

Chief Advancement Officer Search

The Wellington School

Columbus, Ohio

www.wellington.org



The Opportunity

The Wellington School seeks an accomplished and visionary advancement leader to serve as its next Chief Advancement Officer. This is an opportunity to join a vibrant, mission-driven school at an exciting time of growth and possibility.

As a key member of the senior leadership team and a trusted partner to the Head of School, the Chief Advancement Officer will guide Wellington's philanthropic strategy, deepen community engagement, and help secure the resources necessary to advance the School's bold vision for the future. The successful candidate will combine strategic insight with authentic relationship-building, elevating Wellington's culture of philanthropy while strengthening the School's mission.



About The Wellington School

At The Wellington School, we help students find their purpose and realize their potential for tomorrow's world.

Founded in 1982, The Wellington School in Columbus, Ohio, is an independent, coeducational college preparatory day school serving 750 students from preschool through grade 12. Situated in suburban Upper Arlington, Wellington's welcoming campus includes 180,000 square feet of academic space, outdoor learning areas, gardens, and playing fields. Wellington has built a reputation for academic excellence, entrepreneurial spirit, and a deeply learner-centered philosophy.

From its earliest days, Wellington has embraced innovation while fostering a close-knit community grounded in trust, intellectual curiosity, and authentic connection. The school's coeducational environment encourages collaboration, creativity, and leadership, preparing students not only for college but for meaningful lives of purpose and impact.

Wellington's mission challenges students to discover their best selves, become learners for life, and explore how they can contribute meaningfully to the world. The community values intellectual ambition, empathy, responsibility to self and others, and strong relationships across generations of students, faculty, families, and alumni. Over more than four decades, Wellington has focused on the spirit of innovation and partnership that defines its culture today.

By the Numbers

750

students on one campus

43%

students of color

7:1

student - teacher ratio

40%

students receiving tuition assistance

\$896K

raised for The Wellington Fund in 24-25

\$8M

endowment

\$11M

raised to date in quiet phase to support strategic plan

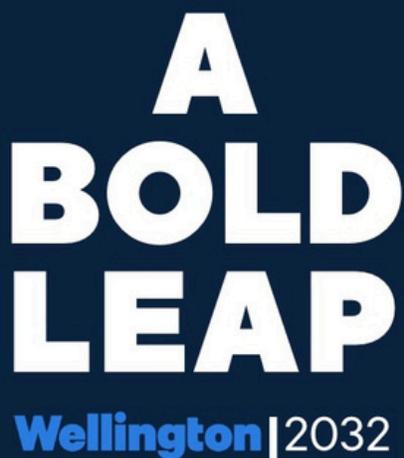
1,746

alumni around the world

Strategic Vision: A Bold Leap

Wellington's strategic plan, A Bold Leap, reflects an ambitious vision for the School's future. Priorities include ensuring academic excellence, deepening community connection, enhancing campus resources, and ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

Philanthropy is central to achieving these goals. The Chief Advancement Officer will play a pivotal role in aligning fundraising strategy with institutional priorities, guiding Wellington toward increased philanthropic capacity and a broadened base of support.



People & Place

Wellington will be **the best place to teach and learn** for those seeking educational excellence in a highly-connected, future-focused learning community.

Program

Wellington will **elevate the standard** for educational excellence and student engagement.

Potential

Wellington will strengthen its financial foundation, securing its **permanence and continued excellence**.



Position Summary

The Chief Advancement Officer serves as The Wellington School's senior strategist for philanthropy, engagement, and advancement. Reporting directly to the Head of School, the Chief Advancement Officer provides leadership for all fundraising and constituent engagement efforts, including major gifts, annual giving, alumni relations, advancement communications, and campaign planning.

This role requires both visionary leadership and operational excellence. The CAO will design and execute a comprehensive advancement strategy that advances Wellington's mission, strengthens community relationships, and ensures the long-term sustainability of the institution.

Leadership Responsibilities

Strategic Advancement Leadership

- Develop and implement an integrated advancement strategy aligned with Wellington's mission and strategic priorities.
- Lead all fundraising initiatives, including annual giving, major and planned gifts, foundation relations, and future campaign planning.
- Partner closely with the Head of School to identify philanthropic priorities and cultivate transformational donor relationships.

Governance Partnership and Board Engagement

- Serve as a strategic advisor to the Head of School and Board of Trustees on advancement strategy, philanthropic trends, and donor engagement.
- Collaborate closely with trustee leadership to shape advancement goals, support governance priorities, and strengthen board participation in fundraising.
- Equip trustees with clear strategies, briefing materials, and prospect insights that empower them as confident ambassadors for Wellington.
- Present clear, data-informed reports that support thoughtful decision-making and long-term planning.
- Help cultivate a strong culture of partnership between advancement leadership and governance grounded in transparency, trust, and shared accountability.

Donor and Community Engagement

- Build authentic relationships with alumni, families, donors, and community partners.
- Elevate Wellington's narrative through compelling storytelling and mission-centered outreach.
- Foster a culture of philanthropy that resonates across all constituencies and reflects Wellington's values.

Institutional Collaboration

- Work closely with leaders in Communications, Admissions, Strategic Initiatives, Business Operations, and Community Engagement and Belonging to ensure cohesive messaging and coordinated constituent experiences.
- Serve as a visible presence within the school community, embracing Wellington's student-centered culture.

Alumni and Volunteer Leadership

- Strengthen alumni and alumni parent engagement through innovative programming and meaningful volunteer opportunities.
- Inspire lifelong connection and philanthropic participation among Wellington's extended community.

Team Leadership and Advancement Operations

- Lead, mentor, and support advancement staff, including the Assistant Director of Development and the Assistant Director for The Wellington Fund.
- Establish clear goals, metrics, and professional development.
- Ensure strong systems, ethical practices, and data-driven planning across advancement operations.

Qualifications and Leadership Profile

Wellington seeks a collaborative, strategic, and relationship-driven leader who brings:

- Demonstrated success in advancement leadership and fundraising.
- Experience partnering effectively with senior leaders and governing boards.
- Exceptional communication skills and the ability to articulate institutional vision with clarity and authenticity.
- A strategic mindset paired with the ability to execute and deliver measurable results.
- An inclusive leadership style grounded in joy, an exceptional work ethic, empathy, integrity, and collaboration.
- Enthusiasm for independent school education and Wellington's mission.
- A bachelor's degree is required; an advanced degree is preferred.



About Columbus, Ohio

Columbus is one of the nation's most dynamic and fastest-growing metropolitan regions, known for its collaborative civic spirit, economic vitality, and exceptional quality of life. As Ohio's capital and a thriving hub for education, healthcare, technology, finance, and creative industries, Columbus offers a vibrant professional landscape paired with an accessible and welcoming community.

At the heart of the city is The Ohio State University, one of the largest and most respected public research universities in the world. The university brings global energy to the region through innovation, research, arts, athletics, and cultural programming, while also contributing to Columbus's strong intellectual and entrepreneurial climate. The presence of Ohio State enhances opportunities for collaboration, lifelong learning, and cultural engagement across the community.

Columbus is widely recognized for its diverse neighborhoods, nationally acclaimed parks system, and flourishing arts and culinary scenes. Residents enjoy a high quality of life, strong schools, and a cost of living that allows families and professionals to thrive. The region's continued growth and vision make it an ideal setting for an independent school committed to preparing students for an evolving world.



Application Process

Wellington welcomes nominations and applications from individuals inspired by its mission and eager to help shape the School's future. Candidates should submit a letter of interest and a current résumé outlining relevant experience in advancement, fundraising, and community engagement.

All inquiries may be directed to [Eliza McLaren](#), Head of School and [Christine Conkle](#), Executive Assistant to the Head of School (conkle@wellington.org). Materials should be uploaded through the link on the School's website. All inquiries and applications will be held in strict confidence. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled. The start date will be determined with the successful candidate.



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