

DERBY ACADEMY

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Dear Members of the Derby Academy Community,

It is our great pleasure to announce that Colleen M. Ramsden has accepted the invitation of the Board of Trustees to be the 35th Head of School at Derby Academy, effective July 1, 2021.

In January of this year, the Search Committee began the process of recruiting the strongest and best-matched candidates to our School from all over the country. Interest in the opportunity at Derby was exceptionally high and the candidate pool was remarkably robust. Following preliminary, confidential interviews with the Search Committee, four of these applicants and their spouses/partners were invited to visit the School, where they met in a variety of formats with faculty and staff, parents, students, administrators, alumni, and Trustees.

Colleen Ramsden brings to Derby 28 years of experience as a teacher, division head, and associate head of school. She spent the first fourteen years of her career teaching first, fourth, and fifth grades in New York, and then at Ravenscroft, a Pre-K through 12th-grade independent school in Raleigh, NC, where she became the Assistant Head of School in 2010 and Associate Head of School in 2019. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management as well as two Master's degrees in Elementary Education and Administration and Supervision from Fordham University. Colleen is in the final phase of completing her doctorate in education: an EdD in educational leadership at North Carolina State University.

During her time at Ravenscroft, Colleen has been integrally involved in virtually every facet of the school. In her role as Associate Head of School, she has worked closely with the Board of Trustees and the Head of School to implement a variety of strategic initiatives including [*Lead From Here*](#), Ravenscroft's distinctive citizen-leader program. She understands how to unite a community, whether it be in developing a signature program that makes a difference in the lives of the entire school community, advancing curriculum development across grade levels and departments, or executing the success of three strategic plans that reinforce enrollment, programming, and development initiatives.

The selection of the Head of School is one of the greatest responsibilities of trusteeship, and all of us in the Derby Academy family can be proud not only that Colleen has accepted the appointment, but also that the scope of the search was so extensive and the qualities of the interested candidates were so outstanding. Thank you to those who welcomed and hosted our candidates—your thoughtful and insightful feedback helped the Search Committee determine that Colleen's leadership, experience, and abilities were the right fit for Derby Academy.

Board President Lori Cashman shares this sentiment, adding, "Throughout this process, we have been guided by our mission: 'Improve Both Mind and Heart.' Colleen's track

record of leading with vision, honesty, and integrity reassured us that she would genuinely embrace the culture of our fantastic community.”

Colleen has shared her enthusiasm for joining our community and continuing to build upon Sarah Derby’s vision and the School’s mission, stating, “I am passionate about working with students in their formative years, and during my visit to campus it was clear that Derby is a child-centered school with a nurturing environment where exceptional and experienced teachers support and guide each of their students with warmth and respect. The School’s environment provides a foundation upon which we can build the Derby Academy of tomorrow.” We encourage you to read her full remarks [here](#).

We are delighted with the outcome and look forward to welcoming Colleen, her husband Jason, and their college-aged children, Connor and Kaitlin, to our community. We are also confident that each of you will, in your own way, extend a warm welcome to the Ramsdens.

We would like to extend a special thanks to our fellow Search Committee members, Lori Cashman, John Drew, Caroline Hayes, Jake Heller, Suzanne Norris, and Jay Sadlon, who devoted countless hours and great care to the search process to ensure its successful outcome, as well as to the Advisory Committee for their thoughtful and thorough contribution to the process. We are also grateful for the guidance and support of Marcus Hurlbut and Deirdre Ling of Educators’ Collaborative.

Thanks to the dedication of so many, and their participation in the search process, Derby Academy is poised for a bold and bright future.

Sincerely,

Jeff Alexander P’24, Vice President, Board of Trustees
Caroline Counselman P’21,’24, Trustee
Head of School Search Committee Co-Chairs