



ACTON
at serenbe



Position Statement

Head of School

Acton Academy at Serenbe

Chatt Hills, Georgia

Start Date: July 1, 2023



ACTON ACADEMY AT SERENBE

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OVERVIEW

Located in the unique, planned community of Serenbe, in Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia (just south of Atlanta), Acton Academy at Serenbe (originally named The Children's House at Serenbe), a neighborhood school, looks out over the woods with private access to miles of nature trails, blueberry bushes and apple trees just outside its doors. Students are steps from green space for outdoor classrooms and play. The exceptional location and the relationships within Serenbe set the school apart. The children's learning experience is deepened and broadened by participating with all the amenities that Serenbe has to offer. They enjoy visiting artists through the Artist in Residence program who teach classes and local residents perform in the classroom. Students visit the Serenbe Farms where they participate and learn about planting and harvesting

vegetables. Classrooms incorporate outdoors where the children take walks on the nature trails to explore and test scientific principles. The children learn to care for one another and for their environment.

MISSION

The Acton Academy mission is to "inspire each child who enters our doors to find a calling that will change the world." This mission is achieved through the Acton philosophy that delivers the tools and processes for young people to master the art of learning how to learn and how to be in relationship with others. At Acton Academy, there is a belief that deep learning happens when young people are engaged independently and in collaboration with others to solve real world problems.

Students learn through:

- Adaptive game-based programs for core skills
- Socratic discussions to strengthen critical thinking
- Hands-on real-world projects
- Life changing apprenticeships

Children at Acton Academy will:

- Begin a Hero's Journey
- Learn to be curious, independent, and lifelong learners
- Develop a deep respect for economic, political and religious freedoms
- Cherish the arts, wonders of the physical world and the mysteries of Life on Earth
- Discover their most precious gifts and learn to use them to solve difficult problems

HISTORY

Acton Academy at Serenbe was founded as a one-room Montessori school in the fall of 2010. During the next several years, the school grew from one room to three rooms and in early 2016 the executive board recognized a need to expand beyond the curriculum being offered for ages eleven and up. The Montessori model possesses a learner driven environment and mentor based mixed aged classrooms which is unmatched for early childhood development.

After extensive research around a variety of education models, the team discovered a network of schools modeled after the flagship Acton Academy in Austin, Texas founded by Jeff and Laura Sandifer. The Acton model incorporates the basic philosophies of Montessori education and then utilizes the depth of learning avenues available via digital learning platforms. It is a learner drive model which flips the focus of the traditional school. Students “learn how to learn” and Guides teach through the Socratic method of redirection.

In January of 2018, Acton Academy was one of 65 schools out of thousands of applicants to be awarded an Acton charter. The small board and staff quickly began planning the transition for the elementary aged students and in the Fall of 2018, the school re-opened its doors as Acton Academy at Serenbe. The primary studio remained Montessori based and the elementary studio fully adopted the Acton curriculum. The initial elementary class began with 13 students and slowly grew to 20 by the Spring of 2020. The enthusiasm and enrollment demands allowed the addition of a middle school class in Fall 2020 and expand to high school in 2021 with over 150 students school-wide. Currently there are 200 students attending the school.





Acton Academy at Serenbe is a learner-driven community comprising a series of micro-school “studios” that serve children ages 6 weeks-18 years. Our school model engages students in real-world projects, educational quests, and Socratic discussions in multi-age classrooms. It focuses on the “Hero’s Journey” of each student – helping students develop their academic skills while seeking their calling in life.

The Nest Studio is for children 6 weeks- 18 months. The Toddler Studio is for children ages 18 months-3 years, the Primary Studio is for children ages 3-6, the Elementary Studio for children 6-11, the Middle School Studio for children 11-14, and the Launchpad Studio for children ages 14-18 years.

FINANCES AND ENROLLMENT

Acton Academy at Serenbe takes pride in its ability to drive tremendous growth while maintaining a healthy financial profile and strong balance sheet. The school’s operations are funded primarily with tuition and run efficiently to ensure the school has a tuition price point that is widely accessible.

As of January 2023, the school currently serves over 200 learners from over 100 families. However, in 2021 the school worked to raise the funds necessary to build a new campus that could support over 400 learners at its capacity. In just a few short months, the school raised over \$12 million between a land donation, cash commitments and a secured construction loan, which has allowed the initial development of this campus. In January 2023, the first building was opened – a four-classroom toddler building—and in August 2023, the second building—an 8-classroom primary and elementary building—will open to students for the 2023-24 school year.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The next Head of School of Acton Academy at Serenbe should be a dedicated educator familiar with and a supporter of the Acton philosophy. The school will need to be led wisely and confidently into the future by embracing the school's current challenges. There will be an opportunity for the next Head of School to:

- Ensure our learners and our staff reflect the diversity of our greater community.
- Manage a growing student population and demand while enhancing our culture and quality of education.
- Build community and a culture that reflects the principles of our learner-led approach (across learners, guides/staff, families and BOD).
- Accelerate and amplify staff's professional development to increase effectiveness and reduce attrition.
- Develop and expand the culture, population and opportunities for the middle school and launchpad learners to maximize bridging from lower to upper school.

KEY QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate to be Head of School at Acton Academy at Serenbe will be the school's chief executive officer, responsible for implementing the vision, mission and strategic objectives of the school. Specific responsibilities include:

- Serving as the "face of the school" to all its constituents, including students, parents, teachers, staff, neighbors, and the local business community;
- Developing and managing relationships with current and prospective parents, current and prospective donors, and other relevant constituencies throughout the surrounding area;



- Working with the faculty leaders to ensure that the school's academic programs are being implemented at consistently high levels of quality;
- Overseeing the financial operations of the school;
- Leading fundraising efforts, including the Apogee Scholarship Program;
- Leading the overall marketing of the school.

Education, Experience and Mindset

- Significant leadership experience in a relevant field (education, not-for-profit, business, etc.)
- Support of the Acton philosophy
- Demonstrated ability to lead, coach, mentor and develop people
- Lifelong learner, growth mindset, eagerness to explore and implement new educational models and approaches

Believes that:

Every child has greatness within them, and it is the school's role to create an environment where they can discover and nurture that greatness.

The traditional lecture-based, top-down educational model no longer serves students' needs as they face the societal challenges of the 21st century.



TO APPLY

Acton Academy at Serenbe retained the firm Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support its search for a new Head of School. If you wish to submit your application, please do so at: <https://rg175.com/candidates/signup>

Applications include:

- Letter of interest (cover letter)
- Resume or CV
- A Personal, leadership or Educational Philosophy Statement
- Names of four current references and contact information (optional)

The deadline for receipt of full application materials is Friday, **March 10, 2023.**

For any questions or further information about the position, please contact: Marcia Prewitt Spiller marcia.spiller@rg175.com