

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY | MARLBOROUGH, MA



DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS



*“Where today’s students become
tomorrow’s innovators.”*



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

New England Innovation Academy (NEIA) seeks a visionary, entrepreneurial, and student-centered leader to serve as its Director of Athletics.

This is an extraordinary opportunity to build an athletics program from the ground up at a young and ambitious school entering its next phase of growth. As the first middle and high school in the nation founded on human-centered design principles, NEIA is guided by three strategic pillars: "innovation in everything we do, sustainable expansion, and belonging for all." The next Director will play a pivotal role in advancing these commitments by shaping how athletics contributes to student growth, community identity, and the evolving culture of the school.

Now in its fifth year, NEIA is entering a period of renewed focus and direction as it proceeds with developing best-in-class programming across all facets of the school. As the school continues to prioritize a more holistic and connected student experience, athletics has naturally emerged as an area with significant potential. Independent school families expect a thoughtfully designed athletics program as part of a well-rounded school offering, and NEIA is seizing this opportunity to build one that deepens community

bonds, enhances student life, and strengthens the school's visibility in a competitive marketplace.

Reporting to the new Head of School, Dr. Durga Suresh-Menon, and serving as a key member of the senior leadership team, the Director of Athletics will provide vision, structure, and operational leadership during a formative period in the school's evolution. This leader will oversee all aspects of the athletics program for grades 6–12, collaborating across academic, residential, and student-support teams to create a connected and mission-aligned student journey. The role requires a steady, collaborative presence who understands how to support students who are bright, kind, creative, and wonderfully individual—learners who thrive when adults recognize their strengths and encourage them to explore, take healthy risks, and grow with confidence. This leader must balance strategic design with hands-on implementation while building trust and coherence across a young and fast-evolving community.





The Director of Athletics will step into a role defined by both vision and possibility. NEIA is making a \$20+ million investment in a new [athletics complex](#) that will include a new turf field and state-of-the-art Athletics Center debuting in Spring 2026. As the school anticipates NEPSAC membership and expands interscholastic offerings, the Director will have the rare opportunity to influence program design before facilities open, ensuring that systems, staffing, scheduling, culture, and community engagement are built intentionally from the start. This leader will architect an athletics road map that balances competitive aspiration with inclusive participation; establishes standards and expectations that bring predictability and professionalism; and nurtures a culture where students of all athletic backgrounds feel supported and encouraged. For a relational, strategic builder who thrives in entrepreneurial environments, NEIA offers the chance to create something lasting, meaningful, and foundational to the school's future.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In partnership with the Head of School and the senior leadership team, the Director of Athletics will be expected to advance the following priorities:

- Build upon NEIA's emerging athletics program to create a mission-aligned, student-centered model. The Director will strengthen and expand NEIA's early athletics offerings by designing a more comprehensive program that reflects the school's ethos of curiosity, belonging, and innovation. This includes establishing cohesive systems, structures, expectations, and culture while ensuring that students of all athletic backgrounds feel welcome, motivated, and supported.
- Help drive enrollment by recruiting students and student-athletes and shaping athletics offerings. As a key partner to Admissions, the Director will help attract and enroll students

THE POSITION

who are excited about contributing to NEIA's developing program. They will identify strategic sports offerings, expand competitive and non-competitive pathways, and articulate a vision that resonates with families seeking an innovative school experience.

- Recruit, manage, and develop a high-quality coaching staff. The Director will collaborate with the Head of Teaching & Learning to identify staffing needs and build a stable, skilled bench of part-time coaches and external partners who align with NEIA's mission and standards. They will set clear expectations, provide meaningful support, and cultivate a shared vision for student growth, sportsmanship, and competitive excellence.
- Design and differentiate Middle School and Upper School athletics programs. With a growing student body and a new facility on the horizon, the Director will build distinct MS and US athletics programs that honor developmental needs, expand opportunities, and prepare students for increasing levels of competition. This work includes setting up age-appropriate teams, schedules, expectations, and staffing models.
- Elevate school spirit, pride, and community identity through athletics. The Director will leverage athletics as a powerful vehicle for belonging and community-building, uniting students, families, faculty, and staff around shared experiences and a growing sense of athletic identity across both competitive and non-competitive pathways. They will champion a culture that celebrates effort, growth, achievement, and inclusion.
- Prepare the school for the opening and use of its new athletics facility in Spring 2026. As NEIA completes a major investment in its athletic infrastructure, the Director will lead planning for program expansion, scheduling, safety, and community use. They will ensure that the new facility becomes a hub for school spirit, improved offerings, and increased visibility across the region.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Strategic Leadership & Program Vision

- Lead NEIA's transition into NEPSAC league competition and position the school for sustainable athletic excellence
- Build and grow competitive athletic programs by establishing team cultures, performance standards, and pathways for student-athlete success
- Seek and recommend appropriate non-league competition to ensure robust competitive opportunities
- Maintain accurate athletic records, statistics, and historical data for all competitive programs

Coaching & Staff Leadership

- Support coaches with resources, guidance, and ongoing development
- Serve as a coach for two athletic seasons
- Mediate disputes between athletes and coaches or within coaching staff, fostering healthy team dynamics

Operations, Logistics & Compliance

- Oversee all operational aspects of the athletics program, including scheduling of practices and games, postseason logistics, transportation, facilities use, officials, non-league contests, and three-season program operations
- Ensure compliance with all league rules, policies, and regulations; develop, maintain, and annually update a Coaching Handbook; and uphold consistent standards of sportsmanship, conduct, dress, and safety
- Coordinate facility rentals to outside groups and provide necessary information for billing, budgeting, and staffing
- Partner with Facilities and Housekeeping/Transportation to ensure athletic spaces are safe, well-maintained, properly equipped, and supported by preventative maintenance plans
- Publish regular athletics communications, including weekly Game Day schedules



Student-Athlete Support & Academic Partnership

- Partner with Enrollment to recruit, assess, and support student-athletes, ensuring alignment with NEIA's competitive and mission-driven goals
- Monitor academic eligibility and collaborate with faculty and administrators to provide timely academic interventions and support
- Coordinate with the Athletic Trainer/Nurse Manager to ensure all student-athletes have proper medical clearance and maintain accurate health and participation records
- Provide resources and support to student-athletes to promote well-being, growth, and performance

Community Engagement & School Partnerships

- Collaborate with Marketing & Communications, Alumni Development, and other departments to promote athletic programs and highlight accomplishments
- Build and strengthen partnerships with the Town of Marlborough, community organizations, and external groups to enhance athletic opportunities
- Develop alumni athletic events, community relationships, and fundraising opportunities
- Represent athletics across admissions, family engagement, alumni relations, and advancement
- Serve as a member of NEIA's administrative team and contribute to school-wide leadership initiatives

Financial Management

- Develop and manage the annual athletics budget responsibly and transparently

QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES

NEIA seeks an innovative and entrepreneurial leader who is energized by the opportunity to build an athletics program from the ground up. The ideal candidate is a strategic thinker and skilled recruiter who understands how athletics can shape



THE POSITION

school identity, drive enrollment, and strengthen community. They bring experience in secondary-school athletics—preferably as an Athletic Director or senior leader in a strong program—and the judgment, adaptability, and confidence required to lead in a dynamic, start-up environment. Equally important is a relational, student-centered approach: someone who is deeply engaged with the community, inspires pride in participation, champions students wholeheartedly, nurtures their confidence, and creates pathways for learners of all athletic backgrounds to evolve, connect, and discover new possibilities.

The next Director of Athletics will be a master collaborator and exceptional communicator who builds trust, fosters belonging, and partners effectively across departments while also serving as the architect who creates structure, sets culture, and brings clarity during a pivotal moment in NEIA's evolution.

Additionally, the ideal candidate brings:

- A deep commitment to NEIA's values of belonging, curiosity, and student voice, demonstrated through inclusive practices that create welcoming and supportive environments for diverse student populations
- Approachability, warmth, and genuine enthusiasm for joining a close-knit community
- Strong relationship-building skills and a collaborative mindset across departments
- Demonstrated leadership capacity that inspires, mentors, and develops coaches and student-athletes
- Professionalism, sound judgment, discretion, honesty, and personal accountability
- A flexible and nimble approach suited to a fast-paced, evolving school environment
- Strength in leading and managing change with positivity and clarity, paired with the adaptability to navigate shifting priorities and multiple tasks in a dynamic environment



- Critical thinking and problem-solving strengths that support thoughtful decision-making
- Strong organizational and planning skills that help bring coherence to complex systems
- The ability to balance independence with teamwork, partnering effectively while also leading with confidence
- Insight to evaluate student performance and potential within a competitive yet supportive athletic model
- Direct working knowledge of athletics in secondary schools (independent schools preferred)
- CPR certification preferred
- Proven ability to recruit, hire, and develop coaches and external partners
- Demonstrated success in building or significantly expanding an athletics program
- Experience with differentiating Middle School and Upper School programming
- Knowledge of health, safety, and wellness programs for athletes
- Experience using technology effectively and strong current knowledge of emerging tools
- Risk management focus and understanding of compliance requirements
- Basic knowledge of preventive maintenance and operation of athletic facilities
- Experience in establishing new systems, processes, and procedures

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

- Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree preferred (education administration or sports management)
- Three to five years of experience in athletic administration
- Prior coaching experience
- Demonstrated experience in student recruitment



THE POSITION



MISSION

Prepare the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs to pursue their dreams and shape a better world. Students discover their passion and purpose, innovate with impact, and prepare for what comes next.

PIN

Your PIN is not only a personal identifier. It is the stake you put in the ground. A starting point for discovering who you are — and learning how you will make a difference.

- *Passion and Purpose:* Passion is understanding yourself and realizing your true potential. Purpose begins with belonging and calls us to create greater good.
- *Innovate with Impact:* Discover needs with empathy. Solve problems creatively and resourcefully beyond conventional means.
- *Prepare for what comes Next:* NEIA incubates future innovators who will be the change they want to see in the rapidly evolving world using next generation technologies and methods.

PILLARS

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

We recognize entrepreneurship as a mindset and means of sharing our ideas with the world. Innovation enables us to create functional and emotional value. We learn to take risks, work through failure, and experience success. Together, these concepts help us make meaningful contributions that benefit society and the earth.

Human-Centered Design

We employ human-centered design as a process to learn empathy and compassion. It serves as a foundation for thoughtful leadership and a way to break down biases and stereotypes. We learn to be good citizens who listen to those around us.

Integrated and Experiential

We seek an experience that is both integrated and experiential. We make connections across disciplines and subjects to build an intuitive and deep understanding of learning outcomes. Our innovators apply their learning to hands-on projects that offer real-world experience.

Belonging and Togetherness

We strive to create a sense of belonging wherever we are. We want those in our community to feel accepted, valued, and heard. We actively appreciate one another and seek to understand how we are different and how we are the same.

I.D.E.A.S. PHILOSOPHY

NEIA innovators are empowered by Inclusion in a Diverse community, which strives for Equity by putting into Action relevant Social justice programs—IDEAS. We understand that each student has an individual and diverse experience before they walk onto the NEIA campus, and we need to start from there. We recognize that adults and students alike have visible and invisible diversity. We acknowledge that this reality shapes us and those around us.

Through I.D.E.A.S., we facilitate the building of a community that honors the great diversity of experience that our students, parents, faculty and staff bring. NEIA will leverage diversity, and diversity of experience, to weave a tapestry of trust and respect.

After all, we are all in this together; we evolve and grow in relation to one another.



New England Innovation Academy (NEIA) is an independent day and boarding school serving students in Grades 6–12 on a campus designed for collaboration, creativity, and community.

Founded in 2021 as the nation's first human-centered design middle and high school, NEIA offers a forward-looking educational experience rooted in innovation, empathy, and real-world problem-solving. The school brings together domestic and international students in a dynamic environment where curiosity is encouraged, individuality is celebrated, and young people are empowered to explore their passions and purpose.

A diverse and globally minded community, NEIA is committed to cultivating belonging and supporting students as they develop confidence, resilience, and strong relationships. With a vibrant residential life

program, an emphasis on design and entrepreneurship, and a culture that values creativity and collaboration, NEIA provides a transformative learning experience that prepares students to engage thoughtfully and contribute meaningfully in an evolving world.

THE PROGRAM

NEIA's academic program is designed to help students build the skills, habits, and confidence needed to thrive as adaptable, thoughtful learners. Grounded in human-centered design, the program emphasizes curiosity, creativity, and collaboration as students engage with complex questions and explore ideas from multiple perspectives. Teachers cultivate a learning environment where young people feel known and supported, allowing them to take intellectual risks, stretch their thinking, and develop a strong sense of personal agency.

Learning at NEIA is inherently experiential and interconnected. Students engage in real-world problem-solving, interdisciplinary projects, and iterative design work that deepen understanding and foster resilience. Whether developing prototypes in

THE SCHOOL

the Innovation Studio, examining social challenges in their communities, or tackling cross-disciplinary inquiries, students learn to navigate ambiguity with confidence and purpose. By the time they move into the upper grades, they are equipped not only with a strong academic foundation but also with the mindset, empathy, and creative confidence to contribute meaningfully in an evolving world.

Although NEIA is a young school, its innovative approach has already earned the confidence of leading organizations in the region. Through partnerships with organizations such as MIT and the Boston Celtics, students benefit from real-world expertise, mentorship, and collaborative learning experiences that reinforce the school's forward-looking mission and deepen the relevance of its academic program.

Middle School

NEIA's Middle School program provides a nurturing, developmentally attuned environment where students are supported by educators who understand early adolescence and its unique blend of curiosity, vulnerability, and emerging independence. With personalized attention and a community that cares deeply about each learner, teachers help students build the confidence to take on new challenges and grow into their best selves. The curriculum is designed to engage students intellectually and creatively, encouraging them to think critically, ask questions, and explore new ideas within a supportive, encouraging setting. By offering meaningful challenges and steady guidance, the program helps students develop resilience, curiosity, and a lifelong love of learning.

Learning in the Middle School is interdisciplinary, hands-on, and rooted in real-world relevance. Students move beyond traditional subject silos to engage in integrated humanities, spiraled math instruction, and a cohesive science program that weaves together biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, and earth science. Innovation Studio empowers students to design responsibly, create solutions, and build technical and interpersonal skills through project-based work, while Life Design supports social-emotional well-

AT A GLANCE, 2025–26

26 acres

Campus Size

**115 students
(26 boarding)**

Enrollment

41%

% Students who identify as people of color

14%

% International students

64

Number of faculty & staff

5:1

Average student-to-staff ratio

16

Average years of teaching experience

83%

% of teachers with advanced degrees

12

Average class size

65%

Students receiving financial aid

\$30,000

Average financial award

\$2.6 million

Annual financial aid budget:

being, executive functioning, and the transition to Upper School. World languages, theater, and visual arts further broaden students' perspectives and creative expression. Through these experiences, and through the consistent support of a dedicated Advocate who meets with each student in small groups and one-on-one, Middle School learners develop strong academic foundations, expanding self-awareness, and the confidence to navigate complexity as they prepare for the opportunities ahead.

Upper School

NEIA's Upper School program builds on the foundation established in earlier grades by offering students increasing independence, deeper intellectual challenge, and meaningful opportunities to explore their emerging passions. Guided by a student-centered and future-focused approach, the program encourages learners to take ownership of their growth, pursue areas of interest, and apply their knowledge to real-world contexts. With teachers serving as mentors and thought partners, students develop the confidence, curiosity, and voice needed to navigate complex ideas and articulate their own perspectives. The environment fosters purposeful risk-taking and resilience, helping adolescents transition into young adulthood with clarity and motivation.

Academic learning in the Upper School is interdisciplinary, experiential, and anchored in NEIA's human-centered design ethos. Students engage in integrated humanities coursework; a cohesive science program that weaves biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, and earth science together; and a spiraled mathematics sequence that emphasizes problem-solving, quantitative reasoning, and conceptual depth. Innovation Studio empowers students to design responsibly and transform ideas into tangible prototypes, while entrepreneurship courses cultivate bold thinking, strategic insight, and a willingness to "fail forward" as part of the creative process. Offerings in world languages, theater, and visual arts broaden students' global perspectives and expressive capacities. Signature programs, including Passion Dive, Real-World Dive, Global Online Academy courses, Life

Design, and dedicated Advocate mentoring, provide students with personalized pathways, experiential opportunities, and consistent support as they prepare for college and life beyond NEIA. Through these integrated experiences, Upper School students develop intellectual agility, creative confidence, and a strong sense of purpose as they step into their next chapter.

CAMPUS & GEOGRAPHY

Campus

NEIA's 26-acre residential campus provides a flexible, modern environment designed to support innovation, collaboration, and student well-being. The campus includes contemporary residential facilities for boarding students, technology-enabled classrooms, science labs, art and design studios, and a variety of collaborative spaces that accommodate both independent and project-based learning. Surrounded by wooded areas and open fields, the campus blends natural beauty with thoughtfully designed spaces that give students room to think, create, and connect.

A signature feature of the campus is The Hive, NEIA's Innovation Studio and makerspace. Fully equipped with fabrication tools—including 3D printers, laser cutters, woodworking equipment, and digital media resources—The Hive serves as a hub for hands-on experimentation, prototyping, and interdisciplinary design work. Students use this space to bring ideas to life, iterate on their thinking, and develop technical and creative skills that complement their academic experience.

Upcoming Athletics Center & Facility Expansion

NEIA is in the midst of an exciting athletics expansion that will significantly enhance programming for students. A new state-of-the-art Athletics Center is under construction, with the first outdoor turf field and full facility planned for completion in Spring 2026. The complex will feature modern training spaces, versatile indoor courts, and high-quality fields designed to support both competitive and recreational athletics.

THE SCHOOL

Once completed, the Athletics Center will serve as a vibrant hub for physical education, team practices, competitions, and community gatherings, reflecting the school's commitment to building a dynamic, inclusive, and forward-looking athletics program.

Geography

Located in Marlborough, Massachusetts, NEIA sits in a vibrant and well-connected community that blends suburban comfort with easy access to major cultural and economic centers. Just 30 miles west of Boston and 20 miles east of Worcester, Marlborough offers quick access to world-class universities, museums, theaters, sporting events, and the region's thriving innovation and biotech corridors. The city itself is home to a growing culinary scene, modern retail developments, and a diverse population that

contributes to a lively mix of local restaurants, arts programming, and community events.

The surrounding towns of Hudson, Southborough, Northborough, and Framingham enhance the area's appeal with walkable downtowns, independent shops, and a wide range of dining and entertainment options. At the same time, residents enjoy easy access to nearby parks, lakes, and trail networks, including Callahan State Park and the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge, which offer opportunities for hiking, biking, and time in nature. Together, Marlborough and its neighboring communities provide a well-rounded quality of life, combining metropolitan convenience with the scenic charm and outdoor accessibility that characterize New England living.



PROCEDURE TO APPLY

To provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at NEIA are based on merit, qualifications, and skills. NEIA is committed to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all employees and qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, veteran status, military service, application for military service, or any other status protected by applicable law. NEIA will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities or pregnancy-related conditions, in accordance with applicable law. This commitment is evident in all aspects of NEIA's employment practices and policies, including recruiting, hiring, job assignment, promotion, compensation, discipline, discharge, benefits, and training.

Interested candidates should submit via https://bit.ly/NEIA_DirAthletics_AppForm the following materials confidentially in one single PDF file:

- A cover letter indicating your particular interest in and qualifications for the position
- A current resume
- A statement of educational philosophy
- The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of five references, including at least two recent supervisors. References should speak to your ability to be an effective coach and administrator, to work successfully with children, and to work collaboratively and collegially with adults (references will be contacted only with the candidate's permission). Please indicate your relationship with each reference (i.e. supervisor, colleague, or direct report).

*Salary Range: \$85,000—\$95,000
(on-campus housing to be provided)*

Please address any questions by email to ara@strategenius.org.



SEARCH CALENDAR

January 15, 2026
Application Deadline

**Mid-December 2025–
Mid-January 2026**
*First-round interviews
with the search consultant*

**Week of
January 26, 2026**
Semifinalist Interviews

**February 11, 12, and the
week of February 16, 2026**
Finalist Interviews

April 2026
Start Date

strategenius