



LOWER SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Start Date: July 2027

Colorado Academy

Denver, Colorado | coloradoacademy.org



Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES

MISSION STATEMENT

Creating curious, kind, courageous, and adventurous learners and leaders.

At a Glance



1906
established



1,043
total enrollment



360
Lower School enrollment



33%
students of color



159
total faculty



75%
faculty with
advanced degrees



18:1
student-faculty ratio
in the Lower School



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OVERVIEW

Situated on a picturesque campus in Denver, Colorado Academy (CA) serves approximately 1,040 students from nearly 70 zip codes across the city, from Pre-K through Grade 12. Nationally recognized for its dynamic programming, commitment to inclusivity, and mission of "creating curious, kind, courageous, and adventurous learners and leaders," CA is a school where the whole child is at the center of the work and where students are, in the words of the community, seen first.

CA seeks an inspiring, student-centered, and visionary leader to serve as its next Lower School Principal, beginning July 2027. This is a distinctive opportunity to lead a division that embraces academic excellence, social emotional learning, and whole-child education at one of the country's premier independent schools. The next Lower School Principal will join Colorado Academy at a time of optimism and momentum—with strong enrollment, a strategic vision for innovation, and a thriving culture of faculty and student engagement, led by Head of School Dr. Mike Davis. The Principal will shape the lives of CA's youngest students and the educators who teach them—and help ensure CA continues to lead as one of the most dynamic, inclusive, and well-rounded educational institutions in the country.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Colorado Academy's next Lower School Principal will join a joyful, student-centered community with deep traditions and a highly dedicated faculty, will help shape the division's next chapter, and will guide the division in the following areas:

Steward a Joyful, Whole-Child Culture

The Lower School is widely described by faculty, parents, and administrators as a joyful environment that celebrates empathy, kindness, and connection. The Principal sets the vision for a culture that emphasizes the strength of the community, focuses on the whole child, and cherishes traditions that elevate the school's core values of courage, curiosity, and kindness. The next Principal will honor and continue to elevate this special culture that is a particular point of pride for the division.

Strengthen Professional Growth and Coaching

The next Principal will have the opportunity to build pathways for consistent feedback and professional growth, a goal that extends across divisions and that is being addressed collaboratively by the senior leadership team. There is an appetite for additional coaching in areas of recent curricular change, like the two newly adopted math programs.



Reimagine Lower School Leadership Structure

The Principal role, as presently configured, carries an extraordinary breadth of responsibility. There is active interest in exploring shared leadership, including the possibility of creating an assistant principal role, and expanding other pathways to leadership within the division.

Advocate for Lower School

The Principal will advocate for the Lower School within a Pre-K–12 setting while simultaneously holding a broad institutional mindset and working closely with a close-knit and highly collaborative leadership team. This leadership team understands how each division informs the work of the others, and they shoulder the shared responsibility of supporting strategic initiatives and stewarding shared resources.

Partner with Families

With personal warmth, confidence, and wisdom, the Lower School Principal will help parents navigate developmental milestones, providing counsel and direction when parents need reassurance about their child's progress.

Manage change and renovations

Following a comprehensive campus master planning process, Colorado Academy is currently investigating the expansion and renovation of the Lower School facility. The Lower School Principal will play a role in designing and reimagining the instructional space for the Lower School and support the division with care and excitement through this process.



\$6.0M

financial aid
awarded



18%

students receiving
aid



\$52.3M

endowment



\$51.1M

annual operating
budget



94 acres

campus size

QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

The next principal will be an excellent educational leader, able to develop curriculum, coach faculty, and provide real structure and clarity, but equally important is high emotional intelligence and genuine humility. The Lower School benefits from a leader who is approachable, empathetic, and collaborative, but who can also set clear expectations, make decisions, communicate the “why,” and give faculty and families confidence about where the division is headed. The Lower School Principal will bring a combination of educational expertise, high EQ, humility, visibility, and decisive leadership.

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



Professional Qualifications

- Experience teaching and leading in a lower school and an appreciation for the challenges and opportunities inherent in a complex, multi-division school;
- Proven ability to inspire, support, and lead faculty in a culture that values both autonomy and collaboration;
- Nuanced understanding of best practices in student-centered pedagogy and curriculum design;
- Understanding of state childcare licensing requirements;
- A track record of inclusive leadership and a strong commitment to equity and belonging;
- The ability to communicate verbally and in writing with inspiration and clarity;
- A history of thoughtful innovation moderated by a skillful and sensitive approach to change;
- A community-building leadership style that is collaborative whenever possible and decisive when necessary, demonstrating approachability, trustworthiness, and a commitment to honoring multiple perspectives;
- The willingness to prioritize visibility amidst the demands of a busy professional schedule;
- Willingness to honor the division’s culture and history while gently guiding it into the future.



Personal Qualities

- A genuine love for young children and delight in the daily life of a Lower School;
- A community-building leadership style that is collaborative whenever possible and decisive when necessary, demonstrating approachability, trustworthiness, and a commitment to honoring multiple perspectives;
- Authenticity, kindness, and humility, with a playful spirit and sense of humor;
- Comfort with autonomy balanced with leadership confidence;
- Skill in managing conflict and holding crucial conversations with care;
- Team leadership mentality.

LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [School Profile](#)
- [Culture and Community](#)
- [About Denver, Colorado](#)





TO APPLY

Review of candidate materials will begin immediately. Interested candidates are asked 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

As the process moves forward, selected candidates may be asked to submit:

- 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)

Candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence and to submit a résumé and cover letter to:

BURKE ZALOSH

Senior Consultant

burke.zalosh@carneysandoe.com

KAREN WHITAKER

Senior Consultant

karen.whitaker@carneysandoe.com

The full-time salary range for this position is approximately \$210,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors which include years of experience, education background, and expertise.

Colorado Academy is an equal opportunity employer.



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