

# McLean School

Transformative.

## McLean School Head of Middle School – Potomac, MD July 2025

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### Overview

McLean School, located in suburban Washington, DC, walks the talk. Many schools talk about the warmth of their community, the collegiality, and the deep sense of caring and trust among and between students, faculty, staff, administration, and parents. At McLean, born from the mission of serving learners that span the range of racial, socio-economic, cultural, and learning strengths and challenges, that deep sense of caring for one another provides a bedrock foundation. Many schools talk about their expanding ability to serve students who learn differently, but McLean has been built for that mission from the start. Through its Abilities Model®, McLean teaches to each student's strengths while providing support in areas of need, and McLean never defines students by what they cannot do. Many schools whose populations include both traditional learners and those with learning challenges talk about their aspiration for graduates to attend college. At McLean School, that is not only an aspiration but is a reality for nearly 100% of graduates.

McLean School looks like a typical, maybe even traditional, college-prep school. But what happens within its walls is anything but traditional. The School has attracted deeply caring and skilled educators whose passion is discovering and teaching to each student's unique abilities in whatever innovative, personal, or progressive manner is best for the student.

With nearly 500 students in K-12, including around 200 in the Middle School (grades 5-8), McLean School delivers on the promise of giving students skills, confidence, and knowledge to succeed in college and beyond. After serving 12 years as Middle School Head, David Roth is moving on to become McLean's full-time Associate Head of School for Educational Programs. McLean is thus seeking a talented, experienced, and committed Head of Middle School starting July 1, 2025, to build on the School's culture and program



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and collaborate with faculty, parents, administrators, and other divisional leaders to ensure the Middle School continues to fulfill its potential and promise well into the future.

### **Mission**

McLean School's mission is to make education accessible, stimulating, and meaningful to a broad range of bright K-12 learners. We understand each student's unique strengths and challenges, and support both in a way that fosters intellectual growth as well as confidence, self-advocacy, empathy, and connection. At McLean, students succeed because they learn how to learn in an inclusive, conscientious community of caring teachers and peers.

### **The School**

Changing the lives of students and families, McLean School is Washington, DC's most comprehensive and academically rigorous full-scope college preparatory program for bright, college-bound students, including those with dyslexia, school-based anxiety, ADHD, and executive functioning challenges. For over 70 years, the School has helped students realize their full potential with a curriculum that is traditional without being rigid, challenging without being intimidating, and designed with the real world in mind. Recognizing the School's important work, students are drawn from 9 counties – and faculty and staff from 13 counties – in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC.

McLean recognizes that all children are natural learners, but that they learn in different ways. The School's Abilities Model® is a more complete way to understand how a student's mind works. This approach recognizes each child for their strengths, providing support in areas of need and fostering resilience, transforming how students view themselves and their futures. McLean focuses on what a child can do, not what they can't—all within a college preparatory program that incorporates challenging academics, championship athletic teams, visual and performing arts, robotics, service learning, and more.

The School does not employ the traditional "learning specialist" that requires students to be pulled out of their classroom. Instead, every teacher is a specialist in learning. McLean has a Coordinator of Learning Services in each division who works seamlessly with students, teachers, and parents. Experienced faculty members teach the way students learn in small classes – the average class size in the Middle School is 10 students per teacher – embedding support in the classroom. These supports combine in different ways



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for different learners, evolving with the student as they grow. This approach of scaffolding and gradual release builds confidence, self-advocacy skills, and resilience, along with important learning habits.

Reaching all corners of the McLean experience, the School's commitment to diversity and equity is an extension of its mission to make education accessible, stimulating, and meaningful to a broad range of learners. McLean embraces diversity and values the integrity of all individuals. This recognition enriches the community and encourages students to be better leaders and responsible citizens.

Over the past decade, the Middle School Program has evolved in remarkable ways. With nearly every grade level having a waitlist, the program has broadened its offerings to include more challenging and rigorous courses, a dedicated focus on social-emotional learning, and an emphasis on project-based education while ensuring support for students' academic and executive functioning growth. Supported by an outstanding faculty and staff who inspire and empower students daily, the Middle School division is poised for fresh initiatives and insights from a new leader.

### **The Location**

Potomac, Maryland, is a suburban community about 14 miles northwest of Washington, DC. With tree-lined streets and lush lawns, the area is quiet and relaxing for its residents, especially those looking to escape the hustle and bustle of Washington, DC. Although primarily a residential area, it is easily accessible from major highways. The area has many nearby shopping and dining options. Potomac is also very close to many natural parks and preserves, including Great Falls Park along the Potomac River, Scotts Run Nature Preserve, and Cabin John Park.

Of course, Potomac also offers convenient access to the DC area. As the nation's capital and the sixth-largest metropolitan area in the country, DC is a diverse city with vast cultural resources. An extensive public transportation system connects the city's many neighborhoods. While many associate the city primarily with politics and government, DC also boasts incredible access to history, including the many landmarks on and around the National Mall, the Library of Congress, and the myriad of offerings of the Smithsonian Institutions, with its 19 museums, all free and open to the public. DC is similarly rich in the performing arts, home to the Kennedy Center, National Opera and Ballet, and the Folger Shakespeare Library and Theater.



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## Job Responsibilities

Among the many responsibilities of the Head of Middle School are:

- Set and maintain high standards and expectations for all students, faculty, and staff for academic performance and personal responsibility for behavior.
- Work with faculty and staff to foster a caring community in which each student is seen and heard, the division meets their educational needs, and students are challenged in their areas of strength.
- Oversee and supervise the hiring, evaluation, and improvement programs for Middle School faculty and staff.
- Support and mentor Middle School faculty and staff in their professional development and their teaching.
- Actively participate in efforts to keep current with and adopt appropriate thought leadership and emerging practices and pedagogies for the student populations McLean serves.
- Collaborate with other division heads, department chairs, and senior leadership to ensure that the entire School adheres to the same student-centered mission and vision.
- Mediate between faculty, between faculty and parents, between faculty and students, and between students in an atmosphere of professional rapport and mutual respect drawing upon the School's work and commitment to Restorative Practices.
- Assist admissions processes by speaking at prospective parent events and participating in evaluating all new student applications for the Middle School. Manage and oversee the budget for all departmental purchases within the Middle School.  
Actively participate in school-wide engagements, events, fundraising, and activities that support the School.

## Desired Skills and Personal Characteristics

Among many attributes, successful candidates will:

- Have an unending love of children, a steadfast belief that every student can be successful, and a desire to get to know each student in the division.
- Have an understanding of how students with dyslexia, anxiety, ADHD, and organizational issues learn and how best to support them.
- Be familiar with and passionate about individualized approaches that teach to each student's strengths. Ensure McLean's [Abilities Model](#)® is a foremost priority. Be



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open-minded and eager to learn and adopt McLean's uniquely successful ways of working with students' academic and social-emotional needs.

- Have classroom teaching experience and the desire to support classroom teachers.
- Possess proven experience with the full range of Middle School leadership and administrative responsibilities, particularly in managing, nurturing, and mentoring a growing and diverse faculty.
- Be a thought leader in curriculum and pedagogy and work collaboratively with others to identify growth opportunities and bring about desired change.
- Embody a compassionate, flexible, and caring leadership style while still having the ability to make tough decisions when necessary.
- Be particularly attuned to and skilled in working with parents who are highly concerned for their children as learners.
- Possess experience with the tools of Middle Schools including schedules, curriculum, evaluation, assessment, and budgets.
- Lead with outgoing, energetic, positive, engaging communications and personal style.

**Salary Range:** \$120,000-\$150,00.

**To Apply:** Interested and qualified candidates should submit, and as separate PDF documents, the following materials:

1. Current resume, including phone number and email address
2. Cover letter stating interest in and qualifications for the position

To Rice Bryan ([rbryan@carneysandoe.com](mailto:rbryan@carneysandoe.com)), and Sabrina Zurkuhlen ([Sabrina.zurkuhlen@carneysandoe.com](mailto:Sabrina.zurkuhlen@carneysandoe.com)). Please do not contact the school directly.



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