools at the time. From 1780's until 1820's the city was growing rapidly. The school was in session for one, three-month term. Although others were welcome, the impulse of the school was to educate Quaker youth, and the teachers were Quaker. Friends wished to provide a 'guarded education' preparing for a way of life in which spiritual and temporal goals were unified.

A school house was built in the 1800s, and a new meetinghouse formed in 1805. "In the years up to the Civil War, the committee too often made only a token effort at support and supervision." The teacher retained autonomy as long as he collected fees. The first guidelines for the school were written in 1818-1819; boys and girls were separated for learning at this time. No corporal punishment was observed after 1820. Likewise, after 1820 women were teachers.

Public schools began in the city in 1829; they were overcrowded, in poor condition, and had poor teachers. In the 1840's the school moved from its original location to the Landon Street Meetinghouse and a joint committee of men and women oversaw it. In 1858-1859, the Monthly

Meeting agreed to accept financial responsibility and to collect tuition; prior to this time the primary teacher really was in charge.

The Meeting sought a teacher and a head to take charge of the school in 1864. He immediately opened a high school and shifted from a school for Friends to a school taught by Friends. For example, in 1885 the school enrolled 225 students, but only 42 were Friends. "Neither pleas to parents from Baltimore Monthly and Yearly Meetings, nor substantial tuition discounts of from forty to more than seventy percent were enough to significantly increase the number of Quaker children at the School." However, a large majority of teachers continued to be Friends. Kindergarten was added in 1880. The Education Committee of the Meeting met monthly. In the last half of the nineteenth century, Quaker schools "tended, like other schools, to prepare for the great community of this world." In 1872 a "collegiate department" was added. In 1877, an "English course of study" for those not going on to college was begun. [Swarthmore was founded in 1864 and Johns Hopkins in 1876.] In 1871, the Head indicated that the school was teaching 'subjects, not books.' Monthly report cards were sent home. In 1885, the school moved to northwest. Staff of 15 or 16 included 12 women who were paid half of what men received, typical of the era. All but two or three of the faculty were Friends. The school claimed a 'greater emphasis on moral education' than the public school. The Jewish population was high until another School opened in 1899.

From 1888-1899 the Meeting actually did not govern the School, although it continued to exist. In 1899 there was a merger between the Meeting school and the school run by its former Head; Rock Creek Meeting purchased most of the useable equipment from the school and appointed a new principal. A new building was built, and in September 1899, the school opened to 154 students. The new committee took on all aspects of school life.

Edgar Wells was head of the School from 1903-1927. He reported to the committee regularly. The school changed during this period from a student body of 201 and budget of \$15,000 to a student body of 550 and budget of \$150,000. Tuition was fairly low; in 1915, it was \$125 while a competitor's was \$250. By 1915 the proportion of Quaker teachers had declined to less than one-third; many are graduates of Friends Schools. Salaries are, by 1927, typical of the era. Rock Creek's students are "seldom from the ranks of those in the social register", but comfortably well off. Children from the Meeting were supported by the Meeting. In 1913, the first student government was formed and was very independent. Sex education was first taught

in 1912. From 1900-1916, a Friday evening lecture series was held, but it was not profitable. Rock Creek Quaker School was among the first Baltimore schools to develop sports programs for girls as well as boys.

In 1924, Wells became worried about the situation of the School's playing fields further west and urged the purchase of land north. Twenty-six acres were bought for \$80,000; the value of the land grew to \$140,000 in two years. In 1929 Weston Niles recommended building an elementary school on the new land and the Olmstead brothers were hired to study the grounds and location of buildings. By 1936, the entire school had moved north.

Weston Niles was Head of School from 1927 until 1935. His greatest problems came from the depression. By 1931 unemployment was 20% and by 1923 over 23,000 local families were on some form of relief. Between 1930 and 1934 Rock Creek Quaker School income dropped 37%, leveling off at about \$107,000 per year until 1937. Enrollment was about 450 in 1930, but only 288 in 1936-1937. Not until the end of World War II did either revenues or student population return. In 1932 the faculty decided to take a pay cut, rather than be further reduced. On the other side, building was a good thing to do during this period as prices of materials and wages were both low.

A professional administrator became Headmaster in 1935. He decentralized authority creating three principals within the school. He also appointed a Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds. By 1936 the entire school had moved north. The only meaningful changes that occurred within the school were changes in teaching methods; the Head was a follower of the progressive educational movement. In 1936 the Rock Creek School Association was formed "to meet the need for a closer relationship between the school and its patrons, alumni, former pupils, and friends." There was a shift from individual competition to group activity and social and athletic programs were very important in the school. The Head resigned in 1943 to become the head of Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C. The Executive Secretary left the Meeting and Yearly Meeting to become Head of School.

By the end of 1939, Rock Creek had taken two upper school war refugees as students. Several more arrive in the next year and by 1943 there were nearly a dozen. Teachers encouraged correspondence between children in France, England and China. No military recruiters or speakers on government wartime programs were on campus.

Enrollment grew from 366 in 1940-41 to 462 in 1944-45. But the school had a large debt, and for eight years had either been in debt or had a balance of only \$1 or \$2,000. Teacher's salaries were 'a disgrace' and faculty did not have retirement or health insurance. The new Head was a 47 year old speaker and published author and community organizer. He was also a "beloved Quaker and inspirational public leader." He undertook to improve the financial situation. For seventeen years, tuition raised steadily, and by 1959 total assets reached \$1 million, with income of half a million. In 1949, he created a tenure program by which after seven years of employment teachers were designated "senior faculty" and considered permanent staff.

The biggest challenge of the period was desegregation. Rock Creek had included persons of color before 1829 when public education began in Baltimore, but afterwards interest waned. In 1947 the school founded a Human Relations Committee. In 1951, the Urban League met with the heads of the private school association. Several Catholic schools had admitted Blacks; a competitor school approved admission in 1950 although no students enrolled until 1955. On September 27, 1955, Rock Creek School held a forum with parents on desegregation. The school community was divided. Trustees were asked to put aside funds in case enrollment declined when Blacks were admitted and they did so. However, the School committee didn't decide to integrate until December 1955; and they decided simply to begin with the nursery. Only 18 students withdrew, and enrollment actually rose from 514 to 523. Six new students were Black. 1964 opened the whole school, regardless of race. Black faculty appeared.

During this period the relationship between students and faculty was very close. The school was thriving. It received a 4.2 (out of 5) and well above the average 3.7 for private schools in the region on its 1959 evaluation by Association of Independent Maryland Schools. Meeting for Worship had become a basic part of the school atmosphere.

The long-time Head was celebrated on May 8, 1960. His son became the new Head. He was much younger, and initially unsure of his capacity. The nation was changing rapidly. Only 6% of Southern schools are integrated. The city is 35% Black. The school committee changed. Developing sub-committees on Finance, Personnel, Scholarships, Property and Public Relations brought more members onto the Education Committee. In 1967 a Long Range Planning Committee was formed. In 1970 that committee opened to students, parents and alumni (all Quaker at first).

In 1972, it became clear that the school was suffering financially from being under Meeting ownership. A separate endowment fund and program for deferred giving or special funding were needed and difficult under the Meeting. "The most important reason for incorporation, however, was that the school wanted to be able to call upon the talents and resources of its non-Quaker patrons." "The school had outgrown the Meeting." In the spring of 1973, a sub-committee on legal structure recommended that 18 of 22 members of the Board be nominated by the Meeting; 15 must be Quakers.

The School and the Meeting were two different organizations with two different purposes. Both were clearly Quaker, and both were devoted to the Society of Friends. "Yet one was a religious institution and the other a college preparatory school with a religious foundation." Over 90% of the school's clientele was not Quaker. "Despite the fears, the incorporation, when it came in 1973, did not seem to weaken the Quaker character of Rock Creek Quaker School." There were some times in the '70's however when the Head took special steps to strengthen the Quakerism of the School. A committee on Orientation and Coordination was formed, as was a special Trustees Study Day.

The new Head had a successful first decade. He was a good fund-raiser, and annual giving was \$100,000 by the 1980s. The children of the Meeting were still being supported (in part) by funds of the Meeting. The Quaker influence on the school was reflected by weekly Meeting for Worship, Quaker speakers, workshops and Quaker Day in the High School.

In 1971, tenure was replaced by a system of guaranteed annual and multiple year contracts. In 1974 the Board of Trustees withdrew the benefit of free tuition to faculty children. Faculty Meeting for Business began. The school celebrated its 200th anniversary in 1994. Quakers represented 7% of students in the 1980s. By 1989 21% of the school was receiving financial aid. Also in 1989, the school decided to increase its size, and a major addition to the Lower School was made. A scholarship fund for Meeting children developed at the Meeting. This project raised money from Friends to support Quaker children, allowing additional funds raised by the school to support other forms of diversity. Enrollment in 1991-1992 was 949.

A major change also occurred in 1994, when the school requested a bylaws change. The Meeting approved the proposal for the Board to appoint two members for temporary tasks.

Also during that year the Diversity Committee at the School expanded its mission to “diversity and Quaker mission.” .

In 1997, the school began to look for a new head, without limiting the position to a Quaker. A non-Quaker became head in 1998. The school earned \$3,360,000 in its capital campaign that year. In the winter of 1997, the Meeting approved a new mission statement for the school. In 2000, some difficulties began. Two Quaker members of the Board resigned. A Friend in the Meeting anonymously donated funds to permit Faculty at the School to study Quakerism. In 2001, a consultative group reported to Meeting that the Meeting’s committee on Ministry and Counsel had met three or four times this spring with the head of the school and the chair of the board. As a part of this process, the School wrote itself a Faith and Practice (book of Queries and Advices).

The non-Quaker Head left the School in 2002, and a temporary Head was on campus in 2002-2004. In 2003 Rock Creek Meeting approved bylaws changes, and also in December of 2004. A new Head came in 2004. Subsequent to that, a strategic plan was approved.

Timeline

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| Early 1800's | A school house was built and a new meetinghouse formed. |
| 1840's | The school moved to the meetinghouse. A joint committee of men and women oversaw it. |
| 1858-1859 | The Monthly Meeting accepts financial responsibility. |
| 1864 | Meeting hires Head. Opened high school; shifted from a school for Friends to a school taught by Friends. |
| 1872 | A “collegiate department” added. |
| 1877 | “English course of study” for those not going to college began. |
| 1885 | School moves. Enrolled 225 students, with only 42 Friends. |
| 1888-1899 | Meeting did not govern the School. |
| 1899 | Merger and building new School. School opened with 154 students. Committee took on all aspects of school life. |
| 1903-1927 | As School grows, proportion of Quaker teachers declines to less than 1/3. |
| 1924-1936 | Land bought north and campus built. |

1927-1935 Weston Niles was Head of School and depression affected it.

1935 A professional administrator became Head.

1937 Rock Creek Quaker School Association formed.

1943 Executive Secretary leaves Meeting to become Head of School.

1947 Human Relations Committee founded.

1949 Tenure program established.

1955 Begins integrating nursery in December. 18 students withdrew.

1959 AIMS Evaluation of 4.2 (out of 5).

1960 New Head of School. School Committee adds sub-committees.

1964 Whole school open regardless of race. Black faculty appeared.

1967 Long Range Planning Committee formed.

1971 Tenure replaced by a system of contracts.

1973 Meeting approves School as separate legal organization, creating mission and Board to sustain Quakerism.

1974 Board of Trustees withdrew the benefit of free tuition to faculty children.
Faculty Meeting for Business began.

1980's Quakers represented 7% of students in the 1980s.

1984 200th Birthday celebration.

1989 21% of students receiving financial aid. Major addition to Lower School.

1991-1992 Enrollment is 949.

1994 Meeting approves bylaws change permitting Board to appoint two members for temporary tasks. Diversity Committee expands mission to "diversity and Quaker mission."

1997 Meeting approves new mission statement for school.

1998 A non-Friend becomes Head. \$3,360,000 earned in capital campaign.

2000 Difficulties begin. Board members resign. Meeting gives Funds for Quaker Study.

2001 Meeting and School meet regularly. School writes Faith and Practice (book of Queries and Advices).

2002 Head leaves and interim in place for two years.

2003 Meeting approves bylaws changes; also in December 2004.

2004 New Head begins. Subsequent to that, a strategic plan was approved.

Agency Financial History

In 1858, the Meeting takes formal responsibility for financial management of the School; it collects tuition. In 1903 the enrollment of the school was 201 and its budget was \$15,000. By 1927 enrollment had grown to 550 and the budget to \$150,000. However, enrollment and assets dropped during the depression with enrollment at 288 in 1937 and a budget of \$107,000.

Twenty-six acres were purchased for \$80,000 during the depression; the value of the land grew to \$140,000 in two years. The entire school moved there by 1936. In 1932 the School's faculty took salary cuts, rather than further decreases in its own ranks.

The school had a period in the 1940's with a large debt, and for eight years had either been in debt or a balance of only \$1 or \$2,000. Teacher's salaries were 'a disgrace' and faculty did not have retirement or health insurance. For seventeen years, tuition increased steadily, and by 1959 total assets reached \$1 million, with income of half a million.

The School became independent of the Meeting in 1973 and annual giving was \$100,000 by the 1980s. The children of the Meeting were still being supported (in part) by funds of the Meeting. A capital campaign raised \$3,360,000 in 1997.

Fiscal Year 07

Programs include for-profit infant and child care and summer programs, not-for-profit pre-school, and grades 1-12.

Revenue: \$26,394,110 Expenses: \$20,819,733

Income –

Financial Aid Awards	2,155,245	(8%)
Parents Association	2,755	
Public Support	4,258,519	(16%)
Dividends & Interest	1,220,061	(5%)
Rent	33,790	
Sales of goods	103,669	
Other Revenue	97,425	

Program Service Revenue

Tuition	17,615,768	(67%)
Auxiliary Enterprises (aftercare)	1,044,878	(4%)
Late Charges and Fines	36,349	
Dining Services	243,450	
Trips	81,945	
Little Friends and Baby Friends	97,736	

Fiscal Year 2005

Revenue: \$21,681,796 Expenses: \$ 17,266,778

Income –

Public Support	2,958,265	(14%)
Dividends & Interest	876,165	(4%)
Rent	19,479	
Special events	6,264	
Sales of Assets	534,907	(3%)
Sales of Inventory	72,774	
Other Revenue	19,774	

Program Service Revenue

Tuition	15,764,257	(73%)
Auxiliary Enterprises (aftercare)	1,062,649	(5%)
Late Charges and Fines	39,049	
Dining Services	234,844	(1%)
Trips and Yearbook	93,369	
Misc. Fees, other income	19,774	

The primary income is tuition. Of public support, the percentage from Friends is about the percentage of Friends in the population – between 4 and 12 %, but usually at the low end. The school does not take government funds. The founding faith community makes grants through three funds for scholarships.



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University of Maryland, Department of Anthropology, 1111 Woods Hall, College Park, MD 20742

Phone: 301.405.7121 Email: faithandorganizations@anth.umd.edu