

St. Andrew's School (Delaware)

Middletown, United States



On 2,200 Delaware acres that doubled as Dead Poets Society's Welton Academy, boarding isn't an option but the entire model.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	73/100
Academic outcomes	74/100
University placement	73/100
Prestige & heritage	74/100
Alumni network	74/100
Facilities	75/100
Transparency	68/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

St. Andrew’s School occupies a narrow, unusual corner of the American boarding market: a ****100%**** boarding, Episcopal, coeducational school on 2,200 acres, founded in 1929 and built around a blunt idea that still matters — admission and access should not track family wealth. That principle gives the school more than a charitable gloss; it shapes the social contract. St. Andrew’s is small at around 320 students, classes are tiny, and the whole structure runs on proximity. There is no day-school cohort drifting in and out, no weekly boarding compromise, no split identity. Boarding here is the institution, not an add-on. For families who want a school where adolescents are immersed in a full residential culture, that is the main differentiator. For families who want flexibility, urban access, or a looser arrangement, it is the wrong

school.

The attraction lies in intensity and coherence. St. Andrew's offers an American curriculum with AP, an average class size of 12, a published **4:1** student-teacher ratio on the school's own figures, and a campus model built around face-to-face life. That produces *close adult attention*, *serious communal living* and *high-contact teaching*. The school talks a great deal about kindness, joy, faith and human connection; in weaker hands, that language can drift into sentimentality. Here, the underlying facts give it weight: every student boards, a large share receive financial aid, and the school is explicit that mentorship, advising and shared routines sit at the centre of the experience. The fee — **\$78,500** for 2026-27 — is expensive by any normal standard, but the school's longstanding commitment to aid is not decorative. With **45%** of students receiving financial aid, St. Andrew's offers a more economically mixed boarding environment than many direct competitors.

It belongs on a shortlist because it combines rarity, discipline and purpose. There are very few coeducational US college-preparatory schools where every student boards, and fewer still with this level of cultural clarity. The school's recent university destinations show real academic traction, and its setting carries its own cultural echo: this is the campus used as Welton Academy in *Dead Poets Society*, which will matter to some families and count as trivia to others. More important is the lived reality: *a fully residential adolescence*, *an intellectually charged small community*, *old-school ritual with modern access*, and *a strong sense of being known*. The trade-off is equally clear. Students who need anonymity, constant city stimulation, or a transactional academic machine will chafe here.

The right student for St. Andrew's is bright, self-possessed enough to live in community, and willing to be visible. This school suits teenagers who want teachers in their lives, not just in their classrooms; who can handle shared expectations; and who gain from discussion, structure and sustained relationships. It will suit students with academic ambition, artistic or athletic seriousness, and a tolerance for institutional culture shaped by Episcopal roots even if they are not religious themselves. It will not suit the adolescent who wants to keep school at arm's length. St. Andrew's asks for buy-in. In return it offers *real belonging*, *moral seriousness* and a boarding experience with unusual internal consistency.

STRENGTHS

- One of only three co-educational college-preparatory schools in the US where 100% of students board, creating a fully residential community rather than a mixed day/boarding culture.
- The school meets 100% of demonstrated financial need for every admitted student, funded by an endowment established by founder A. Felix du Pont.
- Small-scale teaching with a 5:1 student-to-teacher ratio and average class size of 12, set on a 2,200-acre campus, one of the largest secondary-school sites in the country.
- Long-established institution (founded 1929) with accreditation/membership in NAIS, TABS and the Mid-Atlantic Boarding School Group, and known internationally as the filming location for 'Dead Poets Society'.

TRADE-OFFS

- Highly selective: acceptance rate reported at 18-22%, meaning most applicants, including well-qualified ones, are turned away.
- Full boarding fees run to roughly \$72,870-\$78,500 a year, and the school awards no merit scholarships; aid is need-based only, with international students typically capped at 50% of tuition.
- The campus sits in rural Middletown, Delaware, well outside any major city, which can complicate travel logistics and weekend access for relocating expat families.
- With only around 318 students, the school offers a narrower range of electives, clubs and social scale than larger boarding schools, and its Episcopal chapel tradition, while not exclusive, shapes daily community life.

- Alumni base includes figures such as former Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair and CNN anchor Erin Burnett, evidencing a track record beyond marketing claims.

ADMISSIONS

St. Andrew's enrolls boarders in grades 9-12 only, with an application deadline of January 15.

Requirements typically include transcripts, recommendation letters, an essay, standardized tests (ISEE or SSAT, plus TOEFL for non-native English speakers) and an interview. Acceptance rates of roughly 18-22% place it among the more competitive American boarding schools. Financial aid is need-based and substantial for domestic families, but capped for international applicants; there is no merit-scholarship track, so families should prepare a full needs-based application (SSS form) alongside academic materials.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (25)

SPORT: Dominic Seiterle

MUSIC: Loudon Wainwright III, Peter Salett, Maggie Rogers

DRAMA: Loudon Wainwright III, Will McCormack

VISUAL_ARTS: Loudon Wainwright III, Bülent Atalay

LETTERS: Erin Burnett, William H. Whyte, Bülent Atalay, John Seabrook, Loudon Wainwright, Jr., Steven Naifeh, Lydia Kiesling

POLITICS: William Brownfield, Hume Horan

SCIENCE: Dennis C. Blair, Bülent Atalay, Kirk Varnedoe, R. F. Foster

BUSINESS: Cristina Stenbeck, Frederick Brown Starr

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_848e17092c.