

DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE COUNSELING

Start Date: July 2027

Riverdale Country School

Bronx, New York | riverdale.edu

Carney Sandoe & ASSOCIATES

AT A GLANCE

1907
established

1,304
total enrollment

579
Upper School enrollment

52%
students of color

169
total faculty

5:1
student-faculty ratio

$12.3M
financial aid awarded

20%
students receiving aid

$99.2M
endowment

$96M
annual operating budget

27.5
acres in the Bronx

MISSION

Riverdale is a Pre-K through grade 12 independent school in New York City committed to empowering lifelong learners by developing minds, building character, and creating community in order to change our world for the good.



OVERVIEW

Founded in 1907, Riverdale Country School is one of the finest independent schools in New York City: a diverse, equitable, and inclusive Pre-K through grade 12 day school of 1304 students, 579 of them in the Upper School. Students come from 120 zip codes throughout New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, and the student body mirrors the diversity of the greater New York City area. Riverdale's program stresses critical and creative thinking, active reading, and thoughtful analysis. Students come to value the school's foundational values of mind, character, and community, along with the qualities of curiosity, purpose, and belonging. Faculty and families describe a community marked by warmth, rigor, and close student–teacher relationships, with a culture of high challenge and high support that invites and encourages innovation.

In 1907, Frank Sutliff Hackett and his wife, Frances, opened Riverdale as one of the nation's first country day schools, with 12 students and four teachers. Riverdale Girls School opened in 1933, and in 1972 the two schools merged to form a single coeducational school. Riverdale has long been known as a leader in academic excellence and interdisciplinary education, and it has repeatedly shown a willingness to rethink the status quo. The Upper School program is anchored by multi- and interdisciplinary courses that encourage critical thinking through close reading of primary sources, discussion-based seminars, and analytical writing. This curriculum demands and develops agility in independent, critical analysis; promotes a global understanding of the interconnectedness of disciplines, ideas, and issues; and requires that students learn to develop and ask meaningful original questions.





Riverdale appeals to families for its balanced curriculum, unique and challenging programs, strong sense of community, and focus on the whole child. The school believes that free expression and diverse viewpoints contribute to deeper and more nuanced questioning, reflecting, and understanding of the world in which we live. To this end, Riverdale generously supports diversity, equity, and inclusion through professional development for faculty and staff; Community Engagement Teams that organize events and heritage celebrations, speakers, and guest artists; and curriculum innovation grants and affinity groups for every segment of the school community. The school partners with leaders around the world to identify best teaching practices and ways to support students as they grow intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

Riverdale occupies two well-resourced campuses (the most space of any school in the five boroughs). Located in a scenic neighborhood section of the Bronx, the Middle and Upper Schools occupy the historic 20-acre Hill Campus adjacent to the Fieldston neighborhood and overlooking Van Cortlandt Park. The Lower School's River Campus for grades Pre-K through five sits on eight leafy acres alongside the Hudson River and beneath the Wave Hill Public Garden. The layout of the Hill Campus provides ample open space and generous academic, athletic, and arts facilities. Students congregate in the dining hall for breakfast and in various social and outdoor spaces across campus throughout the day. Two gymnasiums, a theater, aquatics center, and buildings for sciences, the arts, and classrooms comprise most of the campus, along with tennis courts and multiple turf fields.

Students appreciate that their classmates are both academically minded and well-rounded. The atmosphere at the school is spirited, and students affirm that they enjoy coming to school and helping each other do well. Parents value the community that feels like an extension of family and recognize that the deep investment in their children by the adults on campus gives students a sense of confidence and an understanding of how to take responsibility for their work, their learning, and themselves.

THE POSITION

Spurred by growth in both demand and enrollment, the administrative structure in the Upper School has recently evolved to include an Academic Dean, Dean of Faculty, and two Assistant Division Heads (for grades 9-10 and 11-12), along with the existing grade dean system in which deans follow the class for all four years. With the goal of deepening the academic and socioemotional support the school offers to students and facilitating even more comprehensive guidance as they build their co-curricular lives, the new structure will allow closer communication and guidance for students and their families throughout their Upper School journey. The Director of College Counseling plays a central role on this Upper School team and in the continued development of an intentional, four-year student experience.

Riverdale's college counseling program emphasizes deep research and frequent communication among students, their families, and their counselors as they consider the next phase of students' education. Six college counselors, including the Director, ensure that students and their families receive significant personal attention, guidance, and care. Students are encouraged to explore the numerous possibilities available to them and to think about their unique interests, talents, and potential. Matching students to the right college is of paramount importance; Riverdale's graduates attend the most selective liberal arts colleges and universities in the nation and around the world, as well as engineering schools, professional art and theater institutes, and music conservatories.

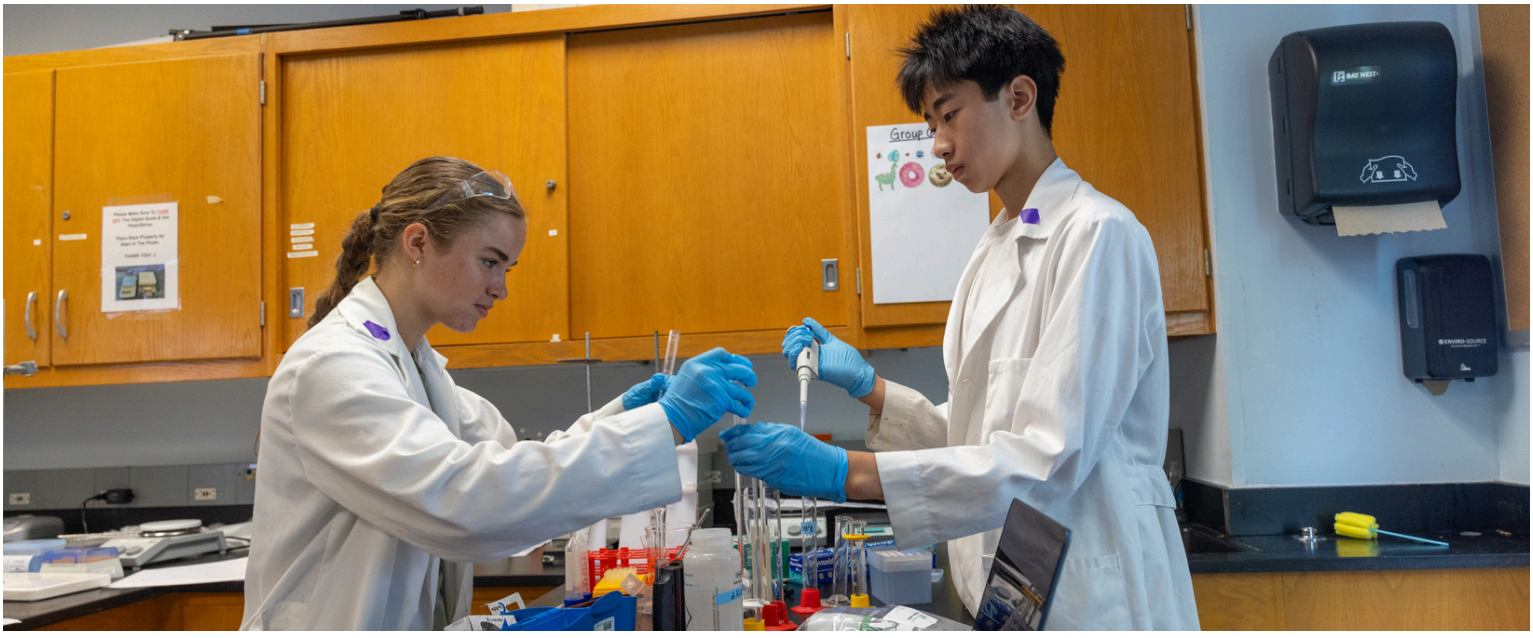
The Director of College Counseling is a senior member of the Upper School administrative leadership team and reports to Upper School Head Anna Hall. The Director carries a student caseload and leads a team of three Senior Associate Directors, two Associate Directors, and two administrative staff members. The incoming Director will follow Kristi Marshall, who is stepping away after three decades of exceptional service to Riverdale. The position offers a thoughtful leader the opportunity to honor a strong tradition while shaping the program's next chapter, pairing deep expertise and a strong network with the warmth, collaborative spirit, and openness that define the Riverdale culture. While the position begins in July 2027, the school anticipates scheduling transition work during the spring and early summer.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Leading a Highly Experienced Team Through Transition: As the Upper School student body has grown, Riverdale's college counseling team has expanded to include six counselors (including the Director) and two administrative team members. The office is deeply experienced and highly collaborative. Following a highly respected Director who has led the college counseling department for 30 years, the next Director will have the opportunity to further leverage the team's experience, while offering opportunities for continued growth and development, distributing responsibility across the team and—as necessary—refining the office structure in support of the school's goals.

Refining Program and Processes: Building on a new administrative structure in the Upper School, initial programming with 9th and 10th grade families, and a successful college seminar program for juniors and seniors, the Director will continue to refine the college counseling program so that it is fully aligned with the 9–12 developmental framework and provides opportunities for learning and reflection that will set each student up for a thoughtful college search process.





Further Connecting College Counseling to the Life of the Upper School: The next Director will continue to strengthen cross-team collaboration throughout the Upper School, building relationships with faculty, Grade Deans, advisors, counselors, and the new Assistant Division Heads, to further ensure that the many adults who invest in the life of each student are positioned to appropriately support the student's college search and application journey, such that the college counseling program is understood as part of the full educational journey, not only its outcome.

A Highly Supportive Process: Riverdale's college results are exceptionally strong, and the office is known for being highly strategic. While anticipating and responding to changes and emergent trends in the college admission landscape, the next Director will continue to foster a process that is characterized by the high challenge and high support that define the Riverdale culture.

Partnering with Families: Riverdale families are deeply invested, and the college process exists within a broader landscape that can contribute to student and family anxiety. The Director will lead parent education across the Upper School years, including Junior and Senior College Nights and financial aid and athletic information sessions and will lead a team that offers guidance that is highly personalized, supportive, and realistic.

148
Number of Seniors (class of 2027)

~ 25
College Counselor caseload per graduating class

winter of 11th grade
College Counselors assigned

90%
Students leaving the state for college

MaiaLearning
College Counseling Platform

QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

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

Professional Qualifications

- An exceptional background in independent school college counseling and / or selective college admissions, expert knowledge of the college admission landscape, and a robust professional network;
- Strong leadership and project management skills and experience with an orientation toward empowering and supporting the continued growth of excellent, experienced professionals;
- The ability to build productive, dynamic working relationships with high school students in support of their self-understanding, growth, needs, and aspirations for college and beyond;
- Fluency with college counseling and student information systems such as MaiaLearning, College Kickstart, Naviance, and Veracross, including a strong grasp of the growing role of technology and AI in college admissions;
- Demonstrated skill in proactively building relationships across the school—with advisors, deans, coaches, administrators, and faculty beyond the college counseling office—in support of cross-divisional and cross-departmental collaboration;
- Deep statistical and analytical skills, a business mind, and the ability to anticipate and proactively solve potential problems;
- A demonstrated commitment to partnering with parents/caregivers in support of students' needs and aspirations; and
- The ability to co-create programs and model practices that center equity and belonging and cultivate an office environment that invites all—students, families, and colleagues—to be their authentic selves and articulate their needs.

Leadership Style and Personal Qualities

- Self-awareness and a demonstrated commitment to personal and professional growth;
- A collaborative, supportive leadership style that builds strong teams and favors collaborative decision-making over hierarchy;
- Well-honed writing, listening, interpersonal, and presentation skills and the ability to harness those skills in the service of the full range of responsibilities associated with serving as the Director of College Counseling;
- A calm presence and a tough skin, with the ability to hold boundaries while communicating with warmth and care; and
- The confidence and humility to advocate for and embrace new ideas, invite and engage in productive disagreement, and welcome feedback.

LEARN MORE

- School Website
- School History
- Core Values
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- About The Bronx, New York

The published salary range for this position is $300-350K. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors which include years of experience, education background, and expertise.





TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence and to apply by submitting the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing interest in this position
- A current, and thorough résumé of no more than four pages

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)

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Riverdale Country School seeks diversity in its faculty, staff, and student body. In admission and employment policies and practices, in financial aid and loan programs, and in all its educational programs, Riverdale does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin, sexual orientation, sex, gender, gender identity or expression.

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