



**Co-Executive Director of College Counseling
Ransom Everglades School
Miami, FL**

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), a top-tier independent day school in the Miami-Coconut Grove area, seeks a collaborative, ambitious, and well-networked Co-Executive Director of College Counseling. This is an opportunity to partner with the Executive Director to help lead and shape an essential program for RE students and their families. The college counseling office at RE has experienced remarkable growth and reimagination over the past year, with seven new college counselors and an essay specialist all appointed since January 2023, for a total office of thirteen. These hiring moves have not only doubled the size of the office, but they have also greatly transformed the services and opportunities available to RE students and families. RE's new Head of School, [Rachel Rodriguez](#), has made college counseling a priority and focus in her first year, and she and RE's Chief Operating Officer, [David Clark](#), are eager to continue to support the office and this leader.

The Co-Executive Director will serve as a critical asset to the college counseling office—and to the Executive Director—as this reimagination continues. The successful candidate will be a consummate relationship-builder, expanding students' and families' exploration of college possibilities, enhancing their understanding of the admission process, and ensuring that the distinctiveness of an RE education is clear in the college landscape. While the office has made excellent gains in its programming and offerings, this next phase will involve the continued creation of a strong internal culture, mentorship of a dedicated team, cohesion and consistency across the college counseling experience, and broadcasting—both internally and externally—RE's value proposition to colleges.

Reporting to the Head of School and working in partnership with the Executive Director and other academic and administrative leaders, the new Co-Executive Director will demonstrate the capacity to lead a high-functioning team, promote a culture of data-driven decision-making, partner with faculty and academic leaders, communicate with diverse audiences, create sustainable processes, and demonstrate deep knowledge of current college enrollment trends. The ideal candidate 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.

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 in confidence 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 to provide students the opportunity to split their education between an old logging camp in the mountains of New York and 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 for Girls did not discriminate based on race, religion, or social status. In 1974, the two institutions merged to form the Ransom Everglades School. 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 America's preeminent independent day schools, with Paul Ransom's ideals remaining ever present in the school today.

Leadership

Rachel Rodriguez

Mrs. Rachel Rodriguez, Head of School, joined the Ransom Everglades community in 2005 as Assistant Director of the Middle School. Two years into that role, she stepped up to serve as Head of the Middle School and led in that capacity for the next 14 years. During Mrs. Rodriguez's middle school tenure at RE, she taught English each year, helped create the middle school advisory program, led tours of the middle school for prospective families, and prioritized the wellbeing of her students.

Mrs. Rodriguez worked as an educational consultant during the 2021-2022 school year before she was tapped to return to Ransom Everglades as the Interim Head of School in the 2022-2023 school year. Following a national search, Mrs. Rodriguez was selected to serve in the permanent Head of School role in 2023. Throughout her time in leadership at Ransom Everglades, Mrs. Rodriguez has continued to lead

and uphold RE's rich history of excellence. As Head of School, she has set forth a new set of core values for the school, [The RE Way](#), which includes support and community, diversity and inclusion, honor and excellence, service and outreach, and joy and wellbeing.

Prior to RE, Mrs. Rodriguez worked in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools for 15 years as a teacher, English Department chair, Exceptional Education Department co-chair, and education specialist. Mrs. Rodriguez graduated from Florida International University with a Bachelor of Science and from Nova Southeastern University with a Master of Science. In 2018, she completed a Certificate in Advanced Education Leadership from Harvard Graduate School of Professional Education.

David Clark

David Clark '86, Chief Operating Officer, is a proud Ransom Everglades alumnus with deep ties to the community. Mr. Clark rejoined Ransom Everglades in 2022 to serve as interim Head of Upper School and Chief Operating Officer. As COO, Mr. Clark oversees RE's athletics, admission, advancement, and business offices. In his role, Mr. Clark is heavily focused on ensuring that all students feel included and supported in the Ransom Everglades community.

Mr. Clark graduated from Dartmouth College with a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics modified with Engineering and had the opportunity to play in the NFL with the Cincinnati Bengals. After a career-ending injury, Mr. Clark returned to RE to work in the mathematics and computer science department, later taking the roles of dean of students and head football coach. After eight years at RE, Mr. Clark then joined Pine Crest School in Fort Lauderdale, FL where he served as dean of students, assistant upper school head, and interim upper school head. From 2014 until his departure to RE in 2022, Mr. Clark served as Head of School for Pine Crest School on the Boca Raton campus.

Mrs. Rodriguez and Mr. Clark work collaboratively with one another to serve the needs of the greater RE community and lead the school with a team-based approach. Together, they are highly engaged with RE students and families to ensure their success during and following their RE experience.

School Community

Ransom Everglades is home to 1,168 students, grades 6-12, spread across a Middle School and an Upper School. A diverse and inclusive community, over 59 percent students identify as multicultural, and twenty percent speak a language other than English at home. In a community environment that values diversity and inclusion, RE promotes leadership, resilience, and service to others.

RE has 24 varsity sports and is also known for its remarkable arts program, which includes offerings such as symphonic band, jazz combo, strings ensemble, theatrical performances, studio art, and architectural modeling. Starting in grade seven, students engage in structured research projects across disciplines, resulting in the gathering and analyzing of data and the crafting of original work.

At the heart of the RE academic experience are the distinguished members of the faculty, who share the highest standards of classroom teaching and, in many cases, hold advanced degrees in their fields. The average length of service for Ransom Everglades faculty is 19 years, with approximately thirty percent being faculty of color. Many faculty members also serve as student advisors. Students are assigned an advisor in ninth grade and continue with the same advisor all four years, with the advisor providing course selection guidance in addition to being a trusted resource and mentor.

The Upper School

Classes in the Upper School are geared toward inquiry and collaboration, positioning 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.

Ransom Everglades requires every student to master basic sailing, canoeing, and kayaking skills to graduate. One of the most distinctive aspects of Ransom Everglades' 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 obtain a level four proficiency in Spanish, Portuguese, French, or Chinese. Many students take AP Spanish in the eighth grade, leading the way for additional language proficiency in the upper school. 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, members of the Class of 2024 have taken 594 AP exams, with 87 percent of students earning a 3 or better. The mean SAT score is an impressive 705 for Reading and 703 for Math; the mean ACT composite is 32. Notably, the Class of 2024 boasts 16 Commended Scholars. 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. Emphasizing the importance of the academic experience, RE leadership will soon examine and analyze the current RE curriculum to determine whether it best suits the needs of students. The Co-Executive Director, in collaboration with other leaders, will understand and articulate the impact of curriculum decisions on college counseling and will ensure that the academic rigor of coursework is communicated effectively.

For more information on the grading scale and academic coursework, please refer to RE's [school profile](#).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity at RE has long been a mark of distinction and a source of pride. The commitment to diversity at RE informs the curriculum, community outreach, co-curricular activities, and the admission process. RE faculty and staff implement programs, workshops, and learning opportunities that reflect these core beliefs. The community embraces multiculturalism and appreciates the unique potential of each individual. Living by this philosophy ensures that students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become 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. Informed by these varying vantage points on the RE experience, the task force worked to ensure that RE's core values, as articulated in RE's mission and particularly as they relate to diversity, equity, and inclusion, are fully integrated into the curriculum, programs, and culture. Wendell Graham '74, the first black graduate from the Ransom School and retired judge, joined the leadership team as a direct report to the Head of School in 2021-2022 as the Director of Diversity and Community Engagement.

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 COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE

The Co-Executive Directors of College Counseling will lead a team of eleven college counselors, an essay writing specialist, and a coordinator of student-athlete college recruitment. Each counselor, along with both Co-Executive Directors, manages a caseload of approximately 5-25 students depending on their responsibilities within the office.

Individual college counseling assignments occur during the fall semester of junior year. During this time, the College Counseling Office hosts a kickoff event, the College Admissions Symposium, providing juniors and their parents with in-depth insights into the admission process. Throughout the next eighteen months, students, counselors, and parents engage in frequent meetings and conversations. The office also provides additional programming, including workshops on: composing effective personal statements and supplemental essays, completing the Common Application, and applying for financial aid and scholarships. Mock alumni interviews, alumni panels, and an application submit-a-thon are also signature events held during the fall semester of senior year. Further, RE students have the opportunity to meet with admission representatives during fall visits, with more than 100 colleges visiting RE's campus each year. Students also participate in the Association of Independent Miami Schools College Fair during the spring, with attendance from over 250 colleges.

RE students and parents begin learning key foundational knowledge about the college search and application process in ninth grade. Freshmen students and parents attend a program called "The Road Ahead," during which the college counseling team introduces college planning resources and lays the groundwork for a successful college planning journey. During sophomore year, multiple "Nuts & Bolts" programs educate families on a variety of topics designed to jumpstart their college search. In addition, teams of counselors are assigned to the ninth and tenth grades to begin to educate students and families on the college counseling process and to field any questions as needed.

The college counseling team is skilled at listening and advising, and they genuinely enjoy working with students and their families. The counselors assist students in planning and meeting deadlines, developing college lists, honing their ability to tell their stories, and completing their application requirements. One hundred percent of Ransom Everglades graduates attend four-year institutions of higher education. The Class of 2023 (153 graduates) were offered admission to 172 different colleges and are attending 83 different colleges in 23 states and seven countries. Eighty-five percent of the class of 2023 enrolled at institutions outside the state of Florida. Ransom Everglades students receive acceptances—and matriculate—to a significant number of the nation's most selective universities and liberal arts colleges. RE's impressive college acceptance record testifies to the strength of the academic program as well as students' abilities to present their holistic academic and personal qualifications.

THE ROLE OF THE CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE COUNSELING

Reporting to the Head of School alongside their fellow Co-Executive Director, this new leader will continue to advance the much-expanded offerings of RE's college counseling office. They will serve as an expert in the field and as a strategist with a robust capacity for critical thinking, while also remaining aware of the challenges and trends taking place in college admissions and how they impact RE students and families. The Co-Executive Director will spearhead an assessment of current college counseling processes to enhance the team's approach and implement best practices, and will build upon RE's relationships with colleges and universities. They will do this work with a personal style that inspires confidence and respect while encouraging collaboration, partnership, and mentorship. They will take an active role in the training and professional development of the college counseling team.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Specific opportunities and challenges for this new leader include:

Enhance the College Counseling Office's strategic plan

As a strategic thought partner, this leader will serve as a chief architect in strategic planning for RE's College Counseling Office. The Co-Executive Director will collaborate closely with the Head of School and the Executive Director to continue to refine the office's current strategic plan, and will strategize comprehensive, long-term goals for the team, grounded in best practices and data.

The evolving strategic plan should be innovative, sustainable, and supportive of RE's broader mission of guiding students toward impactful futures. This will require a sophisticated understanding of college counseling and admissions, with a pulse on the challenges taking place in higher education, while continuing to support an incredibly talented student body and maintain high caliber acceptance and matriculation rates.

In clear and compelling ways, champion and communicate the distinctiveness of the RE experience

The Co-Executive Director will be a sought-after thought leader in the college counseling and higher education space, and will tap into their significant experience in independent schools to represent RE on a national stage. Through relationship building and innate curiosity, the Co-Executive Director will quickly learn RE's unique curriculum and student experience, disseminating this information intentionally to college representatives and leaders. This leader and the broader team will maintain and strengthen RE's positive relationships with college admissions officers, ensuring that RE remains a destination that colleges are enthusiastic to visit due to high-caliber students and exceptional service from the College Counseling Office. The Co-Executive Director will be engaged and involved at the national level with professional organizations and communities, representing RE effectively to other enrollment leaders.

Build strong relationships with students and families

The Co-Executive Director must possess excellent communication and listening skills. They must genuinely enjoy working with young people and be able to build strong relationships with students and families. They will leverage their deep knowledge of admissions from universities across the country and will continue to learn and engage with universities by attending fly-in programs, conferences, and independently planned college visits.

As a co-chief spokesperson for the College Counseling Office, this leader must also effectively communicate updates, processes, and objectives to students and their families. They must be politically savvy and diplomatic, with a high level of emotional intelligence, understanding the unique stressors of this process and strategically engaging families through both large-scale events and individual relationships. To succeed, the Co-Executive Director must be a persuasive relationship-builder who generates trust and enthusiasm and serves as a visible presence on campus, interacting openly and genuinely and attending carefully to RE students and families. The Co-Executive Director must be an active participant in the life of RE in both presence and communication style.

Provide thoughtful support and guidance to a caseload of students and families

Along with each member of the college counseling team, this leader will carry a caseload of approximately five to ten students. The Co-Executive Director will dedicate significant time, energy, and attention to providing intently focused guidance and preparation to each student and family, leveraging each student's unique talents and goals to help them develop a compelling college application plan and timeline. A trusted, knowledgeable, and kind advisor to students and parents, the Co-Executive Director will be empathetic, responsive, and patient in all interactions.

Leverage the use of data analytics in all aspects of college counseling

The Co-Executive Director must embrace a metrics-oriented approach to college counseling. They will leverage technology in compiling data analytics and will use this information to provide transparent and effective communication to students, families, and other stakeholders. The College Counseling Office will continue to sharpen its focus on enrollment trends through a data-informed lens and will have a culture of data-driven decision-making in every aspect of counseling.

RE students and families expect a level of sophistication and respond well to informed and educated discussions about the college admission process. The Co-Executive Directors and the team will be able to provide quantitative evidence for families to help them better understand and be involved in every step of their college admission journey. To serve as a thought leader on campus, the Co-Executive Director must convey sound data and effectively communicate its impact on decision-making.

Form relationships and collaborate with internal academic partners

This leader will work closely with RE's dedicated and experienced faculty and will continue to educate them, especially those serving as advisors, so that they provide sound guidance to advisees on the college process. This individual will consult regularly with department chairs on curriculum changes and will provide feedback from the lens of the higher education community.

RE department chairs are innovative and passionate about their fields and are well-informed regarding the latest and most advanced trends in curriculum, pedagogy, and research. The department chairs are eager to continue to partner with the Co-Executive Directors of College Counseling to support RE's future and student success. The faculty will therefore connect with the college counseling team to discuss the unique benefits and college preparation that their courses and programs offer so that key information is shared effectively with colleges and universities.

Co-lead, retain, and develop a strong, dedicated college counseling team

This individual will co-lead a devoted and enthusiastic team of college counseling professionals, some of whom live in Miami and some of whom work remotely, and will leverage the diverse skillset of the team to execute the goals of the office. The successful candidate will ensure that all team members are aligned in their approach to advising, communicating with students and families, and working with one another as a unit. The Co-Executive Director will have a strong presence in the office and will focus attention on equitable mentorship and leadership of the team.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The following qualifications represent the broad set of skills and personal qualities important for success as the Co-Executive Director of College Counseling. While no candidate will embody every quality, ideal candidates will bring many of the following professional qualifications and attributes:

- A nuanced understanding of admissions, financial aid, and the college counseling profession;
- Ability to analyze, summarize, and present data to various constituencies;
- A proven track record of leading and mentoring a strong team that provides exceptional service to students and families;
- Ability to work collegially and effectively in a collaborative and diverse community;
- An expert understanding of college and university admissions and the demonstrated ability to build strong relationships with college and university admission offices;
- Excellent collaboration and consensus-building abilities and a high level of transparency;
- Genuine enthusiasm for, and ability to engage with, adolescents;
- Diplomacy, tact, and political savvy, particularly in their work with students and families;

- Confident and effective communication skills; the ability to write with insight and clarity and speak persuasively;
- Familiarity with Naviance and College Kickstart software;
- Active involvement with national college admission counseling organizations;
- A BA/BS is required; a graduate degree is desirable.

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:

Berkley Braden, Managing Associate

Lauren Wilkes, Senior Associate

Dan Rodas, Partner

Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/ransom-everglades-school/co-executive-director-college-counseling>

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