

DIRECTOR OF ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL AID SEARCH

THE AVERY COONLEY SCHOOL

Downers Grove, Illinois
averycoonley.org

Start Date: July 1, 2026



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

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Mission Statement

The Avery Coonley School elevates high-achieving and gifted learners through immersion in a mutually talented community where intellect, curiosity, and creativity are enhanced by optimal challenge.

At a Glance



Established
1906



Enrollment
319



Total faculty
46



Student-faculty ratio
9:1



Students of color
56%



Financial aid budget
\$900,000



Faculty with advanced degrees
91%



Campus size
13 acres

Communities represented: 40+

Students receiving aid: 19 %

Endowment: \$4.9M

Annual operating budget: \$11.4M

Clubs and sports: 20+



Overview

Located in the western suburbs of Chicago and serving 319 children from 40 communities in grades PreK to 8, The Avery Coonley School (ACS) welcomes highly motivated, high-ability learners who eagerly seek new challenges.

Gifted and high-achieving students flourish in a unique and collaborative culture where the drive to learn transcends all differences. Founded in 1906, ACS enjoys a storied place in the history of gifted and progressive education for younger students in Chicago and across the nation. Learning spaces brim with energy, project-based learning, and individual exploration. On the historic 13-acre campus, which is adjacent to a forest preserve, members of the Avery Coonley community thrive in a learning environment that allows for flexibility, creativity, and innovation.

Avery Coonley School seeks a Director of Enrollment and Financial Aid starting July 1, 2026. This is an exceptional opportunity to join the leadership team of a highly rated independent school with an unwavering commitment to student success. Reporting to the Head of School, the Director of Enrollment partners with the Senior Leadership Team on a variety of initiatives and is responsible for leading the strategic and operational components of enrollment management for the School. ACS enjoys consistently high enrollment. This is due to its exceptional faculty who understand the needs of gifted and high-achieving children, and a deep commitment to the arts and creative expression, physical health, character, and social and emotional growth.

About the Head of School

Dr. Kirsty Montgomery is a British-born educator and administrator, passionate about learning. She graduated with a BA in political science from Northwestern (magna cum laude), and later an MA in social science, MA in history, and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Chicago. As an educator, Dr. Montgomery has taught history (European Civilization, World Civilization, Ancient World Religions & Philosophy, History of Britain, International Relations, and the History of China & India) at a variety of educational levels from third grade up to 12th grade. She served four years on the faculty of the Illinois Math and Science Academy, five years at Omniscope Academy, also in Illinois, as well as teaching at higher education institutions including Oakton Community College, Northwestern University's Center for Talent Development, and the University of Chicago.



Dr. Montgomery was previously Head of School at Lakeview Academy in Georgia, where she was instrumental in leading the school through the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to that, she led Northwestern's Osher Institute where she was responsible for over 1,500 lifelong learners. She is delighted and honored to serve as head of school at Avery Coonley.

Position

Reporting to the Head of School, the Director of Enrollment and Financial Aid is responsible for understanding the strategic and operational components of enrollment, the research necessary to inform decision-making, and the oversight of student recruitment, financial aid, and reenrollment efforts. This is an exceptional opportunity to join the leadership team with an unwavering commitment to student success. As a center of the school, both outward and inward facing, the admission office articulates the vision and mission every day and in every way. The Director facilitates admissions and enrollment discussions as a member of the administrative team. As part of the school's recruitment and enrollment of students, the Director of Enrollment and Financial Aid oversees the admission processes and records; admission events, and constituent volunteer efforts; and all recruitment and enrollment efforts, up to welcoming new families to ACS.

The Director of Enrollment plays a vital role in the ACS community and is one of the school's most visible spokesperson.

Key Responsibilities

- Present the school to prospective students and their parents, including systematic and efficient handling of applications and communication with candidates and their parents.
- Interview candidates and their parents; arrange for admission testing; secure necessary student credentials; and communicate final decisions to the appropriate individuals.
- Oversee the admission office, including the creation of the admission budget and appropriate admissions and marketing materials, mailings, and publications.



- Continue to open new markets with a focus on areas where gifted students are not currently being identified.
- Facilitate meetings of the admission committees.
- Oversee the network of parents, former parents, and alumni to assist in the admission program.
- Represent the school at various gatherings and conferences.
- Manage financial aid funding and distribution in conjunction with Head of School and Business Manager.
- Coordinate and maintain relationships with outside testing services.

Qualifications and Personal Attributes

- Bachelor's degree from a four-year accredited institution. Advanced degree preferred.
- Five or more years of experience in the nonprofit sector managing admission and marketing activities for an organization.
- Approachable and collaborative, possess effective communication and problem-solving skills.
- Excellent communication skills, both written and spoken
- Superior listening skills - able to listen to students and parents, understand and quickly respond effectively to their requests.
- Engaging, high energy, flexible, warm and a high EQ.
- Teaching experience and/or an understanding of gifted education preferred
- Ability to receive feedback and engage in continuous self-improvement.
- Ability to adapt to a dynamic, rapidly changing work environment.
- Ability to work collaboratively and across teams, departments, and divisions and possess a "can do" attitude.
- Firm belief in personal accountability, producing measurable outcomes, and sustaining high expectations.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about The Avery Coonley School.

[School Website](#)

[Strategic Plan](#)

[Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

[Secondary School Matriculation](#)



To Apply

The Avery Coonley School has retained Carney, Sandoe & Associates / The Baker Group to assist in the recruitment of the Director of Enrollment and Financial Aid. Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current and thorough résumé of no more than four pages;
- A writing sample, such as a parent/guardian communication, newsletter, open house speech, blog, or article to:

Lisa Parsons

Consultant, Carney, Sandoe & Associates
lisa.parsons@carneysandoe.com

Kim Peeples

Consultant, Carney, Sandoe & Associates
kim.peeples@carneysandoe.com

The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$110,000-\$140,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors that include years of experience, education level, and expertise.