



Search for the Head of School

The Roxbury Latin School West Roxbury, Massachusetts

THE SEARCH

The Roxbury Latin School (RL), one of the nation's most distinctive independent schools, seeks an intentional and devoted leader to serve as its next Head of School. Founded in 1645, RL is the oldest school in continuous existence in North America, an independent boys' school by tradition and by conviction. Following 20 years of forceful leadership under Headmaster Kerry Brennan, the new Head will join RL at a moment of strength – and will face the challenges of honoring a rich history while building on a legacy of excellence, identifying goals that are both affirmational and aspirational. This leader must deeply resonate with RL's mission of knowing and loving every boy.

RL's academic program is based on the Western humanistic tradition and is exceptional in its rigor. Across the spectrum of the arts and sciences, students' scholarly achievements are a source of pride, but RL's chief priority is to develop the character of its boys, caring most about the kind of person a boy is and expecting them to do something great with their lives. Students at RL are accomplished generalists, equally attentive to academics, extracurriculars, service, and strength of character.

The diversity of students' backgrounds is a distinctive feature of RL, achieved intentionally over decades. In recent years, RL has thrived in an increasingly competitive educational landscape, with strong enrollment, an extraordinarily robust financial outlook, and a deep commitment to need-blind admission and enrollment. Remarkably, nearly 90 percent of the students admitted to Roxbury Latin choose to enroll, and the education of every student is subsidized by RL's large endowment. Tuition itself is approximately 35 percent less than other Boston-area independent schools. With 70 faculty and staff and just over 300 students in grades 7-12, RL has long prioritized its commitment to the city of Boston, characterizing itself as a "city school" with a firm connection to Boston and its residents and a 117-acre campus that lies within city limits. In building a class, the School seeks to maintain an intimate environment of just over 300 students, 38 percent of whom identify as students of color, 30 percent of whom come from the city of Boston, and 36 percent of whom receive financial aid.

RL's distinctive strengths include its commitment to ethical and character education; values of honesty, simplicity, respect, and concern for others; strong relationships among faculty, staff, and students; student engagement in a broad range of extracurriculars; a dedication to access and affordability; a Classical curricular emphasis; and an intention to be a "democratically gathered school" that brings the

community together at least once per week through widely-beloved “Halls.” At RL, tradition, pride, and seriousness of purpose are palpable – *Roxbury Latin has a soul*.

Working in collaboration with the board of trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, students, families, and alumni, the Head will be expected to provide leadership and strategic direction for RL’s future. The Head will inherit an institution high-functioning in key areas, including 100 percent parent and faculty participation in the annual fund, alumni annual fund participation believed to be among the highest rate of secondary schools nationally, the largest per capita endowment of any day school in the nation, the highest faculty compensation in the Boston area, and many long-serving faculty members. The successful candidate will be clear and decisive, with an evidenced ability to make difficult decisions. This leader will empower faculty and staff and cultivate strong internal ties, while also proudly promoting the School’s strengths with key external audiences, continuing to secure RL’s niche in the competitive independent school landscape in the Boston Metro area and nationally.

The Roxbury Latin School 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.

For more information about Roxbury Latin, please see the Appendix.

ROXBURY LATIN’S NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Head of School reports to the board of trustees and will ensure that every one of the 300 boys at the School is known and loved. The Head will clearly articulate the School’s mission and values; lead, attract, and develop an unsurpassed faculty and staff; and oversee the daily operations of the School and its programs. The Head is, first and foremost, the carrier of RL’s distinctive culture, its chief communicator and leader by example.

The next Head should be poised to address the following priorities:

Maintain Roxbury Latin’s distinctive and intimate culture

Roxbury Latin strongly believes in the social, emotional, and academic benefits of a small, tightly-knit community and celebrates many long-held traditions that have made RL a school unlike any other: an educational program that emphasizes a Classical, traditional, focused, and rigorous liberal arts curriculum; a core emphasis on character development and the kind of person a boy is; a commitment to educating boys who are accomplished generalists rather than specialists and are able to explore multifaceted interests; and confidence in the many advantages of a boys’ school. The incoming Head will evidence a commitment to these pillars and, at the same time, will explore opportunities for continued growth as the local community and the world evolve.

The role will require ongoing conversations across the RL community – with faculty, staff, students, families, trustees, and alumni – about the School’s rich history and ambitions for the future. The next Head will determine operational and organizational priorities and work in partnership to translate these recommendations into concrete outcomes. Priorities include, but are not limited to, deepening RL’s existing commitment to academic excellence, advancing its historic commitment to access and inclusion, ensuring long-term financial sustainability and the continuation of a need-blind admission model, and increased attention to wellbeing and mental health.

Identify, recruit and inspire the next generation of excellent faculty and staff

Faculty members at RL are notably loyal, and many have dedicated their careers to the institution. This next Head of School must attend to the future of RL's faculty, continuing to prioritize the recruitment of high-quality and excellent teachers – who are highly compensated but are asked to wear many hats – who relish the concurrent roles of teacher, coach, and advisor that allow them to truly know and support their students. The Head will lead by example in this regard, serving as a role model for faculty and boys in their deliberate approach to hard work. The Head must welcome the next generation of faculty into the culture of RL, integrate the ideas of newer faculty with the knowledge of longstanding faculty, and support all faculty at varying stages of their professional lives.

The Head of School will also support, empower, and work closely with a strong administrative team to efficiently manage the School's operations. In this next leader, RL hopes to find a Head of School capable of balancing visibility and accessibility with delegating when appropriate. Given that administrators at RL also often teach, coach, and advise, the Head will ensure that each administrator's responsibilities effectively leverage his or her talents and capacity.

Emphasize community wellness and balance, in the context of ever-increasing pressures and competing demands

The Head of School must support wellness and balance for all students, faculty, and staff, particularly as the topic of student mental health continues to gain attention. RL has long encouraged student individuality, sense of self, and the pursuit of life's deepest questions and intends to maintain that vision alongside a challenging curriculum. The Head, in partnership with senior leadership and the School more broadly, will continually examine and redesign policies, procedures, and services to ensure that all members of the community feel fully supported. An unusual, individualized advisor system for students should continue to be essential in this regard.

Capably manage and grow the impressive financial foundation of the School

The distinctive character of Roxbury Latin derives, in good measure, from a financial foundation that is dramatically different from any other independent day school in the country. Over the years, the School's leadership has developed a financial model that successfully weaves together RL's institutional priorities, including a small school size, relatively modest tuition, need-blind enrollment, well-compensated teachers, and a responsible annual draw on the endowment. A well-managed endowment is the cornerstone of the School's unique financial position. While RL has enjoyed a stable financial foundation for many years, ensuring the School's long-term sustainability necessitates an intentional focus on resources. The Head will help RL continue to elevate its fundraising profile, furthering its relatively new emphasis on capital giving and ensuring that impressive annual fund contributions continue to grow. The Head will continue to collaborate with the board of trustees to consistently assess the School's business model and plan for the future.

Ensure wide recognition of RL's strong reputation and brand

While RL 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. RL has traditionally balanced an academically rigorous curriculum with character development, and the next Head must highlight the School's Classical curricular emphasis and commitment to the accomplished

generalist, facets which differentiate RL from other independent schools and have provided exceptional opportunities for its students. The Head will partner locally with the Boston community, prospective students and families, and other key stakeholders to raise awareness of RL's profile. On a national level, the next Head will make sure that colleges and universities across the country understand RL's distinctive offerings and strengths.

Continue to prioritize the School's longstanding commitment to access and inclusion

The next Head of School must continue to nurture Roxbury Latin's welcoming culture, reinforcing the empathy and genuine care that have long defined the School. RL believes that its community is enriched – and in many ways defined – by the collective backgrounds of its students. From its founding, RL has formed an intentionally diverse community, dedicated to enabling all students to attend regardless of financial circumstances. The next Head must reinforce this fundamental commitment to a need-blind admission policy, enabling RL to continue to recruit a diverse and inclusive student body based fundamentally on merit and potential. At the same time, the next Head must build upon the School's rich tradition of diversity through new programs and practices that ensure its continued leadership in this area.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Roxbury Latin seeks a leader who embodies the values that the School holds dear. The role requires a leader capable of navigating a small but complex organization, coupled with a personal style that inspires excellence and respect. The successful candidate will be a student-centered leader with an astute understanding of the independent school landscape. While no one candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following qualifications and attributes:

Professional Experience

- A demonstrated appreciation for the deeply held values central to RL's mission, and the ability to effectively and eloquently articulate RL's vision and the importance of an RL education to a diverse audience;
- A commitment to the transformative power of an all-boys' educational experience;
- An unwavering commitment to academic excellence;
- An institution builder with a record of successful administrative leadership, including the ability to build and manage high-performing teams;
- Proven record of supporting a high-performing faculty and the ability to recruit and retain a talented, diverse faculty body;
- A clear and decisive leadership style, with demonstrated experience making difficult decisions;
- A passion for working with students and families;
- The ability to serve as an enthusiastic advocate for all aspects of the RL experience, academic and co-curricular alike, including athletics and the arts;
- Enthusiasm for and success with fundraising; a willingness to be actively involved in advancement strategy and implementation, and the aptitude for building strong personal connections to the School;
- The ability to embrace the opportunity to be a partner with the local community and to further RL's foundational commitment to the city of Boston.

Personal Qualities

- The belief that leading a school is a calling and not just a profession;
- Ability to understand the appropriate amount and rate of change for a loyal school community;
- Excellence in written and oral communication, with the ability to inspire faculty, staff, students, families, alumni, trustees, and a range of external stakeholders;
- High emotional intelligence, and personal and social maturity;
- Demonstrated intellectual and civic engagement;
- Identification, first and foremost, as a teacher at heart;
- Integrity, sound judgment, and the highest ethical, moral, and professional standards.

TO APPLY

The Roxbury Latin 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:

Katie Rockman, Partner
Berkley Burke, Managing Associate
Brian Burbank, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/roxbury-latin-school/head-school>

An equal opportunity employer, The Roxbury Latin School is fully committed to attracting, retaining, and developing the most qualified employees without regard to their race, gender, color, age, nation of origin, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

APPENDIX: ABOUT THE ROXBURY LATIN SCHOOL

Founding and Early History

The Roxbury Latin School is the oldest school in continuous existence in North America, and its history is deep. The Reverend John Eliot, known as the “Apostle to the Indians” for his life-long work with the native Algonquians, founded the school in 1645 “to fit [students] for public service in Church and Commonwealth.”

In defining a distinctive mission and vital program, Roxbury Latin asserts its independence – remaining alert to what is most effective in educating boys, but daring to define what is in their best interest, even if at times that is countercultural. Reverend Eliot entrusted the school to seven “feoffees” – trustees who defined the Schoolmaster’s duties as follows: “To use his best skill and endeavors, both by precept and example, to instruct students in all scholastical, moral, and theological discipline.”

Roxbury Latin believes students must consider and address the question of the meaning of their existence, and the community regularly discusses and shares a wide range of religious beliefs. Boys are thereby exposed to the idea that they are called to a higher purpose. Every boy in the School knows that RL cares most of all what kind of person he is. It is RL’s principal tenet, and they call on it regularly as the marker by which everything else at the School is measured.

Roxbury Latin Today

Today, Roxbury Latin would feel quite strange to the ten boys enrolled in John Eliot’s sparsely furnished one-room, one-master school, but it remains true to the original mission set forth by its founder – to prepare students intellectually, morally, and spiritually for service in the world. Roxbury Latin is clear-eyed about its core values.

Most boys attend Roxbury Latin for six years. In recent years, the School’s admit rate for the entering class has hovered around 17 percent; yield is typically near 90 percent. RL deeply values its socioeconomic diversity and, to meet this commitment, is need-blind and meets the entirety of demonstrated need. To ensure accessibility to middle-income families, tuition at Roxbury Latin is approximately 35 percent less than that of other Boston-area independent schools. The education of every student is subsidized by RL’s large endowment, and the 60 or so boys admitted to the School each year are as notable for their differences as for what they have in common.

Roxbury Latin’s all-boys’ setting is a distinguishing feature. The School upholds the conviction that, in an all-boys’ environment, boys are much more likely to take healthy academic and personal risks, to advance alternative perspectives, to express themselves unselfconsciously in class, and to assume roles that they might be reluctant to chance in a coeducational environment. Boys in a boys’ school are given time to grow up at their own pace, both intellectually and socially. The commitment to an all-boys’ education remains unwavering.

A Sense of Community and Tradition

Relationships between Roxbury Latin faculty and students are strong, and faculty see their roles as advisors as the most essential. Early in the year, each boy selects a member of the faculty to serve as his

advisor. An advisor and advisee usually meet one-on-one weekly, sometimes for a specific purpose but more likely to discuss whatever is on either's mind. Advisors also serve as the primary point of contact between families and the School, with the collective goal of helping boys develop the skills to direct their own lives.

One of RL's most valuable traditions is the stream of distinguished speakers who come to the School to share their real-world experiences in "Halls." In the best Classical tradition, Halls virtually always conclude with a Q&A involving the student audience and inspire ongoing conversation. Hall speakers tap the rich talent of Boston and beyond, including RL's own alumni. To name a few: Former Director of the CIA John Brennan enlightened RL on the current state of international politics; celebrated street artist and activist Rob "Problak" Gibbs shared his work and joined art classes; members of the American Shakespeare Center performed *Antigone*; Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker delivered the keynote address during RL's recent Founder's Day celebration; and famed journalist and national security expert Juliette Kayyem addressed the school on the anniversary of 9/11.

Academics

Roxbury Latin's educational program is designed to fulfill the interwoven objectives of the School's mission. Its traditional, focused, rigorous liberal arts curriculum emphasizes a defined core of courses early in a boy's career, followed by a wide range of elective options. It seeks to deepen the intellectual curiosity possessed by all entering students, training them in the analytical skills and communication that underlie advanced academic work and an examined life beyond school.

During Roxbury Latin's first 200 years, the curriculum was confined to reading, writing, Latin, and mathematics. Today, RL's program includes a broadened academic curriculum that remains focused on Classical pedagogy, along with a large selection of activities and sports. The School maintains a challenging curriculum in a "hybrid model," offering numerous Advanced Placement courses across the academic spectrum, while also thoughtfully evaluating the disciplines and courses for which the School's own curriculum may be more appropriate. Students are required to take Latin and either French or Spanish, and RL is one of only a handful of schools in the country to offer three years of Ancient Greek. Increasingly, the School's program is complemented by several opportunities for travel, including month-long immersion programs in France and Spain. RL has also built out impressive coursework in STEM, believing that students must appreciate how science and engineering underlie much of modern civilization to become lifelong learners. Hands-on experiences, including research opportunities and national science research competitions, are hallmarks of RL's STEM offerings.

RL expects a great deal from its students. Faculty members encourage every student to strive for excellence, and many courses in the upper grades use college-level textbooks. Carrying a five-course load on top of myriad extracurricular pursuits is a challenge, even for RL's brightest students, but boys who come to RL are willing to work hard.

Academic excellence is apparent in the success of students. One hundred percent of graduating students typically go on to four-year institutions and, for the Class of 2022, the Middle 50 percent of SAT scores fell at 690–760 (EBRW), and 690–800 (Math). Ninety-four percent of the boys in the Class of 2023 sat for 158 AP examinations by the end of their junior year; eighty percent of the exams received a score of 4 or 5. In the Class of 2023, out of 52 boys, 42 percent has earned National Merit distinctions: ten are National Merit Semifinalists and 12 are Commended Students, meaning their scores placed them in the top four

percent of all 1.5 million test-takers nationwide. One scholar was recognized in the National Hispanic Recognition Program.

The School's [2022-2023 Profile](#) offers more detail on curricular offerings and academic programs.

Student Life

Roxbury Latin takes pride in being known as a rigorous academic institution. Academic learning is the cornerstone of the RL experience, but the School also values experiences outside the classroom.

At a small school like RL, students rarely confine themselves to one or two extracurricular specialties. Roxbury Latin encourages its students to be accomplished generalists – to immerse themselves in a range of activities – and boys see this as an opportunity. RL manages to offer a wide array of extracurriculars and course offerings for a small school, without that range becoming unmanageably large. With ten varsity teams and a host of non-athletic extracurriculars, boys assume both high-profile leadership positions and also less prominent, but consequential, supporting roles. The School believes that, for young men to reach their full potential, they must be willing to participate in new activities, along with those in which they have already achieved success.

The vast majority of RL boys play sports in two or three seasons per year, though they also engage in multiple additional extracurriculars, even if they had previously thought of themselves as athletes first and foremost. Boys take pride in being members of “the 18-season club,” a distinction reserved for those who have played on a team every season. Notably, without exception, those same 18-season athletes have also sung in the Glee Club – which has remarkably high participation – written for the school newspaper, or taken on a role in a play or musical.

Faculty

Like the Head of School, faculty members at RL see their work as a calling. They are highly compensated and, in the best version of the teacher-coach model, much is asked and expected of them. Very few faculty members hold only one role, and all faculty – even administrators at the highest levels – teach, coach, and advise. While faculty members are dedicated experts in their disciplines, they are keenly aware that their primary duty is to serve as role models to the boys and to know and love them authentically. Roxbury Latin students often point to their relationships with their teachers, which last well beyond their RL years, as one of the most valuable elements of their education. Faculty members know the boys well, both inside and outside the classroom, and encourage lives of purpose, characterized by concern for others.

Access and Inclusion

Since its founding, RL has brought together students from a wide range of backgrounds, uniting them under common ideals. It has a historic commitment to serving boys of the city of Boston and its surrounding areas, as well as ensuring that all students can attend regardless of financial circumstances. RL teaches students that one of their greatest life roles is service to community, and faculty model that conviction for all students.

RL aims to create an environment that is supportive of every student. Conversations should serve as opportunities for listening, connecting, reflecting, and learning. RL's Director of Community and Culture continually builds upon the School's history of access and inclusion, and priorities include need-blind

admission and enrollment, curricular assessment and renewal, a diversity of speakers at schoolwide Halls, the ongoing education of faculty and staff, faculty and staff hiring and support, and service to increase student awareness of the surrounding community.

Finance and Governance

Roxbury Latin's financial model is unique. The School's well-deserved reputation as an inclusive meritocracy is a consequence of tuition that is dramatically lower than that of its neighboring schools, need-blind admission and enrollment policies, faculty who are the best compensated among the region's independent schools, and financial aid offered for all features of the School's program. This model has been made possible by a healthy \$175M endowment. A sustainable and modest 3-5 percent annual draw from the endowment covers a portion of the annual budget (40 percent), with the remainder coming from tuition (40 percent) and annual fund giving (20 percent). The School's operating budget is just over \$20M.

RL is currently governed by a board of 24 members, most of whom serve for six-year terms; half, per RL's bylaws, are alumni. Of the 24 trustees, six are charter trustees with 12-year terms. They take an active part in RL's present and future, working closely with the Head and the administrative team. Trustees usually meet five times per year as a full board, while trustee committees meet regularly and additionally on an as-needed basis. Committees include: finance, development, the committee on trustees, investment, building and grounds, executive, and audit.

Leadership

Headmaster Kerry Brennan is Roxbury Latin's 11th headmaster, with the headmaster position originally established in 1847. Headmaster Brennan has served RL since 2004 and announced his decision to retire at the conclusion of the 2023–2024 school year.

Headmaster Brennan spent eight years teaching at Roxbury Latin earlier in his career, ultimately serving as Chair of the Arts Department, Director of Music, an English teacher, a coach, a counselor, and a class dean. He left RL in 1986 to become Director of the Lower and Upper Schools at University School in Cleveland, Ohio, where he spent the next 14 years. He subsequently became Headmaster of Collegiate School in New York City in 2000 and, after four years there, was called back to Roxbury Latin for the remaining 20 years of his impressive career.

Upon assuming the RL headship, Headmaster Brennan committed to deepening the School's programs, attracting high-quality faculty, administrators, and staff, and ensuring that the facilities served an ambitious program well. He has consistently maintained that RL's most distinctive feature is its demographic: the boys it serves. He has strongly advocated for the financial support necessary to guarantee the ability of talented boys to attend the School and to participate fully in its programs. The result has been a school defined by a broadly representative student body – one with a clear mission and an enduring dedication to an intimate community.

Campus

Roxbury Latin sits on 117 acres in West Roxbury, Boston's most southwest neighborhood, and the head of school resides in a house on campus. Although the expansive campus has a pastoral quality, RL has always been a city school. One-third of its students live in Boston neighborhoods, as do a significant number of faculty and staff. While RL moved to its current location more than 90 years ago, the physical

plant has grown extensively over the past 20 years. It now includes 11 buildings, along with eight athletic fields (including turf football/lacrosse, soccer, and baseball fields), 12 tennis courts, an indoor hockey rink, a cross-country course, and a fully-equipped outdoor classroom used for studies in science and other coursework.