



MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School

New York, NY

Founded in 1764, Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School (CGPS) is one of the nation's oldest private schools and the largest independent school in Manhattan. CGPS offers a rigorous and comprehensive college preparatory education to nearly 1,300 students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. The Middle School serves 253 students in grades 5-7.

For a position to begin in July 2019, CGPS is seeking an accomplished middle school leader with strong curricular expertise, excellent administrative skills, and an educational philosophy consonant with the school's unique culture and values.

Suited to an academically diverse group of students – ranging from the highest achievers to those needing meaningful learning support – CGPS provides a balanced, caring educational experience. Rigorous yet relaxed, CGPS seeks to inspire students in an atmosphere that is cooperative rather than intensely competitive.

Promoting intellectual growth while instilling in students a love of learning, CGPS nurtures individuals' academic and non-academic passions and strives to imbue in them concern and respect for others. The school seeks to empower its students, sending them into the world beyond CGPS with a solid educational foundation as well as the confidence, optimism, sense of purpose, and energy to achieve and exceed their dreams.

The school's incomparable Upper West Side campus encompasses 12 buildings. With the opening in 2016 of two new floors atop the main building, a self-contained Middle School for grades 5-7 was created for the first time in the school's history. Eighth-graders remain in the Preparatory School, allowing them to become accustomed to the expectations of that division before beginning the higher-stakes freshman year.

The next Middle School Director will join CGPS during an exciting time of growth and innovation. For a forward-thinking and collaborative academic leader, the position offers an exceptional opportunity to build upon a deep foundation of institutional excellence while forging a clear identity for this young division.



APPLICATION DEADLINE: January 21, 2019





COLUMBIA GRAMMAR AND PREPARATORY SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

Mission

Founded in 1764, Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School balances a rigorous comprehensive college preparatory curriculum with healthy social and emotional development. We dedicate ourselves to educating students with diverse talents and backgrounds and offer them opportunities to learn, reflect, and safely express their ideas and creativity. With our parent body, we share a fundamental commitment to high academic achievement and the development of social responsibility.

Philosophy

Columbia Grammar & Preparatory School is committed to a rigorous and comprehensive college preparatory curriculum with a serious emphasis on art, music, and drama. The academic program is structured and balanced within the liberal arts and sciences in order to develop each student’s intellectual potential to its fullest. The program includes English, language arts, world language, mathematics, science, current and historical social studies, technology, physical education, and the fine arts. At the same time, the school recognizes its fundamental responsibility to develop good character, standards of conduct, and a sense of social responsibility within the school community. The development of good citizenship in our students is regarded as a crucial and integral part of their education. Our school is strongly committed to coeducation and feels that a relaxed but structured social setting where boys and girls can learn together is the most effective educational environment. The school is also committed to a financial aid program designed to maintain diversity and balance — racial, ethnic, and financial — within our school community.

Columbia Grammar & Preparatory School has a responsibility to our students, to their parents, and society at large to help each child become a well-educated, responsible, caring, and productive person. Cultivating our students’ minds, supplying them with a substantial fund of knowledge, and providing them with the basis for making sound ethical judgments remain the foundations of the school’s mission and philosophy.

ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL AID

ENROLLMENT, PRE-K–12:	1,273
GRAMMAR:	436 (Pre-K–Grade 4)
MIDDLE:	253 (Grades 5-7)
PREPARATORY:	584 (Grades 8–12)
SCHOOL-WIDE STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO:	6 to 1
AVERAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASS SIZE:	15
STUDENTS OF COLOR:	24%
MIDDLE SCHOOL TUITION AND FEES:	\$50,690
FINANCIAL AID:	\$7.6 million to 15% of student body

PHYSICAL PLANT

LOCATION: Upper West Side of Manhattan (W 93rd St.)
FACILITIES: 12 buildings; 17,000-square-foot dedicated Middle School space constructed in 2016

FACULTY AND STAFF

TOTAL NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:	287
TOTAL SCHOOL-WIDE FACULTY:	250
FACULTY WITH ADVANCED DEGREES:	64%
AVERAGE FACULTY TENURE:	16 years
FULL-TIME MIDDLE SCHOOL FACULTY:	34
PART TIME MIDDLE SCHOOL FACULTY:	3
FACULTY SHARED WITH OTHER DIVISIONS:	25

AFFILIATIONS

ACCREDITATION: New York State Board of Regents,
 New York State Association of Independent Schools
MEMBER: National Association of Independent Schools,
 Independent School Admission Association of
 Greater New York

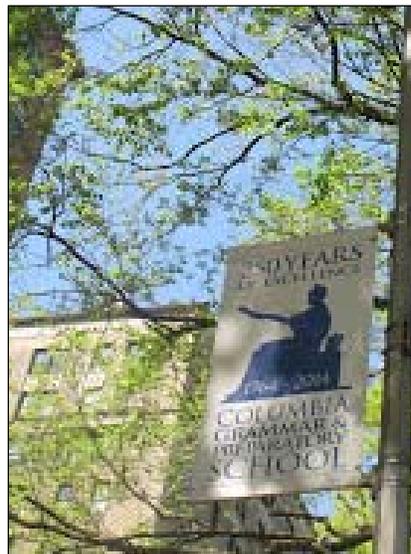
ON THE WEB: www.cgps.org

DEFINING STRENGTHS AND UNIQUE ATTRIBUTES OF CGPS

CGPS emphatically rejects the notion that a commitment to challenging academics requires either a pressure-cooker environment or a student body limited to only the most academically gifted. As such, it occupies a unique position in the New York City independent school marketplace, attracting families seeking a well-rounded and affirming experience that meets the needs of students with diverse talents, aspirations, and personalities.

Parents, faculty, staff, and students describe CGPS as a close-knit community – comfortable, structured, and supportive as it guides students to academic achievement and increasing independence while emphasizing balance and moderation in student workloads. Top academic achievers are well served by the rigorous curriculum, and support is available for those who need it, including a comprehensive Learning Resource Center.

The CGPS Parents Association plays an active role in the life of the school, building community and facilitating communication through a network of Class and Grade Representatives. The Parents Association sponsors numerous events ranging from all-school gatherings to parent discussion groups, community service projects, new-family welcoming activities, and teacher appreciation events. The group enjoys productive working relationships with the administration, including the division directors.



A BRIEF HISTORY

Columbia Grammar School was founded in 1764, just 10 years after the founding of Kings College, which became Columbia College, now part of Columbia University. Originally established as a boys preparatory school for Kings College, Columbia Grammar School functioned for 100 years under the direct auspices of the college. The school became a proprietary institution in 1864 and obtained nonprofit status in 1941. Dr. Richard J. Soghoian was appointed the school's 13th Headmaster in 1981, serving with distinction until his retirement in 2017. (Candidates for this position may wish to read Dr. Soghoian's 2012 book, *Mind the Gap! An Insider's Irreverent Look at Private School Finances and Management*. It clearly articulates CGPS's unique culture and educational philosophy while offering a lively history of the school's remarkable 30-year journey from near insolvency to its current position as one of New York City's top independent schools.)

THE STUDENT BODY

Demand for the CGPS experience is robust. Attrition is very low, with most students who begin in Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten staying to complete their high school careers at CGPS. Several new students also join the school each year in ninth grade. As a family-oriented school, CGPS gives admissions preference to siblings as well as alumni and faculty/staff children. Most CGPS students live in New York City, primarily Manhattan, with a few coming from New Jersey, lower Westchester County, or Connecticut. The student population is diverse across many dimensions, including the 24 percent who identify as persons of color. This year, financial aid resources of \$7.6 million are assisting 15 percent of the student body.

CGPS prides itself on welcoming an academically diverse population and preparing all students exceptionally well for college, as evidenced by their strong performance on standardized tests and impressive college placement results. Approximately one-quarter of the senior class each year typically gains admission to an Ivy League school.

THE FACULTY, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATION

CGPS has long invested generously in its faculty and staff. The result is a loyal, talented, and committed cadre of teachers with an average tenure of nearly 16 years – a marker of the school’s stability and an important contributing factor to parents’ satisfaction. The faculty bring a rich variety of backgrounds and experiences to their work; 64 percent hold advanced degrees. Faculty salaries are in the top quartile of NYC independent schools. Benefits are generous, including fully paid health insurance for each employee, need-based tuition remission, and free breakfasts and lunches. Each faculty member has access to \$1,500 in professional development funds, and the school offers three summer grants per division. Equally important to many faculty members is a professional culture that has traditionally lavished trust on teachers and granted them considerable autonomy to tailor their teaching to their own interests and the particular needs of their students.

The Middle School faculty includes 34 full-time and three part-time teachers. In addition, 25 teachers have shared teaching responsibilities in the Grammar, Middle, and Prep divisions.

The new Middle School Director will join the senior academic leadership team during an exciting period of transition. Dr. William Donohue, former Superintendent of Schools for the Byram Hills School District in Armonk, New York, joined CGPS in July 2017 as Head of School. The Director of the Grammar School, Sarah A. McLean, also came to the school in 2017. She was the Head of English Learning (Elementary Division) at Chinese International School in Hong Kong. Joanie Dean was named the Prep School Director in 2018, having worked at CGPS since 2000 in various capacities, including Assistant Director of the Prep School, Dean of Academics, Dean of Academic and Administrative Affairs, and Math Department Head. Faculty and parents have found the leadership transitions, after a lengthy period of consistent school leadership, to be energizing and well managed. The current Middle School Director is retiring after 25 years at CGPS, after successfully completing the charge to establish the Middle School as its own distinct division with a dedicated facility, which opened in the fall of 2016.

The senior administrative team includes the Head of School, the three Division Heads, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Director of Institutional Advancement. Other administrators reporting to the Head include three Admissions Directors (one for each division), the Maintenance Supervisor, the Security Coordinator, and the Athletics Director. The Directors of the three divisions enjoy wide latitude and significant responsibilities in the oversight of their divisions, including hiring and firing, curriculum, and budgeting.

CAMPUS AND FACILITIES



Situated in a prime location on Manhattan’s Upper West Side, CGPS has created an impressive urban campus adjacent to Central Park that offers among the highest ratios of academic space per student of all New York City’s private schools. Nine fully renovated brownstones and the historic original school building constitute the Grammar School, providing charming educational and play spaces for younger students. Two buildings constructed from the ground up host the Preparatory School, the Middle School, and assorted offices.

In 2016, the new, self-contained Middle School facility was created by adding two floors to the top of the school’s main building at 36 West 93rd St. The 17,000-square-foot Middle School includes 17 classrooms, three science labs, a library/digital information center, a computer lab, and a new rooftop play yard. Technology is deployed in appropriate ways throughout the school, including iMacs, iPads, Chromebooks, SmartBoards, and 3D printing. Athletic facilities include four gymnasiums, a weight and training room, and a swimming pool. Teams also use athletic facilities throughout the metropolitan area.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

CGPS is committed school-wide to a rigorous and comprehensive college preparatory curriculum. During the Middle School years, the emphasis is on the continued development of basic skills, oral and written expression, and critical thinking.

The academic program is designed to produce confident, independent thinkers as students learn through interactive discussion, cooperative group work, and hands-on activities. The curriculum also seeks to lay the foundation for important 21st-century skills including technological literacy, design thinking, and innovation.



Recognizing that early adolescents need support and guidance as they enter a crucial period of social and emotional development, the Middle School strives to create an environment that purposefully emphasizes kindness, awareness, and respect. Both in and out of the classroom, students have opportunities to support one another, develop strong leadership skills, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

To ease the transition from Grammar to Middle School, the fifth grade is organized into six self-contained classrooms, each overseen by a core teacher. Beginning in 6th grade, the program is departmentalized, with homeroom classes of 15–16 students.

Highlights of the Middle School program include the following:

- A wide-ranging **STEAM initiative** is being implemented across the Middle School curriculum, which is becoming increasingly integrated, inquiry-based, and experiential. Many arts projects are designed to complement specific curricular units in social studies, language arts, math, and music. A new, problem-based math curriculum, Bridges, has been introduced in grade 5. Dedicated sets of laptops are stocked in all academic classrooms, and iPads are available in the computer labs.
- Building upon their Spanish studies in the Grammar School, sixth-graders take a five-week introductory course in each of the **world languages** offered at CGPS: Spanish, French, Japanese, Chinese, and Latin. At the end of the year, they pick the language they wish to pursue.
- CGPS offers a strong network of support services to promote student success and wellbeing. The **Learning Resource Center** was established in 1986 to provide support and remediation so that students with learning differences could thrive in the challenging academic environment at CGPS. The program offers one-on-one remediation and academic support during the school day that is fully integrated with each student's academic program. The LRC currently serves students from grades 1–12, including 23 middle-schoolers. Space is limited to about 4 percent of the student body, and there is a substantial additional tuition for the program. **Power Hour** is a free after-school enrichment program designed to help students in grade 5 practice, organize, enrich, and review their work. Each Monday to Thursday from 3 to 4 p.m., students may spend extra time with their classroom teachers, computer teachers, music instructors, and math and reading specialists. The newly appointed **Child Study and Wellness Coordinator**, a psychologist, works individually with students and their families and conducts classes on topics associated with social and emotional development.

- CGPS has long emphasized **the arts**. Building on the skills explored in earlier grades, all middle school students take general **music** classes that reinforce and develop the fundamentals of music literacy and provide opportunities for active music making. Major units include world drumming, ukulele and guitar, and composition and arranging. Music technology is incorporated throughout the curriculum. The burgeoning performance program now includes a Chorus, Orchestra, and Band. The strong **theater** program features the staging of a play in grade 5 and a musical in grades 6 and 7. Over the course of three years, Middle School students practice **visual arts** disciplines including painting, drawing, printmaking, mixed media sculpture, digital art, and stop motion animation.
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- **Columbia Cares** is a committee that works in conjunction with classroom teachers beginning in the Grammar School to execute grade-wide community service projects with their students. The program continues into Middle School with projects ranging from sending letters to military service members to a hands-on challenge designed to spur discussion about hunger, poverty, and nutrition.
 - Beginning in seventh grade, students may participate in the school's extensive **interscholastic athletics** program. Nearly 60 percent of the student body competes on one or more of the 39 interscholastic teams offered in grades 7–12. Fall sports include coed cross country, boys and girls soccer, and girls volleyball. Boys and girls basketball, coed indoor track, and coed swimming are offered in the winter. Spring sports include baseball, lacrosse, tennis, and golf for boys; softball and tennis for girls; and coed track and field. With the exception of varsity teams, the school follows a no-cut policy to encourage student participation.

THE POSITION: MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTOR

The Middle School Director reports to the Head of School and is a member of the school's senior leadership team. Direct reports to the Middle School Director include the Assistant Director, the Administrative Assistant, the Psychologist, the Scheduler, and Department Coordinators.

The Middle School Director:

- Collaborates with the Prep School and Grammar School Directors.
- Coordinates with the Middle School Assistant Director.
- Collaborates with the Curriculum Coordinator.
- Coordinates with the Head of Security.
- Partners with Admissions.
- Represents the Middle School's Strategic Plan and academic program to internal and external audiences.
- Coordinates with the Parents Association representatives.

The Middle School Director is responsible for daily operations related to:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling. • Curriculum. • Implementation of the Strategic Plan. • Signature programs such as music and STEAM. • Faculty teaching and duty assignments. • Faculty evaluations, both formal and informal; peer coaching and yearly goal setting. • Faculty recruitment and hiring. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty orientation, training, and mentoring. • Professional development. • Organization of faculty, grade-level, department, and curriculum meetings. • Review of student progress report data and parent conferences. • Support for the Learning Resource Center program. |
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OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

In just its third year as a separate entity, the CGPS Middle School is a vibrant learning community with a great deal of potential still untapped. The next Middle School Director will have the opportunity to build upon this solid foundation, forging a clear and compelling Middle School identity while also putting into place the additional systems and cultural norms characteristic of a mature division.

The next Director must embrace wholeheartedly the core tenets of the CGPS philosophy and culture: the commitment to serve a broad variety of students well in a comfortable and supportive atmosphere characterized by warmth, mutual respect, and a lack of pretension – while delivering academic rigor. Among the specific opportunities and challenges awaiting the next Middle School Director are the following:



- The new Director should be well versed in current approaches to middle school curriculum and pedagogy, including 21st century learning initiatives and differentiation. S/he will have the opportunity to work with a talented, enthusiastic team of department coordinators and faculty on curricular refinement and integration. To promote a more unified PK–12 educational program, the Head of School is also eager to establish a highly collaborative academic leadership team with the three division directors and the school-wide curriculum coordinator.
- Given the myriad social and emotional challenges facing young adolescents – including anxiety, bullying, and the sometimes pernicious effects of social media – the next Director may want to explore the development of a more robust advisory program.
- CGPS faculty members have always enjoyed a great deal of autonomy. Faculty and parents note, however, that the young Middle School would benefit from a more clearly articulated and consistent approach to rigorous curriculum, assessment, student discipline, and faculty quality within and across the three grades.
- CGPS’s identity as a Manhattan independent school that is unpretentious and comfortable is now firmly embedded in the school’s DNA. Yet, like most of New York City’s top-tier independent schools, CGPS has its share of affluent, prominent, and sometimes demanding families. In the day-to-day leadership of the division, the Middle School Director will need to lead with confidence and integrity – upholding the school’s values, adroitly managing parent expectations, and holding all students to appropriate behavioral standards. Parents and faculty will appreciate a Director who communicates clearly and often about important developments in the life of the division.
- There is a strong desire within the community to ensure that families from diverse backgrounds continue to find CGPS a welcoming and inclusive place. Parents and faculty are particularly eager to see more persons of color in the faculty and administration.

WHO SHOULD APPLY: IMPORTANT QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

CGPS seeks an experienced, visionary middle school leader who will embrace the opportunity to guide this young division as it strives to forge a strong identity and develop a stellar program grounded in best practices and thoughtful innovation. Candidates from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply. The ideal candidate will offer most or all of the following attributes:

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Excellent academic credentials, including an advanced degree, coupled with evidence of a commitment to lifelong learning.

- A forward-thinking educational vision and philosophy that is consistent with the mission and values of CGPS and the Middle School.
- Strong expertise in middle school education, including a demonstrated knowledge of curriculum, social and emotional development, and emerging issues.
- A demonstrated passion for the work of education, including experience as a classroom teacher at the middle school level.
- Relevant experience in school administration, including the ability to bring consistency and creativity to the development of needed policies, procedures, assessment tools, schedules, etc.
- Exceptional communication and listening skills.
- Demonstrated ability to hire, inspire, develop, support, and evaluate a strong faculty and staff.

LEADERSHIP STYLE AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

- A commitment to professionalism, demonstrated through high standards, integrity, evenhandedness, and strength of character.
- A flexible, adaptive, supportive, and collaborative approach to the management of faculty; the ability to simultaneously empower and hold faculty accountable to consistent standards of excellence.
- A willingness to set and enforce appropriate behavioral expectations and boundaries with students.
- A warm, engaging, compassionate, and approachable personality; a positive outlook.
- Eagerness to inspire, challenge, and engage with students; a genuine enjoyment of young adolescents.
- A commitment to embracing diversity, inclusivity, and equity.
- An appreciation for the particular rewards and challenges of urban education and the NYC independent school culture.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND SEARCH PROCESS

Acting on behalf of CGPS, Wickenden Associates is actively recruiting accomplished middle school leaders for this appealing leadership opportunity. The lead consultants are Laura Hansen (lhansen@wickenden.com) and Jim Wickenden (jwickenden@wickenden.com). Both may be reached at (609) 683-1355. *Note: This search is being conducted on an accelerated timetable. Candidates are encouraged to contact Wickenden Associates as soon as possible to discuss the opportunity and the application process.*



Candidates should submit **ASAP and no later than Monday, January 21, 2019**, the following:

- *A cover letter indicating why they are particularly interested in and qualified for the position.*
- *A current résumé.*
- *A statement of educational philosophy.*
- *The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of three references. (We will obtain permission from candidates before contacting references.)*
- *Optional: Other supporting material (e.g. articles, speeches, or letters of recommendation) that would be useful to the Search Committee.*

These materials should be transmitted via email attachment to searches@wickenden.com. After an initial review of applicants, the Search Committee will interview semifinalist candidates on **February 2-3, 2019**. Shortly thereafter, finalists will be invited to CGPS for a more comprehensive series of interviews with representatives of the school's constituencies. An appointment is anticipated no later than early March. Wickenden Associates will keep all applicants informed of their status throughout the process.