



**Search for Head of School
Ransom Everglades School
Miami, Florida**

The mission of Ransom Everglades School is to provide an educational environment in which the pursuit of honor, academic excellence, and intellectual growth is complemented by the concern for the physical, cultural, and character development of each student.

THE SEARCH

Ransom Everglades School (RE) seeks an inspirational, innovative, and visionary leader to serve as its next Head of School.

Situated within the Coconut Grove neighborhood in the vibrant city of Miami, RE is a top-tier independent school with a public purpose, combining rigorous college preparation with a commitment to societal impact. Since 1903, RE has been known for developing well-rounded students who embrace a dynamic and challenging curriculum and thrive as service-oriented leaders. At its core, RE's philosophy teaches students that they are in the world not so much for what they can get out of it as what they can put into it. RE has approximately 1,100 students across two campuses in grades 6-12 and is widely considered one of the best schools in Florida and the nation. RE has a diverse and engaged student body, talented and committed faculty, and an incredible location on Biscayne Bay. The School has thrived in an increasingly competitive landscape with steady enrollment numbers, a strong financial position, and an exceptional reputation.

At Ransom Everglades, all students can access meaningful opportunities to grow and succeed along whatever paths they choose. The next Head will celebrate the School's 120th year of rich history and tradition while shaping a future of growth and innovation. The successful candidate will bring a track record of success at complex academic institutions; a deeply held connection to and alignment with RE's mission, heritage, and culture; and demonstrated leadership, including sound fiscal management, fundraising acumen, administrative success, and a passion for working with students and families. The Head will be a visible presence on campus, known to faculty, staff, students, and families, building upon the strong sense of shared commitment to the development of RE students. RE seeks a leader who is strongly attracted to the School's educational mission, ambitious goals, and location in the dynamic city of Miami.

Ransom Everglades School has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. Please direct all inquiries, nominations, and applications to the search firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

RANSOM EVERGLADES SCHOOL

History

In the early nineteen-hundreds, Paul C. Ransom founded an Adirondack-Florida School that provided students the opportunity to split their education between an old logging camp in the mountains of New York and the Pine Knot Camp on the shore of Biscayne Bay. Mr. Ransom's values of self-reliance, public service, and developing multiple forms of intelligence were the crux of this migratory boarding school. Each campus emphasized a student's relationship between learning and nature. In 1949, the Adirondack-Florida School moved to Coconut Grove permanently and was renamed the Ransom School for Boys.

In 1955, the Everglades School for Girls was created only two miles from the Ransom School. The founders of this school shared core values with Mr. Ransom, believing in experiential learning and the value of community involvement. Unlike many other schools of that era, the Everglades School did not discriminate based on race, religion, or social status. In 1974, the two institutions merged to form the Ransom Everglades School ("RE"). The Everglades campus on Silver Bluff became the Middle School; the Ransom campus on Biscayne Bay housed the Upper School. In the years since, RE has become one of the preeminent independent day schools in the United States, with Paul Ransom's ideals remaining ever present in the School today.

Ransom Everglades Today

Guided by the words of Paul C. Ransom, RE produces graduates who "believe that they are in the world not so much for what they can get out of it as for what they can put into it." The School provides rigorous college preparation that promotes the student's sense of identity, community, personal integrity and values for a productive and satisfying life, and prepares the student to lead and contribute to society.

RE is home to 1,121 students, grades 6-12, spread across a Middle School and an Upper School. RE students enjoy an average class size of 14 students with a nine-to-one student-to-faculty ratio. Ransom Everglades is a diverse and inclusive community, with over fifty percent of students identifying as multicultural, and twenty percent speaking a language other than English at home. RE students are highly engaged in varsity sports, performing and visual arts, research, and co-curricular organizations.

During the first three years of RE's seven-year program, middle school students are introduced to independent-learning expectations, scholarly approaches to their studies, and critical-thinking skills across all academic areas. Students develop self-advocacy skills by initiating meetings with teachers and attending extra-help sessions. All are assigned to advisories where they participate in activities designed

to build character skills, including empathy and gratitude. Enrolled in eight classes, sixth- and seventh-grade students take rotation courses for visual arts, performing arts, and computer science, along with one elective each semester. Eighth-grade students take two electives per semester. Classes in the Upper School are geared toward inquiry and collaboration, requiring students to prepare, discuss, debate, present, and defend points of view. The Upper School faculty implement a pedagogy that empowers students to own their learning, exposes them to global perspectives, and integrates technology, all while preserving an engaged classroom environment.

RE requires every student to master basic sailing, canoeing, and kayaking skills to graduate. One of the most distinctive aspects of RE's experiential pedagogy is the annual Outward Bound program for ninth graders. Preparation for Outward Bound is part of the ninth grade Bay Studies curriculum and includes instruction in canoeing and the use of a map and compass.

RE also provides a unique and intensive language program that requires all students to be fluent in Spanish, with many conversational in a second foreign language by graduation as well. RE also offers rising seniors an opportunity to apply for fellowships that support summer projects and an independent study for credit program, connecting students with a faculty mentor.

With academic excellence at the forefront, typically over ninety percent of RE students receive a three or higher on their AP exams, with over 900 exams taken each year. RE students become Presidential Scholars; start their own non-profits; win national prizes for photography, robotics, and debate; and compete at regional, state, and national levels of athletics. Many students complete an internship during their time at RE as well. In 2014, RE launched the Summer Learning Through Internships and Mentoring Program to enhance the quality and quantity of internships facilitated by the School. Students who participate are required to present their summer work in a session open to the community.

The School has 24 varsity sports, with championship teams or individuals in track and field, soccer, sailing, lacrosse, swimming, golf, tennis, and water polo. RE is also known for its remarkable arts program that includes offerings such as symphonic band, jazz combo, strings ensemble, theatrical performances, studio art, and architectural modeling. Further, starting in grade seven, students engage in structured research projects across the disciplines, resulting in the gathering and analyzing of data and the crafting of original work.

RE is home to 115 faculty, with seventy-eight percent holding an advanced degree and twenty percent holding a doctorate. The faculty is comprised of innovative teachers dedicated to their students, as well as active scholars, research scientists, and creative artists passionate about their disciplines. RE's teachers love the daily challenge of inspiring, engaging, and nurturing students. The average length of service for Ransom Everglades faculty is 19 years. RE also has 90 dedicated administrators and staff who provide support to all aspects of school life, including facility maintenance, administrative operations, and student services.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity at RE has long been a mark of distinction and a source of pride. RE is an inclusive community that benefits from diverse experiences and perspectives. The commitment to diversity at RE informs the curriculum, community outreach, co-curricular activities, and admission process. RE faculty and staff implement programs, workshops, and learning opportunities that reflect these core beliefs. The RE community embraces multiculturalism and appreciates the unique potential of each individual. Living by this philosophy ensures that students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to be productive global citizens.

The Anti-Racism Task Force, established by the Board of Trustees in June 2020, released its final report in June 2021. The task force included representatives from all constituencies: alumni, parents, trustees, faculty, and Ransom Everglades Black Alumni. The task force worked to ensure that RE's core values, as articulated in the School's mission and particularly as they relate to diversity, equity, and inclusion, are fully integrated into the curriculum, programs, and culture.

Governance and Finance

Ransom Everglades School is governed by a Board of Trustees of 29 members, each serving initial, three-year terms. The Board's by-laws clearly define the roles and responsibilities of Trustees and the Head of School, with the Board assuming fiduciary and policy-setting responsibility. The Board convenes 10 standing committees to advance its work. RE is in a strong financial position, boasting an endowment exceeding \$52M and a history of surplus budgets. In 2016, the School purchased the La Brisa property, which doubled the Upper School footprint and was a major expansion of RE's real estate. In June 2021, RE successfully closed the *REinventing Excellence* campaign two years early, raising \$82.3 million and 10% over goal — with the largest annual fund in school history at \$3.3 million — supporting important projects focused on student life and learning, financial aid, faculty support, and much more.

Alumni

Ransom Everglades alumni enjoy a lifelong association with the School. As ambassadors, they bring an important voice in encouraging students to consider the School and, as reunion volunteers and attendees at regional events, they foster an important bridge from past to present. Their regular investment in *The Fund for RE* ensures that today's students enjoy the finest educational experience possible. The five-year historical growth (2017-2021) of The Fund increased by twenty percent. The School provides many opportunities to remain in touch and stay engaged through: annual regional events, reunions, and alumni weekend; the *Ransom Everglades Log* magazine (published twice each year, including class notes); career and internship opportunities; the Hall of Fame and Distinguished Alumni Awards; and volunteering and community-building events. In 2020, members of RE's Black alumni community created an independent organization called Ransom Everglades Black Alumni (reBa). They met several times with the Board of

Trustees and school leadership to discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion and remain a critical sounding board as work continues.

Coconut Grove, FL

Coconut Grove—founded in 1873 by an eclectic mix of pioneers, artists, intellectuals, and adventurers— is the oldest neighborhood of Miami, located along the shores of Biscayne Bay just south of the city’s downtown business district. Today, Coconut Grove is a sought-out residential community known for its diversity, as well as for its shops, restaurants, open-air cafes, parks and gardens, and year-round arts programming. With its waterfront on Biscayne Bay, this is also a popular boating, sailing, and fishing community.

A key attraction of Coconut Grove is the easy access to the greater Miami and Miami Beach community. Miami is the fourth largest urban area in the nation, home to over 6.1 million people. The majority of Miami’s residents have emigrated—or are born to parents who emigrated—from countries in the Caribbean and Central and South America. The result is an eclectic community amidst a tropical landscape unlike any other in the United States. With a unique culture inspired by its climate, proximity to Central and South America, and financial prosperity, Miami is an exciting and increasingly international city and is a major hub for finance, commerce, media, entertainment, and the arts.

Downtown Miami features the largest concentration of international banks in the United States, and the city is also home to several hospitals, research centers, corporations, and recreational companies. Abundant cultural and artistic life, as well as plentiful outdoor recreational opportunities, make the area both vibrant and interesting.

THE ROLE: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

RE’s next Head of School will provide inspirational leadership to its dedicated and diverse community. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the Head is charged with effectively managing a \$55 million budget and strengthening the School’s financial and human resources. The Head’s 13-person senior leadership team includes the associate head, chief operating officer, chief financial officer, director of admission and enrollment management, head of the upper school, head of the middle school, chief technology officer, director of advancement, director of communications, director of athletics, director of inclusion and community engagement, executive director of college counseling and director of arts.

The successful Head of School will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Evolve RE’s vision and strategy to ensure national preeminence

RE has a distinguished history of educational innovation, providing an environment in which the pursuit of honor, academic excellence, and intellectual growth is complemented by concern for the physical,

cultural, and character development of each student. Working closely with the Board of Trustees, the Head will drive further innovation by leading the creation of a strategic vision and plan that demonstrates what is distinctively rewarding about an RE education. The Head will be expected to inspire and catalyze a community of students, faculty, families, and administrators to ensure RE's preeminence in South Florida and independent schools nationally. The Head must find ways to balance the needs of two campuses and blend the best of many people's thinking with the unifying imprint of a leader's vision and judgment.

Leverage data and key indicators to assess and elevate the RE experience and brand

With its beginnings and growth paralleling that of its surroundings, RE holds a unique place in Miami. The Head will continue to foster a spirit of inventiveness and innovation, while creating key performance indicators by which the Board and community can assess a future strategic plan that maintains RE's competitive advantage. The next leader should be well versed in independent school governance and practices, integrating more sophisticated use of data and technology to assess the RE experience, thereby increasing the school profile and elevating the RE brand.

Emphasize community and connection

The RE community benefits from a real presence of empathy and genuine care among all constituencies. As the community continues to adjust from the disruptions and difficulties of the pandemic, the Head will prioritize connection and healing, recognizing the importance of supporting the social-emotional well-being of students as an essential part of pursuing excellence. The Head will bring a student-centered approach to their work, creating opportunities for joy and connection across both campuses that encourage school spirit and pride. It is critical that the next Head continues to nurture RE's inclusive culture, prioritizing clarity and consistency of communication to build trust and belonging.

Strengthen the experience of faculty and staff

RE's faculty and staff are amongst its greatest strengths, and their dedication to their craft sustains the School's strong curricular and co-curricular offerings and reputation. The new Head will work assiduously to build relationships and a collaborative, supportive learning culture. Partnering with the two division directors and broader administrative team, the Head will address continued professional growth and well-being for all faculty and staff. The Head will continue to encourage curricular innovation across grade levels and strengthen structures and policies that promote equity and balance. Cost of living in Miami remains a significant issue, and the Head must work with the Board of Trustees to ensure RE's success in recruiting and retaining a dynamic and diverse faculty and staff.

Build and support a strong leadership team

With an inclusive approach and commitment to excellence, the Head will assemble and support a strong administrative leadership team, ensuring that a complex school is well managed. RE recently welcomed back David Clark '86 as Chief Operating Officer, a new role in the leadership structure. The next Head will leverage the existing strength of this leadership team and continue to recruit, develop, and retain a high-performing team.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The experiences, qualities, and skills RE seeks in candidates grow directly out of the strategic challenges and opportunities facing the new Head. While no candidate will embody every quality, ideal candidates will bring many of the following professional qualifications and attributes:

- Successful leadership and management experience in a rigorous, student-centered school or comparably complex organization. A record of building or strengthening an institution and achieving results.
- Dynamic and accessible leadership style; maturity in interpersonal dealings and high emotional intelligence.
- Genuine enthusiasm for – and ability to engage with – young learners and their families.
- Commitment to and success in building diverse, equitable, and inclusive teams and practices.
- A sophisticated understanding of the college admissions landscape with a pulse on the challenges taking place in higher education.
- Proven ability to lead successful fundraising campaigns and/or the relevant skills and appetite for fundraising.
- Facility with the uses of technology in education, and an openness to experimenting with technological innovations to enhance students' learning experiences.
- Ease with maintaining a strong, highly visible presence as a leader and ability to develop deep and trusting relationships with students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and the surrounding South Florida community.
- Integrity and the highest ethical and professional standards.

TO APPLY

Ransom Everglades School has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications (resumes and letters of interest) should be sent electronically and in confidence to:

Dan Rodas, Partner
Sheryl Ash, Partner
Berkley Burke, Senior Associate

Isaacson, Miller
www.imsearch.com/8684

The search committee will consider applications from candidates available for a fall 2023 or later start date.

Ransom Everglades School, in accordance with state and federal laws, does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, religion, color, sex, national origin, ancestry, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or other grounds protected under state or federal equal employment opportunity laws or regulations.