

HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

McLEAN SCHOOL

Potomac, Maryland

mcleanschool.org

Start Date: July 2024

McLean School
Transformative.



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission Statement

McLean School's mission is to make education accessible, stimulating, and meaningful to a broad range of bright K-12 learners. We understand each student's unique strengths and challenges, and support both in a way that fosters intellectual growth as well as confidence, self-advocacy, empathy, and connection. At McLean, students succeed because they learn how to learn in an inclusive, conscientious community of caring teachers and peers.

At a Glance



Established
1954



Enrollment
495



Student-teacher ratio:
5:1



Advanced Placement courses
10



Total Faculty
102



Students of Color
38%



Financial aid awarded
\$6 Million

Families receiving aid: 42%

Endowment: \$1.1 Million

Annual operating budget: \$20.1 Million

Graduating rate from a 4-year college:
approximately 100%

Graduating seniors accepted to first or
second-choice college: 100%

Average merit-based college award for
graduating seniors: \$250,000

Varsity sports teams: 13

Clubs and activities: 30+

PVAC championships won: 9



Overview

McLean's mission – and its unique [Abilities Model](#)[®] – embrace the idea that every one of us has a unique learning path waiting to be discovered and tended toward growth. McLean places students at the center of the content and structure of their education, it deploys the skills of talented and expert teachers, provides a pedagogy that is both flexible in approach and academically rigorous, and delivers this to students in a supportive, inclusive culture that unlocks each student's core potential.

Bright, college-bound students with dyslexia, ADHD, academic performance anxiety, and executive functioning challenges thrive at McLean as their confidence and self-advocacy skills grow. Alongside them are more traditional learners who excel in smaller classes where they are challenged and grow through a student-centered view of learning. Together, these students are served by an amalgam of teaching models that reach students individually, enabling them to achieve impressive heights of learning. Students, in turn, share their strengths with one another, creating an inclusive and diverse community of learners who support and help each other grow. McLean students graduate as proud and capable learners, able to recognize and embrace their unique abilities, and advocate for what they need to learn, enabling them to find their way successfully in the world.

McLean also focuses on the whole student. Frequently, matriculating students remark upon the new sensation of feeling seen and understood; of feeling confident in themselves as learners and excited about school. This is because McLean's mission looks beyond strict and limiting academic confines to also focus on building spaces where students have the expectations, language, and skills to navigate issues related to sense of self, friendship, stress management, and their overall place in our community and greater world. McLean's pedagogy emphasizes social-emotional learning. Teachers and counselors form teams of interdisciplinary support, available to all students and coordinating developmentally appropriate programs to each of its three divisions.

LD Schools FOCUS ON LD LEARNERS	McLean School TRANSFORMATIVE FOR A BROAD RANGE OF LEARNERS	Traditional College Preparatory Schools FOCUS ON CONVENTIONAL LEARNERS
Limited Program	✓ Abilities Model®	✓ Full Scope Program
✓ Small Classes	✓ Full Scope Program	Larger Classes
✓ Student-Centered Instruction	✓ Small Classes	Traditional Instruction
✓ Teachers with Specialized Training	✓ Student-Centered Instruction	Teachers with Conventional Training
✓ Integrated Support	✓ Teachers with Specialized Training	Pull-Out Support
Limited Wellness Programming	✓ Integrated Support	Limited Wellness Programming
Disabilities Model	✓ Comprehensive Wellness & Mindfulness Programming	Disabilities Model

As successful as McLean is today, the school reaches for still higher ambitions. McLean aspires to build on its current leadership role in serving nontraditional learners and realize its own potential to be recognized as *the* source of thought-leadership in this arena. McLean’s thought-leadership is building a reputation that, in turn, shapes the development of pedagogic methods for both nontraditional and more typical learners. It is drawing students who felt like outsiders in a teacher-centered classroom, the exhilaration of feeling both understood and challenged as a learner. Its draw – and its transformative nature – extends to McLean’s families, creating an engaged and enthusiastic parent community, appreciative for a setting which nurtures their students in critical ways. The families of our students are among McLean’s most passionate supporters and advocates.

Indeed, the must-have value of McLean’s offering, a growing appreciation for how it melds academic rigor with flexible, student-centered approaches, and its sophisticated strategic marketing, has led to a full school with a waiting list. Through ambitious marketing and dynamic word-of-mouth from the McLean community, the school has achieved 5% net growth annually for the last ten years. This success has also allowed McLean to focus on the range of learners, however broad, that it best serves, understanding that McLean is not a fit for, and cannot effectively serve, all applicants.

McLean’s solid financial health and its steady increase in enrollment will benefit from the recently announced acquisition of a second campus that will be home to its Lower School (serving grades K through 4). The expansion will allow for the Middle and Upper Schools to expand, creating a path for the School – which has grown 50% over the last decade – to continue its steady, intentional and deliberate overall growth. In addition to the opportunity to reach, teach – and transform – even more students, McLean’s growth also allows the school to further strengthen and enrich the curricular and extracurricular programming, further expand its revenue base, and provide a larger social context for friendships, diversity, and inclusive community-building. Amidst this growth, McLean’s commitment to small class sizes and a rich learning environment is foundational and remains unchanged.



With the disciplined and dynamic leadership of the school’s administration, the pronounced dedication and passion of the faculty and staff, the engagement of an enthusiastic and dedicated parent community, and the generative, strategic vision and meaningful support of its Board of Trustees, McLean has evolved into the impressive school that it is today. With internal interim leadership in place for the 2023-2024 school year, McLean now seeks a new head to begin in July of 2024 to continue McLean’s transformative program, fulfill its ambitions for even greater impact, and lead the meaningful growth that lies ahead.

Strengths of the School

Among many strengths the new head will find at McLean School are:

- A school that knows and understands the students it serves and how to serve them. McLean’s [Core Values](#) and application of their unique [Abilities Model](#)[®] are embedded in all that the school does;
- A “must-have” educational program that is a leader in the Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia (DMV) region;
- A seasoned, highly trained, dynamic, empathic, and expert faculty who teach the way students learn, providing a sense of competence, confidence, and resilience to accompany important study habits and subject mastery. Faculty are given the autonomy to meet each child where they are, and to develop and apply the best techniques to build on that child’s abilities;
- A strong academic program providing nurturing support for younger students in the lower grades and moving to a rigorous curriculum in the Upper School focused on college-prep and other skills crucial to real-world success;
- The core classroom experience is supported by dynamic co-curricular offerings in the fine and performing arts, athletics, robotics, and a wide range of other activities;
- A national leader in integrated wellness and mindfulness education;

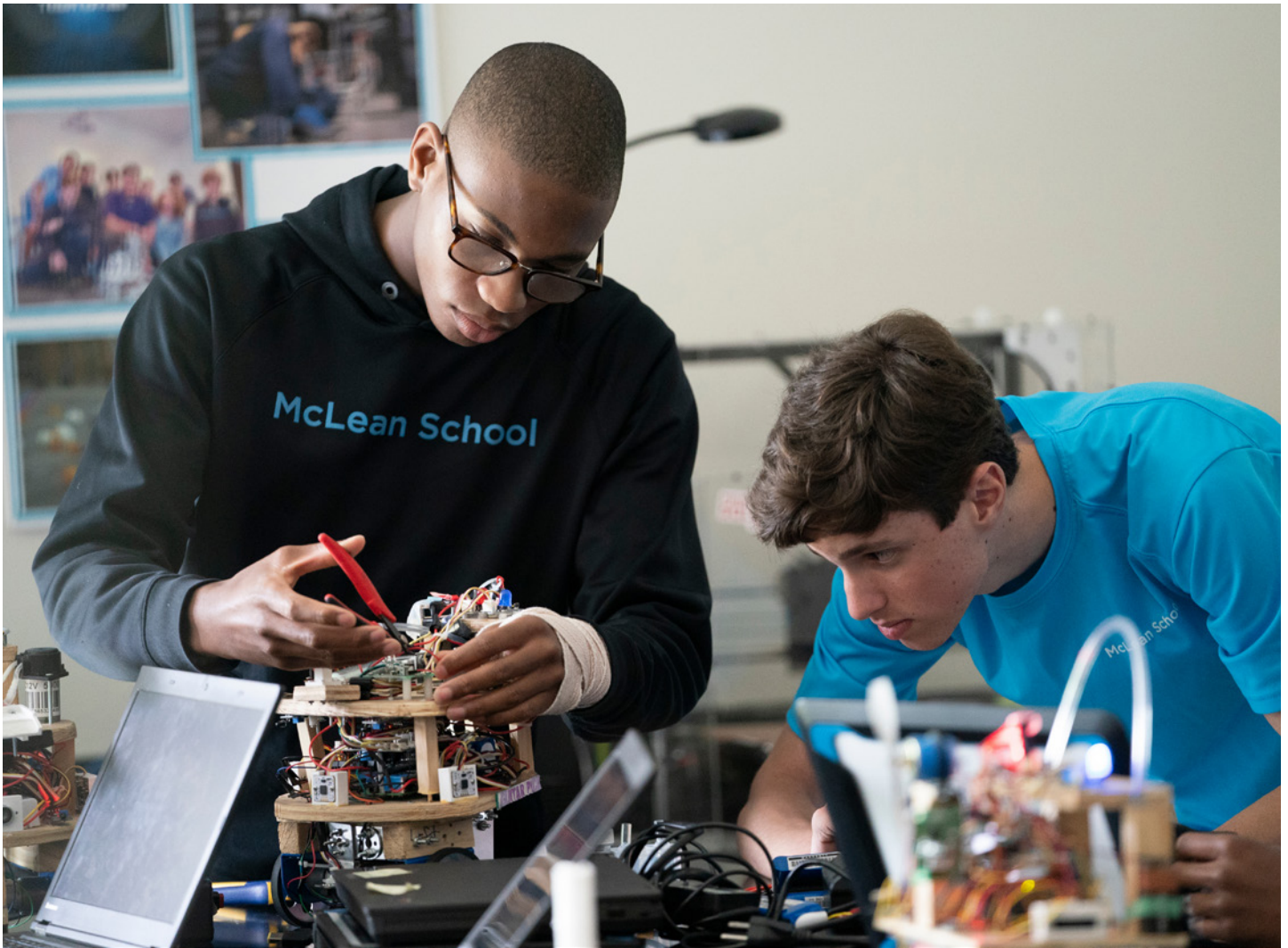


- A commitment to interweave diversity, equity, and inclusion into the fabric of school life;
- A dynamic and independently recognized summer program with academic, athletic, STEM and tutoring tracks;
- An understanding that the school serves not only the students, but their families, providing important education and support to wrap the student in a supportive school and home partnership;
- Solid and institutional and financial health;
- A growing culture of giving that supported the expansion of McLean’s Upper School building facilities;
- A school lead by exceptional division heads and seasoned and energetic administrators;
- A capable and committed Board working in a generative, best-practices relationship with the school Head and administration.

Opportunities and Challenges

The new Head will find personal and professional satisfaction and have the opportunity for meaningful impact – from transforming the lives of individual students to further building McLean’s reputation – through a focus on challenges and opportunities that include:

- Supporting the continued development and application of McLean’s unique Abilities Model® as the neuroscience and philosophy of education and student development continue to evolve, ensuring McLean continues to identify and richly serve its student population;
- Recruit, retain and support McLean’s dynamic, diverse, and gifted teachers, counsellors, and specialists, including through robust professional development and opportunities for focus on flexibility and creativity in their work;
- Align the K-12 curriculum, looking for opportunities to strengthen interdisciplinary work and collaboration.
- Continue a strong and active commitment to deepen McLean’s work in DEI across curriculum, programs, and school culture.
- Build upon McLean’s success in celebrating learning differences and in building its own brand by clearly articulating the school’s core value proposition, maintaining, and elevating its profile in the independent school market, and its thought-leadership in the educational community;



- Lead with a growth-mindset and foster a disciplined, considered, and entrepreneurial evolution of the school without losing small class sizes, the magical individualized attention to each student, and the close interpersonal relationships across the entire school;
- Develop the opportunities to enrich and expand the program and identity of McLean through the addition of a new Lower School facility;
- Manage programs and relationships across two campuses and three divisions to facilitate a sense of one cohesive school with a strong all-school culture and spirit;
- With a sustained focus on the students it best serves, continue the ongoing work of understanding the evolving nature of nontraditional learners;
- Integrate a rich and cutting-edge, classroom-focused pedagogy with a vibrant extracurricular offering, including in athletics and the arts, forming a holistic approach to student development and real-world readiness;
- Develop a campus master plan, including upgrading the athletic and arts facilities;
- Leverage the opportunity for McLean's thought-leadership to both create a national reputation and brand that, in turn, shapes the development of pedagogic methods for both nontraditional and more traditional learners;
- Provide strategic leadership to further enrich fundraising activities in support of growth of the school and its mission.



Qualifications and Personal Attributes

- An appreciation for, an understanding of, and experience working with, college-capable students who reflect a range of learning experiences;
- Empathic, emotionally intelligent community builder who relates and connects to all of the school's stakeholders while honoring its commitment to responding to the unique need of individuals.
- A professional background that reflects a rich basis for understanding the student and family dynamics of nontraditional learners;
- Dynamic communicator who can vividly and compellingly communicate the story of McLean, who it serves and what it does for students and families, as well as communicate a vision for McLean that draws the community together, creates a magnetic pull for top teaching talent and new students and families;
- A leader who values visibility in the daily life of the school from classrooms and carpool lines to arts, athletic, and community-wide events;
- An adept manager, able to build on McLean's institutional health and support the efficacy, growth, and success of school personnel;
- Demonstrated strength in celebrating the richness of backgrounds and experiences of the whole community, making all feel welcomed and valued, building tools and engagement with challenging issues that go beyond any particular framework or structure;
- Broad appreciation for the social and emotional life of students in their development as learners and as real-world preparation;
- Enthusiasm for engaging with students and encouraging, supporting and witnessing the labors and triumphs of children as they develop their knowledge and sense of empowerment;
- Appreciation for the craft, commitment and passion of great teaching, and a commitment to sustaining the freedom of teachers to spark each student's individual passions and needs.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about McLean School.

[School Website](#)

[Virtual Campus Tour](#)

[Core Values](#)

[College Matriculation](#)

[The Abilities Model®](#)

[About Potomac, Maryland](#)



To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact consultants Skip Kotkins or Heather Flewelling at Carney Sandoe in confidence. To apply, please submit, preferably in separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing your interest specifically in the McLean Head of School position;
- A current résumé or curriculum vitae;
- A one-page statement of experience with and philosophy of serving non-traditional learners;
- A list of five professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission).

Send to:

Skip Kotkins

Senior Consultant

skip.kotkins@carneysandoe.com

Heather Flewelling

Search Consultant

heather.flewelling@carneysandoe.com