

# Allendale Columbia School

*Rochester, NY*



**HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL SEARCH**

**Start Date: July 1, 2026 or earlier**



## OVERVIEW

Serving 350 students in Little School through Grade 12, Allendale Columbia seeks an experienced, dynamic educator and a curious learner to join a team of professionals responsible for innovative, authentic, and student-centered programming. Reporting directly to the Head of School, and a vital member of the school's Leadership Team, the Head of Lower School is responsible for leading, inspiring, supporting, and hiring a talented team of approximately 40 faculty and staff. The Head of Lower School is also responsible for creating a culture of collaboration and kindness for our Little, Pre-Primary, and Lower School students and their families to enjoy.

### *Job responsibilities will include:*

- Developing, upholding, and advancing an affirming, inclusive climate in the Lower School that prizes justice, equity, and diversity
- Hiring and evaluating LS faculty/staff
- Managing a faculty/staff of 40, including Director of Little School, teachers and specialists
- Oversight of the Allendale Columbia wrap-around care program, Rainbow Room
- Preparing a master daily schedule and assigning teachers and students to classes and other duties
- Designing and facilitating professional development for Lower School faculty and staff
- Supervising, supporting, and evaluating faculty in the development and implementation of curriculum with a clear value on inquiry based learning; reviewing and evaluating the Lower School academic program
- Conducting regular meetings with faculty to collaborate, including monthly division meetings
- Overseeing the coordination of the programs of the Lower School; assisting in the planning and the presentation of school assemblies, programs, and informing the entire school community of Lower School programs and activities
- Building strong, trusting partnerships with parents and caregivers by communicating regularly via newsletters, conferences, and timely informal outreach.
- Administering and management of the Lower School budget
- Participation in the admissions process in conjunction with the Director of Enrollment
- Serves as the Lower School registrar
- Collaborating with local districts around special education services; overseeing the Student Support Team and having knowledge of the MTSS process



## HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

The Columbia School was founded in 1890 with 13 elementary level students in a family residence. From this beginning the school grew over a relatively short period of time into a K-12 all-girls preparatory school focused on quality academics. In 1926 Allendale School was founded as a country day school for boys on a 24-acre site in Rochester. In 1936 the two schools merged during the Great Depression in order for each to survive, but they separated three years later and stayed that way for the next 30 years.

Following a massive fire on the Allendale campus in 1966, after which community members supported the school by funding its rebuilding, the Allendale and Columbia Boards agreed that a merger made sense and worked to honor both schools as they came together under one Board. In 1971 this merger was brought to fruition and Columbia moved onto the Allendale campus, recently equipped with new buildings and room for the merged, now co-ed, student body.

In 2020 Allendale Columbia added The Little School, accommodating 18-month olds to 3 year olds. Today the school enrolls 350 students on its 33-acre campus: 30 in Little School, 145 in Lower School (grades PK-5), 54 in Middle School (grades 6-8), and 121 in Upper School (grades 9-12). Allendale Columbia (AC) is a thriving, diverse community of learners who engage locally and internationally to create opportunities to design, imagine, learn, and make a positive impact.

## MISSION

At Allendale Columbia, we prepare students for the world they will inherit. In our trusting and responsive environment, students 18 months through grade 12 grow in confidence and develop scholastic independence. Together, our students and teachers imagine, design, and create in order to make a positive impact locally and globally.

## CORE VALUES

- Making connections that matter
- Mastering strategies for learning
- Inspiring curious and creative learners
- Sparking resilient spirits
- Daring to take risks



## FAST FACTS

- Co-ed day school, 18 mos-Grade 12
- 350 students: 69% White, 31% Students of Color
  - » Little School: 18 months to 36 months
  - » Lower School: AC3s, PreK, Kindergarten-Grade 5
  - » Middle School: Grades 6-8
  - » Upper School: Grades 9-12
- 64 faculty, 71% with advanced degrees
- Annual Fund: approx. \$1 million raised / year
- Endowment: \$10 million
- 33 acre campus
- Student to teacher ratio: 6:1
- Student to Teacher Ratio



## A BIT ABOUT ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

Rochester is the fourth largest city in New York State, with a population of approximately 212,000; the greater Rochester metropolitan area boasts 1.06 million people. Noted historically as a hub of social (women's rights) and political (abolitionism) movements, Rochester has also been the home and/or birthplace of several important American businesses, including Eastman Kodak, Bausch and Lomb, Xerox, Wegman's, and Western Union. It is a very affordable city offering culture, history, and beautiful landscape.

As a mid-sized city in western New York, Rochester sits on the southern shore of Lake Ontario and is bisected by the Genesee River. Its terrain was formed over a million years ago by ice sheets that created the series of hills that hug the city. The area also contains many small lakes, bays, waterfalls, and gorges - making it a wonderful place to explore.

The climate of Rochester is cold and snowy in the winter, cool and beautiful in the summer. It experiences four very distinct seasons. Rochester's park system was originally designed in the 1890's by Frederick Law Olmsted; now there are about 15 city parks, one of which houses the city zoo. Many sports facilities and playgrounds may also be found in these parks, encouraging outdoor recreation at all times of year.

The city is also the home of several well-known colleges and universities, as well as many smaller educational institutions. The [University of Rochester](#), which houses the prestigious [Eastman School of Music](#), and [Rochester Institute of Technology](#) are part of Rochester's rich educational offerings. Equally of interest are the cultural events and activities of the area, including the [Rochester International Jazz Festival](#) and the [George Eastman Museum](#), housing the oldest photography collection in the world.

Though Rochester's population was once almost 95% White, it is now significantly more diverse with approximately 45% White, 38% Black or African American, and 17% a variety of other races. In recent years it has become a hub of immigration, affirming its status as a sanctuary city in 2017.

Rochester is accessible via car, bus, train, and plane. If you have a boat, that will work too, at least via the lakes! The Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport is serviced by eight major airlines; Amtrak operates to and from the city; and bus service is available city-wide and nationwide, through Trailways and Greyhound.



## AC'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Allendale Columbia embarked on a new strategic plan in 2022, which you may learn more about [here](#). In a nutshell, AC's current strategic priorities include:

**Personalized Learning Opportunities**—rethinking schedules to optimize learning opportunities, establishing an Innovation Fund to support non-traditional learning opportunities, creating partnership opportunities with area businesses, and updating spaces to allow for more collaborative learning.

**Educating the Whole Child**—enhancing restorative practices, identifying resources and PD for the Student Success Team, strengthening skills in guiding and mentoring students' learning, formalizing structures for student feedback, and promoting problem solving and critical thinking in student learning.

**Connections**—through service learning, alumni partnerships, hiring practices for diversity, and new endowed scholarships.

## LITTLE SCHOOL, 18 MONTH-OLDS TO 3 YEAR-OLDS

Founded in 2020, AC's Little School currently enrolls 30 children from 18 months to 3 years-old in a 7:30am-6:00pm licensed day care program. Based on a Reggio Emilia-inspired approach, Little School offers children a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment. Children are provided with two meals a day, year-round outside of several holiday breaks.

The Little School has become a robust program that naturally feeds into the PrePrimary classrooms and is a launching pad for the experiential learning that occurs throughout Lower School. While the Little School has its own director, it is overseen by the Head of Lower School.



## LOWER SCHOOL, KINDERGARTEN- GRADE 5

With its 145 Grades K-5 students, AC's Lower School is the largest division of the school. Acknowledging that children learn at a different pace from one another, a primary goal of the Lower School is to help each child understand how they learn. AC's Foundations Curriculum in reading, math, and "communication" (speaking and writing) takes students where they are and moves them toward mastery at their own pace. Students work in these three core areas daily.



Inquiry-based and project-based learning is at the heart of all that happens in AC's classrooms, making the Lower School intensely student-centered. Using the Responsive Classroom approach, AC's Lower School emphasizes academic, social, and emotional growth as the foundational safety net for all student learning. Morning Meeting allows for growth in student responsibility and what it means to be a global citizen. And finally, reflection time built into the end of each class day encourages each child to consider what was learned and how, whether it was through classwork, other events of the day, or social interactions.

Specials—in the performing and studio arts, language, PE, and STEM—introduce students to the same teacher for each special over all Lower School years, thereby creating strong bonds and deep understanding of each child over time. Lessons in these classes are often coordinated with the core curriculum.



Students receive no grades in the Lower School. Report cards are issued twice a year, offering narrative and standards-based assessments of student progress. Parents are invited to meet with the teachers halfway through each of the two semesters, with additional meetings when/if necessary.

All Lower School classes have at least one recess period a day, underscoring AC's belief in the importance of play in a child's learning journey. .

To read more about the Lower School program, click [here](#).

## AFTER SCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR LITTLE AND LOWER SCHOOLS

Rainbow Room Jr, for 3 and 4 year-olds, and Rainbow Room, for K-5 students, are offered every day after school hours and during vacation days (including during summer programs). After school activities are largely play-based and often outside. Vacation days each have a theme to make extra fun for the children enrolled. Both these options are offered at an additional cost.

Summer programs are offered as full-day and week-by-week options for 3-18 year-olds. Morning and afternoon sessions are available, each with its own theme. Some of the options include Fairies and Pixie Dust and Camp Cobblestone (with a different focus each day) for the youngest children to science, dance, yoga, and cooking for the Lower School set.

Click [here](#) to see more on the After School and Summer programs.



## EQUITY STATEMENT

*The Allendale Columbia School community affirms and celebrates its members as global citizens who seek to build compassionate connections rooted in social justice. We promote a strong ethic of social responsibility in our students, parents, faculty, staff, and alumni. We strive to build a diverse community that promotes equity and justice for all. We foster an environment that reflects the diverse experiences and perspectives present in the larger world. We embrace the National Association of Independent Schools' Principles of Good Practice for equity and justice as a framework for inclusion. We commit to continuous, intentional evaluation of our practices to cultivate a culture of belonging, renewed and reimagined by the collective community.*





## PROFILE OF THE NEXT HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL

*A successful new Head of Lower School at AC will be:*

- A community builder who can create a clear vision and forward-thinking direction for the Lower School based on a thorough knowledge of best practices, a growth mindset, strategic thinking, and high energy;
- A warm, compassionate, and thoughtful leader who puts students at the center of every decision;
- A leader with a track record of fostering a happy and thriving Lower School environment;
- An engaging, calm, visible, and inspiring leader;
- An excellent communicator, in all forms, both with students and adults;
- An educator dedicated to creating and embracing meaningful connections with parents;
- A leader who demonstrates the ability to think and act strategically in equal parts;
- An educator who demonstrates a sense of humor; and
- An advocate for the Lower School while working collaboratively with the school's Leadership Team to establish and execute broader institutional goals.

*The ideal candidate will:*

- Have at least 5 years of experience working with Pre-Primary and Lower School students (ages 3-12), preferably in a leadership role.
- Have a master's degree or higher in elementary education or school leadership.
- Be a natural leader and self-starter, and thrive in a creative role that has room to be defined by the person filling it.

Salary range: \$100,000 - 115,000, plus benefits.



## To APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically, as separate documents (preferably PDFs), the following materials:

- EC Candidate Summary (ask Sally Mixsell for this document)
- Formal cover letter of application stating desire to apply.
- Current résumé
- Statement of leadership philosophy
- At least three references, including name, title, relationship with candidate, phone number, and email address for each
- EC Disclosure Form (ask Sally for this document)

*Please send any candidate recommendations or referrals to:*

Sally Mixsell, Partner, Educators Collaborative, LLC  
[smixsell@educatorscollaborative.com](mailto:smixsell@educatorscollaborative.com), 203-824-3653

*Allendale Columbia School, as an equal opportunity employer, does not discriminate in its hiring of employees on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, creed, national origin, citizenship, marital or veteran status, age or disability. We actively seek diversity among faculty and administration as well as among students.*

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[allendalecolumbia.org](http://allendalecolumbia.org)