

Columbus Academy

Gahanna, United States



One of the nation's first country day schools, offering AP-caliber rigor without AP labels across 231 wooded acres near Columbus.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	72/100
Academic outcomes	73/100
University placement	72/100
Prestige & heritage	72/100
Alumni network	71/100
Facilities	75/100
Transparency	70/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Columbus Academy occupies a distinct place in the Columbus market: an old independent day school with real land, real history and no need for gimmicks. Founded in **1911**, it ranks among the country's early day schools, and that matters. Schools with that kind of lineage tend to know what they are. Here, the proposition is clear: a non-religious, college-preparatory American education for ages 3 to 18 on **231 acres** of wooded campus, eight miles from downtown Columbus. The school's scale sits in a useful middle ground — large enough to sustain breadth, small enough to keep students known — and the **1:8** student-teacher ratio reinforces that. *A serious school with room to breathe* is still a rare thing.

What sets Columbus Academy apart is the combination of traditional academic ambition and a country-day setting that gives students space, literally and culturally. This is not an urban pressure-cooker school operating out of a tight footprint. It offers *a calm, self-possessed atmosphere* and the expectation of disciplined study without boarding-school remove. The editorial tagline captures the academic position neatly: AP-calibre rigour without AP labels. For parents, that signals a school that values substance over branding. The appeal rests less on flash and more on *deep-rooted institutional confidence*, close teaching, and a campus that can support a full school life rather than a timetable squeezed into limited facilities.

This belongs on a parent’s shortlist if the brief is clear: strong academics, day-school practicality, and an environment that feels *grounded rather than performative*. It also suits families who want independence without a religious frame and who value continuity from early years through graduation. Columbus Academy will suit students who are academically capable, comfortable with structure, and ready to use the resources of an established school well. It will not be the first choice for families chasing a highly branded exam factory or a school built around spectacle. Its audience is the student who wants *quiet seriousness*, breadth, and the confidence that comes from attending a school that has been refining its model for more than **100** years.

STRENGTHS

- Ranked #2 among private high schools in Ohio by Niche, with an overall A+ grade based on academics and outcomes.
- Small-scale teaching model: average class size of 15 and an 8:1 student-to-teacher ratio across a 231-acre campus.
- Substantial need-based aid program, with roughly a quarter of students receiving assistance averaging around \$14,000 a year.
- Broad extracurricular base, offering 16 interscholastic sports plus dedicated visual and performing arts facilities.
- Long institutional history, founded in 1911 and accredited through ISACS with NAIS membership.

TRADE-OFFS

- Day tuition runs from about \$27,900 to \$37,100 depending on grade, a significant recurring cost for relocating families.
- Admissions are competitive, with a reported acceptance rate around 57% and required ISEE testing plus interview.
- Purely a day school with no boarding option, drawing most students from within roughly a 30-mile radius of central Ohio, which limits its practicality for families without local housing.
- Located in suburban Gahanna, 8 miles from downtown Columbus, meaning families are car-dependent rather than close to an urban or international community hub.

ADMISSIONS

Admission spans an Explorers program (age 3) through Grade 12, with typical entry points at kindergarten, sixth grade and ninth grade. Applicants take the ISEE, submit transcripts and recommendations, and complete an interview and screening visit; reported acceptance sits around 57%. The financial aid application deadline is February 1, though general admission is rolling. Day tuition ranges from roughly \$27,900 to \$37,100 depending on grade, and about a quarter of students receive need-based assistance.

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_332ea79ce7.