

Position Statement for
Head of School Search

The Altamont School

Birmingham, Alabama

July 1, 2022



THE
ALTAMONT
SCHOOL



OVERVIEW

Perched atop the hillside overlooking the city of Birmingham, Alabama, lies a beautiful setting for The Altamont School, a school that serves 365 students in grades 5-12. The School enjoys a wonderful tradition of high academic and behavioral expectations. Altamont was established in 1975 through the merger of the Birmingham University School and Brooke Hill School. The warmth of the community is palpable; close supportive relationships between faculty and students are at the heart of the school culture. The school program is multi-faceted and dynamic; students talk excitedly of the variety of activities, projects, and presentations in which they are engaged.

Faculty and administrators readily become excited when discussing the School: “We do amazing things for kids,” and “it’s okay to be smart and work hard here.” Adults and students alike are truly respected for who they are at Altamont. One administrator commented “the kids’ individuality is embraced here, everyone’s accepted, and this is a very diverse school, more diverse than the local region.” Altamont also provides tremendous opportunities for involvement and engagement. Being a small school with many activities and programs requires engaged student participation.



MISSION, CORE VALUES AND HONOR CODE

Mission:

The mission of The Altamont School is to improve the fabric of society by graduating compassionate, well-educated individuals capable of independent thinking and innovative ideas. To this end, the School attracts, nurtures, and challenges students whose commitment to truth, knowledge, and honor will prepare them not only for the most rigorous college programs, but also for productive lives.

Core Values:

Respect, balance, integrity, curiosity, and leadership.

Honor Code:

The Altamont environment is one of respect and encouragement. Our mission is lived out daily in our honor code: Truth. Knowledge. Honor. The Honor Code is essential to the fulfillment of our mission and applies to all aspects of school life. The tenants of the code are simple: to not lie, cheat, or steal. They allow students to establish sound moral and ethical standards that will serve them for the rest of their lives.



PROGRAM

Altamont offers a challenging college preparatory curriculum. Every class is taught at the honors level. The curriculum includes many AP offerings, college-level mathematics, sciences, world languages, and a multitude of fine arts and elective courses. Faculty advisors meet with students individually on a regular basis and collectively on a daily basis. Altamont develops independent thinkers. The School provides a very strong faculty and an extraordinarily strong and successful college counseling program. For a small school, the offerings are unbelievably rich and varied. Throughout the entire program, self advocacy and individuality are encouraged. One faculty member commented that different learning styles are encouraged here. A parent indicated, “there’s so much goodness and nurturing going on here that it’s unbelievable.” The School recently adopted a 1:1 laptop program throughout all grades.

IDEA at Altamont (inclusion, diversity, equity, and access). Altamont has built a collaborative and safe space for work to be accelerated in the School. The mission of the IDEA task force is to create immediate and long-term recommendations for the improvement of equity at Altamont by creating an inclusive, equitable and respectful culture where all individuals feel welcomed and valued. The work of this group fosters a community where individuals regardless of race, gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of their identity are able to contribute and fully participate.

More information on the Altamont academic program may be found at <https://www.altamontschool.org/academics/an-altamont-education>

QUICK FACTS

Enrollment: 365
Annual Fund: \$400k
Endowment: \$7m
Teacher-Student Ratio: 12:1

STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

- Strong relationships throughout the entire school community
- Incredibly dedicated teachers who know and connect with students and their families
- A well balanced and strong academic program throughout the entire school
- Excellent co-curricular programs that empower students to pursue passions and explore new interests
- A vibrant fine and performing arts program woven into the curriculum featured in outstanding facilities
- A well-developed, effective and caring advisory program
- Cohesive faculty-student relationships
- A successful college counseling program
- Inclusive and successful athletic program grades 5-12 that provides a balance with arts and academics

All who are affiliated with Altamont will quickly note a close, welcoming, and warm community as one of its most distinctive characteristics. Even during this year, with all the challenges associated with operating a school during a pandemic, Altamont has maintained a strong sense of connection, continuing to look for opportunities to safely celebrate and gather. Students and parents appreciate the dedication, thoughtful approach, and hard work of the faculty and staff to preserve the special nature of the Altamont experience.



The Altamont School

Head of School Position Statement

Start Date: July 1, 2022



southern flair with global cuisine. The city boasts an eclectic music community. Birmingham was ground zero for the American civil rights movement. It is a golf mecca. Cultural roots run deep and strong in Birmingham. The welcome here is real and generous with a rich history. A spirited nature is tempered by cosmopolitan charm. The vibe of Birmingham is contagious, Birmingham knows who it is and enjoys it! The city is historically significant, eclectically funky, and progressively southern.

Altamont values traditions! Indeed, there are many traditions at Altamont that bring the community together and foster a special sense of connection. Some of the most cherished Altamont traditions include:

- Project Week
- Poetry Week
- Art Show
- Homecoming
- May Day

Altamont is a multi-generational school. Many faculty, administrators, staff, and parents are alumni of the school. Parents truly respect and love the School; as one parent said, "it's a place for kids to blossom. There's a true respect for lifelong learners here."

CAMPUS AND LOCATION

Altamont School sits on 28 acres on the crest of Red Mountain in a secluded residential neighborhood overlooking Birmingham that is only five minutes from downtown. The campus is lovely, the facility fantastic. Rarely do you find a school facility so well-equipped for 365 students. Two gymnasiums, multiple well-equipped classrooms, art space that invites creativity, and a myriad of gathering places throughout the School that allow small groups to gather and interact.

Birmingham is the largest city in Alabama. Known as "the dinner table of the south" the dining scene is awesome, combining



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The future head of school will have the amazing opportunity to usher in the next era of Altamont. The community is ready for a forward-thinking leader who can look to the future while honoring the history and culture of the School. This is an outstanding opportunity for a leader who is excited to embrace and engage in relationships that make up this very special school. The Altamont ethos is strong, infectious, and in search of leadership that can harness the tremendous energy of the community.

Like all schools, Altamont has had its challenges. It will be important for the next head to deeply

understand these challenges, prioritize them, and address them in ways to connect with the positive aspects of the school culture. In addition to navigating a global pandemic, Altamont has experienced challenging leadership over the last few years and is in need of a stabilizing and reassuring force within the School. Despite these obstacles, school spirit is strong, and parents, teachers, administrators, and students are excited for this next chapter.

The next head of school at Altamont will appreciate the strengths of the School and embrace the exciting opportunities and challenges ahead. They are:

- Pursuing academic excellence. Sustaining and

promoting academic excellence as a top priority at Altamont. Providing the discipline, encouragement, tools, and training for faculty to deliver a program characterized as challenging and engaging. Maintaining academic excellence is the top priority for Altamont moving forward.

- Thoughtfully building community. Cherishing and nurturing the Altamont culture, which has been characterized by warmth, kindness, and respect. Embracing fully Altamont's time honored values and honor code. Being a visible and engaging presence to faculty, students, and parents.



The Altamont School

Head of School Position Statement

Start Date: July 1, 2022

- Being an inspirational communicator. Be a visible presence. Bring warmth and a sense of humor to the important work of the School. Build vibrant networks and relationships with parents both current and past, students, and the larger Birmingham community.
- Instilling organizational well-being. Promote positive faculty and staff engagement. Build effective teams in collaboration, emphasizing a one-school ethos. Work in partnership with the Board of Trustees. Operate with an open door that invites input and robust discussion but also demonstrates decisiveness and leadership.
- Managing enrollment. Lead and assist the School in creating a very strategic and effective enrollment operational plan. Be visible throughout greater Birmingham, make connections and build alliances with members of very successful local organizations. Bring an end to the “best kept secret in Birmingham.”
- Recruiting. Continue to ensure Altamont’s ability to recruit and retain high-quality and diverse faculty in an increasingly demanding and competitive market.
- Fundraising. Effectively fundraise to keep building the endowment for Altamont, allowing the School to be less tuition-dependent and ensuring that it’s able to effectively implement future strategic priorities.



- Promoting the importance of positive faculty and staff morale. Delegate responsibilities appropriately, and build effective and collaborative teams. Invite input and robust discussion but also demonstrate decisiveness and leadership. Ensure the policies and procedures are handled consistently across the School.
- Creating a shared vision. Work with the outstanding team of board members, administrators and faculty to create an exciting vision for Altamont. Then go forth and make this become a reality. This is a very exciting time for the School.

THE POSITION

The next head of school will need poise, patience, confidence, energy, and wisdom to effectively balance the demands associated with this leadership opportunity. A successful candidate must be able to demonstrate the following talents, skills, attributes, values, and experiences:

- Effective relationship-builder who leads by genuinely knowing and caring about students, faculty, and families
- Excellent listener and effective communicator in writing, speaking, and interpersonal relationships
- Influencer with the ability to help teachers and department heads be the drivers of school improvement
- Visionary and strategic thinker
- Visible leader with a very high EQ
- Collaborator working with others regarding best practices to ensure the School remains a regional leader in grades 5-12 education
- Committed leader with a sophisticated perspective in ensuring equity and inclusion throughout the School
- Fundraiser with passion and focus
- Recruiter of faculty, administrators and staff





APPLICATION PROCESS

We welcome applications from those who are eager to take on the opportunities and challenges at Altamont.

Candidates interested in applying to become the next head of school at The Altamont School may apply online at <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

The application includes:

- Letter of Interest
- Resume
- Personal Statement or Educational Philosophy
- List of five references

If you have any questions, or if you would like to nominate a candidate for this exciting opportunity, please contact:

John Farber
jfarber@rg175.com

The deadline for full receipt of materials is **September 1, 2021**.