

HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

ATHENS ACADEMY

Athens, Georgia

athensacademy.org

Start Date: July 2026



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission Statement

Athens Academy seeks excellence with honor in the educational and personal experience of each student.

At a Glance



Established
1967



Total enrollment
868



Total employees
187



Student-teacher ratio
7:1



Students of color
20%



Financial aid awarded
\$1.6M



Average faculty tenure
17 years



Campus size
152 acres

Students receiving aid: 22%
Endowment: \$18M

Annual operating budget: \$20M
State athletic championships: 54



Overview

Located on a sprawling and pastoral 152-acre campus a few miles from the University of Georgia and just over an hour's drive from Atlanta, Athens Academy stands as North Georgia's most distinguished school, where "excellence with honor" is more than a motto—it's a transformational commitment that shapes every aspect of the educational experience. Serving approximately 870 students in K3 through grade 12, Athens Academy has established itself as one of Georgia's premier independent schools, with a reputation for academic excellence that extends far beyond the region. Expert teachers provide individualized instruction that challenges each student to reach their full potential through innovative, creative learning experiences that prepare them not just for college, but for leadership in an ever-evolving world.

Athens Academy's comprehensive approach to education is built on four foundational pillars that create well-rounded, confident leaders: Academics, Arts, Athletics, and Service and Leadership. From strong foundations in reading and writing to dynamic programs in science, technology, engineering, and math, students engage in learning that is both meaningful and forward-looking. The school's championship athletics program boasts an impressive 54 state championships with 20 varsity team programs, 17 junior varsity teams, and 20 Middle School teams in 11 different sports, while award-winning fine arts programs nurture creativity and self-expression at the highest levels. Service and leadership development begins in Preschool, cultivating the empathy and integrity that define Athens Academy graduates, culminating in an Upper School Honor Code written and upheld by students themselves. This holistic approach builds character, fosters authentic relationships, and develops the critical thinking and problem-solving skills essential for students' success in college and beyond.

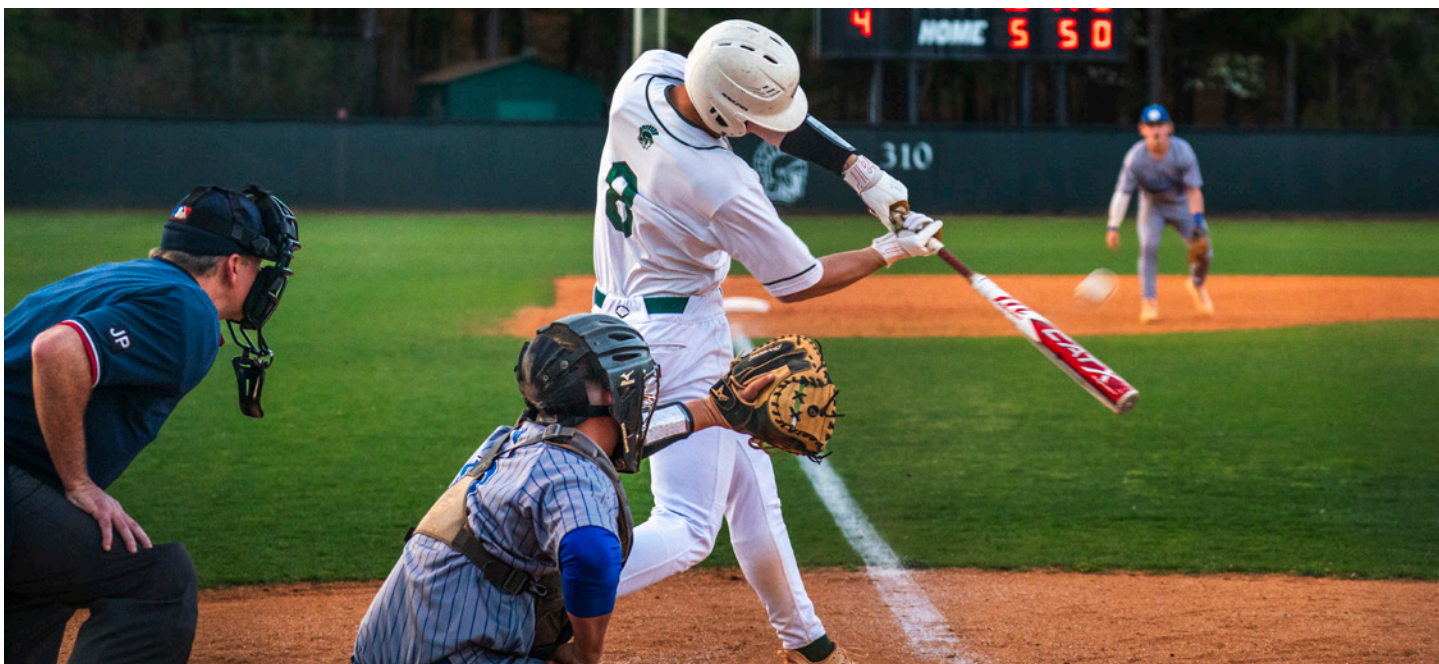
The next Head of School will inherit a legacy of success built on exceptionally solid foundations: state-of-the-art facilities, an experienced senior leadership team, strong finances, and a devoted Board of Trustees. Following the highly successful 12-year tenure of current Head John Thorsen, the school is well positioned for its next chapter of growth and innovation. As an educational leader that has set the standard for independent education in the area, Athens Academy enjoys an excellent reputation not only for its academic programs but for its vibrant community as well. As one person said, Athens Academy is "a place where people seek and find community"—a testament to the authentic relationships and shared purpose that define the community and create an attractive environment for the next chapter of visionary leadership.



Opportunities and Challenges

The next Head of School will face challenges and opportunities including:

- Nurturing the school's commitment to academic excellence by maintaining high academic standards while continually enhancing the curriculum, actively partnering with faculty and administrators, and supporting evolving best practices in teaching and learning;
- Strengthening Athens Academy's position as the premier educational destination in North Georgia by refining institutional messaging and programs, further solidifying the school's reputation as the region's school of choice, and building enrollment consistent with the Academy's mission;
- Investing in people and relationships, responding to the wide variety of needs and perspectives among stakeholders, and uniting the community in service to the school's mission and its commitment that each student and family feels a strong sense of belonging and meaningful engagement within the Academy community;
- Communicating with inspiration and clarity to a wide variety of stakeholders, serving as the school's chief storyteller and greatest advocate for both internal and external audiences;
- Recruiting, hiring, developing, and retaining an excellent faculty, staff, and senior administrative team and supporting them in order to make full use of their talents;
- Partnering with the Director of Development and Board of Trustees to further develop a culture of philanthropy and raise the necessary resources for the school to fulfill its mission at the highest possible level; and
- Expanding strategic partnerships with University of Georgia and other external partners to enhance opportunities for faculty growth and enriching student academic experiences.



Qualities and Personal Attributes

The most competitive candidates will offer most or all of the following qualifications and qualities:

Strategic and Mission-Aligned Leader

- A deep understanding of and appreciation for the joys and compelling qualities of a multidivisional school;
- Personal and professional alignment with the school's mission and a leadership style rooted in a commitment to "excellence with honor";
- The ability to articulate vision and strategy and the tactical skills necessary to manage the systems and processes necessary to implement strategy; and
- Facility identifying common ground and achieving buy-in among stakeholders.

Community Leader

- Eagerness to engage actively with employees, students, and parents and willingness to prioritize relationships amidst the demands of a busy professional schedule;
- A leadership style that is collaborative whenever possible and decisive, when necessary, built on approachability, responsiveness, and transparent communication; and
- A commitment to honoring and balancing multiple perspectives in order to maintain an authentic, inclusive community.

Fiscal Steward and Operational Leader

- Experience assessing educational and programmatic offerings and aligning and raising resources to support excellence in all the school's endeavors;
- Depth of experience in enrollment management, school operations, governance, and strategic planning;
- A forward-facing, external orientation with strong fundraising capabilities and the ability to serve as an ambassador for Athens Academy in the broader community; and
- Significant experience recruiting, hiring, managing, and developing adults in complex organizations.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Athens Academy.

[School Website](#)

[College Profile](#)

[Strategic Plan](#)

[About Athens, Georgia](#)



To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. **Review of candidate materials will begin immediately.** Candidates are encouraged to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents as soon as possible:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position
- A current résumé

Selected candidates may be asked to provide:

- Writing samples specific to this search
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission)

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