



ALBANY  
ACADEMY

Head of School





## THE SEARCH

Albany Academy ("the Academy") is seeking a visionary, community-oriented head of school to lead this prestigious independent institution into the future. The successful candidate will be tasked with upholding academic excellence while fostering a culture that values both community spirit and individual student development. The ideal applicant should possess a proven track record as an inspiring leader and adept fundraiser, with experience in aligning diverse stakeholders around a shared vision within complex institutional environments.



For over two centuries, Albany Academy has been a beacon of academic achievement, character development, and personal growth. It has rightfully earned its reputation as the Capital Region's premier – and sole – pre-K to post-graduate independent, college preparatory day school. The Academy's current structure, resulting from the merger of two single-sex schools, offers an innovative educational model. Students experience co-educational learning in the lower school (pre-K through grade 4) and upper school (grades 9 through post-graduate), while benefiting from single-sex education in the middle school (grades 5 through 8). The school's mission statement emphasizes the development of "diligent students of high character who become curious, critical thinkers" through a coordinated approach of single-sex and co-educational environments. The Academy's brand promise, "exceptional beyond measure," reflects its unwavering commitment to cultivating excellence in every student, nurturing limitless potential through individualized guidance, rigorous academics, and diverse opportunities.

Situated on an urban campus in Albany, New York, the Academy is home to 78 faculty and staff members and 636 students as of the 2024-2025 academic year. The institution takes pride in honoring its rich history and traditions while evolving to meet the needs of contemporary students.

The incoming head of school will join the Academy at an exciting juncture, following a realignment that transitioned the lower and upper schools to fully co-educational learning while maintaining single-sex education in the middle school. Building on this momentum, the new leader will be tasked with several key responsibilities:

1. Spearhead a comprehensive strategic planning process in collaboration with key stakeholders, developing a unifying vision with clear priorities for the school's future.
2. Strengthen communication across the Academy community, fostering relationships built on trust and transparency with students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, and trustees.
3. Lead a collaborative leadership team, including three divisional heads and dynamic marketing, enrollment, and advancement teams.



4. Work effectively with the board to manage the school's finances while enhancing fundraising efforts and philanthropic successes.
5. Champion the school's longstanding commitment to inclusion and belonging, furthering efforts to create a welcoming, supportive, and proud school community.



6. Collaborate with the board of trustees to accomplish its goals and position the Academy for even greater achievements.

Albany Academy has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next head of school. Please direct all inquiries, nominations, and applications to the search firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

## FOUNDING AND CAMPUS HISTORY

Albany Academy's rich history spans over 200 years of academic, artistic, and athletic distinction. The Albany Academy, an independent school for boys, was founded in 1813 with a focus on classics, mathematics, and science. The following year, the Albany Academy for Girls (initially named The Union School and later Albany Female Academy) was established.

The two institutions explored merger possibilities at various points in their history. In 1975, they signed a coordination agreement allowing students in grades 10-12 to cross-enroll in elective courses. By 2000, over 100 students were taking advantage of this opportunity across 50 different courses. An affiliation agreement signed in 2005 established a single head of school while maintaining two separate boards, and unified some administrative functions. In 2007, the schools officially merged to form The Albany Academies, operating under a single board of trustees with equal representation from each school.

## RECENT TRANSITIONS

In 2024, more than two centuries after the founding of its parent schools, the institution completed a significant realignment. The Albany Academies were fully integrated into one cohesive entity, renamed Albany Academy, while preserving essential elements of their single-sex traditions. The school is now organized according to developmental stages, with division heads overseeing standardized policies and practices within each division.



The restructuring process has been approached thoughtfully, with leadership taking care to preserve the school's history, traditions, and identity. This included developing a unified brand strategy and refining academic seals to create a more cohesive visual identity while respecting the school's rich heritage.

## ALBANY ACADEMY TODAY

Albany Academy provides its 636 students with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum across three divisions: lower school (grades pre-K-4), middle school (grades 5-8), and upper school (grades 9-PG). The faculty and staff, 80% of whom hold advanced degrees, foster a close-knit community and a culture of respect while encouraging independence and problem-solving skills in both academic and socio-emotional domains.

The Academy's educational approach emphasizes personalized learning, with a 9:1 student-to-faculty ratio and an average class size of 15. This enables faculty to develop strong bonds with each student and tailor instruction to individual learning styles. The curriculum is designed to prepare students for the creative, entrepreneurial future that lies ahead, incorporating innovative learning experiences, authentic leadership opportunities, and abundant co-curricular activities.



The school offers a wide array of advanced placement and honors courses, as well as the opportunity for students to pursue independent research through honors projects. College counseling is highly personalized, beginning in 10th grade and continuing through 12th grade, with counselors assisting students throughout the college admissions process.

International students comprise nearly 10% of the student body in the middle and upper schools, contributing significantly to the school's diversity. The Academy also boasts a strong athletics program,

with 28 varsity teams across 15 sports, and a thriving arts program encompassing dance, theatre, visual art, music, and filmmaking.

Albany Academy is accredited by the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS) and chartered by the State of New York. It is also a member of the National Association of Independent Schools and the Capital Region Independent Schools Association.

### Finance and Governance

The school is governed by a 21-member board of trustees, composed of current and past parents, alumni, and community and business leaders. The board is responsible for the Academy's long-term strategy and sustainability, while the head of school manages daily operations and implements board policies.

Albany Academy operates on a budget of approximately \$17.5 million, with an endowment of \$34.6 million. The average tuition for the 2024-2025 academic year is \$20,000, with 39% of students receiving tuition assistance totaling \$2.7 million. The school's annual fund raises approximately \$800,000 each year, primarily from current families. In April 2020, the school completed a successful five-year capital campaign, raising more than \$23 million for various improvements and initiatives.



### Alumni Community

The Academy boasts a global network of approximately 5,800 alumni living in 22 countries. Two organizations, The Albany Academy Alumni Association and the Albany Academy for Girls Alumnae Council, represent the alumni body and work to maintain connections between graduates and the school.



## Leadership

Christopher J. Lauricella became the head of school of The Albany Academies in 2018. In this role, he ushered the school through the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the recent realignment. An independent school educator since 1994, Chris came to The Albany Academies from The Park School in Buffalo where he served as head of school for ten years. His professional experience spans both public and independent schools and includes administration, conducting educational research, classroom teaching, curriculum development, college counseling, and coaching. A native New Yorker raised on Long Island, Chris began his teaching career at the National Sports Academy at Lake Placid, where he lived and worked with aspiring Winter Olympic athletes. He began his administrative career as a dean of students at the Storm King School in Cornwall-on-Hudson and went on to serve as the head of upper school at the Brimmer and May School in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, before becoming head of school at The Park School. Chris holds a bachelor of science degree in English education from the State University of New York at Oneonta and a master's degree in educational administration with a focus in private school leadership from Teachers College, Columbia University. He currently serves as a trustee of NYSAIS.

## Campus

Albany Academy is situated on a 55-acre campus in Albany, New York. The campus features two academic buildings, two libraries, an auditorium, a black box theater, multiple music education spaces, an alumni center, and a residence for the head of school. Athletic facilities include an indoor competition-size pool, six fields, an ice rink, six outdoor tennis courts, a 33,000 sq/ft multi-sport indoor practice facility, and an all-weather outdoor track.



## ALBANY ACADEMY'S NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

The incoming head of school will be responsible for all policy decisions, implementing board directives, overseeing faculty and staff, articulating the school's mission, delegating authority, and managing daily operations. Key opportunities and challenges for the new leader include:

### **Providing visionary leadership while strengthening Albany Academy's evolving identity and guiding the school into its next chapter, including the development of a new strategic plan**

The head of school will join the Academy at a pivotal moment in its storied history, following the recent realignment of two schools into a single, primarily co-educational institution. The Albany Academy community is deeply attuned to the school's history, character, and culture, along with its founding principles and mission. For many, the years spent at the Academy – and earlier at Albany Academy for Girls and The Albany Academy – were profoundly formative; that passion is palpable when speaking with alumnae, alumni, and current students alike. Honoring Albany Academy's deep history and fostering the community's pride in its traditions will be essential as the new leader sets a clear vision for the school's future. The head's leadership will sharpen the focus on the Academy's overarching mission, enhance conditions for academic excellence, ensure long-term financial sustainability, and deepen the school's longstanding commitment to advancing access, inclusion, and belonging. The head must demonstrate the capacity and humility necessary to engage in decisive decision-making as well as evolving conversations to support the Academy community in continuing to adopt meaningful changes. The head will also continue to promote the Academy's education philosophies and pedagogy as a leader in New York and New England independent schools.

Albany Academy's most recent strategic plan concluded in 2024, and it is time for a new one. In close collaboration with all Albany Academy stakeholders, the next head of school will help the board of trustees articulate an ambitious and compelling vision for the school's next chapter and develop and implement a corresponding strategic plan. This vision will invite the entire Academy community to join in defining and realizing the school's greatest dreams for its future. The plan should outline strategies to enhance programs, practices, and resources to best equip students with the skills and values needed to contribute to a changing world without sacrificing the essence that is Albany Academy. After helping the board establish the plan, the head will work decisively internally to determine the distinct operational priorities for success in the future.

### **Capably managing and growing the financial foundation of the Academy**

While Albany Academy has enjoyed a stable financial foundation over many years, the school's ambitious goals, deferred maintenance needs for legacy facilities, and long-term sustainability necessitate a consistent focus on growing the school's resources. Planning is already underway for a new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) Innovation Center and for the remodeling of the science wing in the upper school building. To support initiatives such as these that will set the school apart



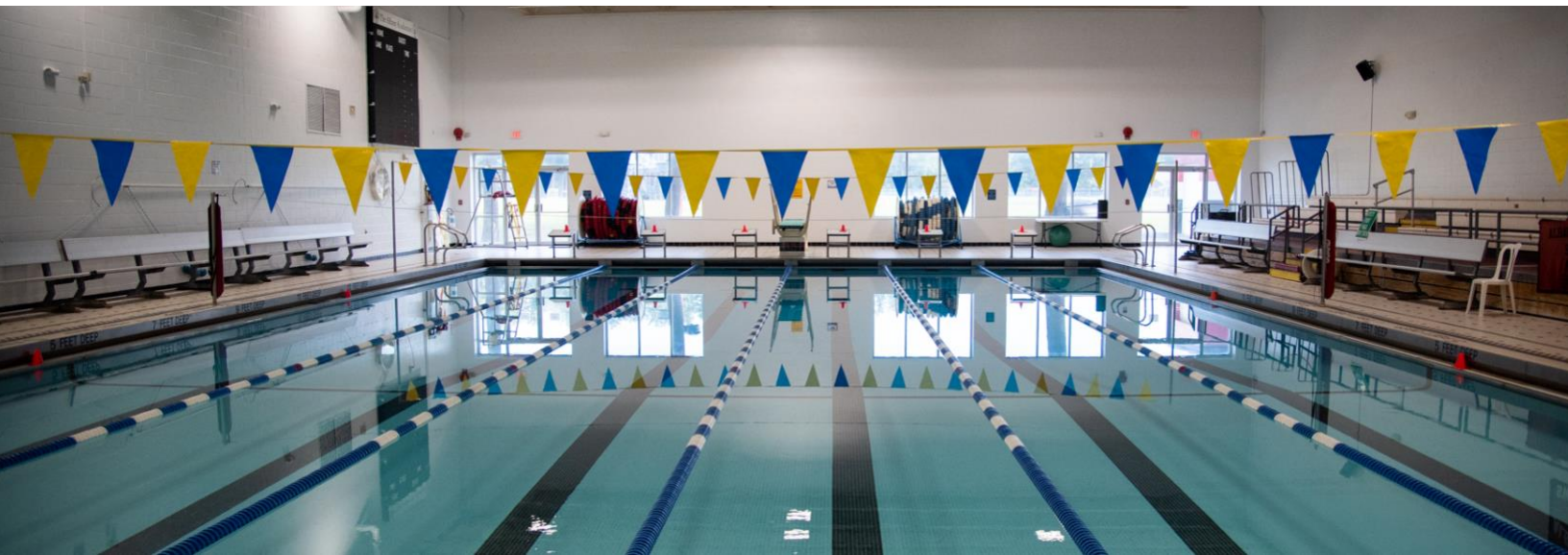
and augment its deep-rooted commitment to excellence, the head will help elevate the school's fundraising profile and successes with increased emphasis on building a tradition of philanthropy and growing the endowment. The generosity of current Academy parents, families, alumnae, alumni, and parents of alumnae and alumni plays a significant role in allowing the school to recruit and retain excellent faculty, sustain the socioeconomic diversity of the student body through financial aid, and plan for future improvements to the school's facilities and programs. All of these initiatives must be sustained and enhanced through continued fundraising efforts, with the head as the school's lead ambassador in this crucial work, in partnership with the director of advancement and their staff. Overall, the head of school will collaborate with the board of trustees to build a sustainable business model that ensures the school's fiscal strength well into the future.



### Sharpening Albany Academy's positioning in the broader admissions landscape

The head of school will assess and evolve the Academy's enrollment strategy in what is today an increasingly competitive admissions environment. This will require an understanding of how recruitment, retention, identity development, and relationship-building work in concert to inform an impactful admissions and financial aid process in independent day schools. The head will develop a clear understanding of the Academy's position in the admissions landscape – both its considerable strengths and advantages as well as its challenges and areas of opportunity. Coupled with strategic fundraising and planning, the head will evaluate and optimize the Academy's position with particular attention paid to demographic shifts in the region and enrollment trends. Like many independent schools, Albany Academy

has seen a downward trend in lower and middle school enrollment in recent years; more recently, there have been waitlists for several grades in the lower school, reflecting an upward trajectory in that division. For the school's long-term financial health, the Academy will need to enroll more mission appropriate students in order to grow tuition revenue. The caliber of the academic program at the Academy is exceptionally strong, and the next head must continue to nurture the intellectual ambition and pedagogical sophistication for which the school is known. Given that the science and art of enrollment management shapes the community and influences the school's fiscal health, the head must work closely with the admissions team to admit and then yield an academically and extracurricularly talented student body with diverse experiences, skills, and interests.



### **Promoting effective communication and continuing to foster a culture that values community and belonging**

The incoming head will reflect the Academy's commitment to community and endeavor to develop relationships built on trust and transparency with students, faculty and staff, alumnae, alumni, parents, and trustees. They will promote clear and consistent communication with every member of the school community, inviting families and friends into dialogue about the current and future priorities of the school. Maintaining a prominent presence within the community and actively engaging with students to understand their motivations will be important. There is a particular opportunity for an energetic and enthusiastic head to engage Albany Academy alumnae and alumni, a group that is deeply connected to the school but has fractured somewhat with the realignment. The incoming head must also build and maintain relationships with the school's highly regarded faculty and staff through thoughtful decision-making, clear communication, and inclusive processes, and should strive to bolster collaboration and innovation in pursuit of the best educational experiences for students, faculty, and staff. The head of school will support and empower their strong administrative team to efficiently manage the school's



operations and distributed leadership. Additionally, it is essential to cultivate significant partnerships with school parents to ensure that they feel an integral part of the community. Albany Academy's board of trustees works in close partnership with the head on matters related to the organization's governance, strategic direction, fiscal health, and fundraising. The head must continually engage trustees in these efforts, as well as help to recruit new members with diverse backgrounds, and continue to strengthen the governance model. It will also be important to bring together the wider school community in celebratory and fun ways. The successful leader will balance visibility and accessibility — genuinely knowing and caring about every member of the community — with a strong and decisive executive presence in service of the school.

The head will support and enhance the Academy's diverse and inclusive culture. Albany Academy equally celebrates student achievements in academics, athletics, the arts, and other co-curricular pursuits. This egalitarian ethos is evident on campus, and the Academy must remain a welcoming and supportive place for all students. The values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging at the school are more critical now than ever for its students to thrive in the world beyond its walls. The head will ensure that the voices of all students, faculty, and staff are heard and will continually examine and redesign policies, procedures, and services to ensure equity. The head must be dedicated to diversifying faculty and staff and supporting their professional growth.



### Ensuring wide recognition of Albany Academy's strong reputation and brand

The head of school must work to ensure that Albany Academy is recognized as the premier place to educate children in the Capital Region and the desired workplace for creative, innovative, and ambitious faculty. While the Academy has developed a reputation for excellence over many years, this next leader must ensure that external audiences continue to have a current understanding of its unique offerings and emphases. The incoming head will exhibit gravitas and presence fitting of a spokesperson for the school,

serving as a booster for the Academy in showcasing its strengths and employing its newly designed branding and logo. The head will partner locally with the Albany community, prospective students and families, and other key stakeholders to raise awareness of Albany Academy's profile. On a national level, the next head, in partnership with the college counseling team, will make sure that colleges and universities across the country understand the Academy's distinctive offerings and academic strengths.

## QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate will possess:

- A deep appreciation for Albany Academy's history and the ability to articulate the importance of an Academy education to diverse audiences.
- Confident decision-making skills with an inclusive, transparent, and collaborative leadership style.
- A record of successful administrative leadership and institution-building.
- Passion for working with students and families.
- Enthusiasm for and success with fundraising.
- Strong business acumen and fiscal responsibility.
- Excellence in diplomacy and communication.
- The ability to support and lead high-performing teams.
- A nuanced understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in education.
- Familiarity with current issues facing independent schools.

## COMPENSATION

The anticipated salary range for this position is \$300,000 - \$350,000 annually. Albany Academy provides this salary as a good faith estimate of the starting pay range considering factors such as (but not limited to) the scope and responsibilities of the position and a candidate's work experience and education. In addition to the salary offered, the Academy offers a collegial and inclusive culture, and a benefits program, which includes a head of school residence (Leonard House), generous paid time off, paid holidays, and a retirement plan with Albany Academy contributions.

## TO APPLY

Albany Academy 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:



Karen Avery, Partner  
Katie Rockman, Partner  
Mia Carpiello, Senior Associate  
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/albany-academy/head-school>

Albany Academy believes that the active expression of diverse perspectives and life experiences is vital to a thriving school community. Guided by its Mission Statement and Core Values, the Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, inclusive, equitable, and just environment that fosters excellence.

