

The Baldwin School

Bryn Mawr, United States



Since 1888, a single-sex college-prep tradition on Philadelphia's Main Line, housed in Frank Furness's landmark former Bryn Mawr Hotel.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	73/100
Academic outcomes	75/100
University placement	74/100
Prestige & heritage	73/100
Alumni network	72/100
Facilities	73/100
Transparency	69/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

The Baldwin School trades on two assets that many American independents cannot match: a deep institutional history and a sharply defined educational model. Founded in 1888, it is a non-religious, girls-only day school in Bryn Mawr for ages 3 to 18, and it sits in the Frank Furness-designed former Bryn Mawr Hotel rather than on an anonymous suburban campus. That matters. Parents shopping the Philadelphia Main Line market are not choosing Baldwin for novelty; they are choosing a school with a *clear sense of self*. The offer is straightforward: an American college-prep education, delivered in English, inside a single-sex environment that the school defends openly rather than treating as a legacy quirk. In a market full of schools trying to be everything at once, Baldwin’s *institutional confidence*

stands out.

The shortlist case rests on focus. Baldwin puts academics, arts and athletics all on the front page of its public identity, and the structure underneath that claim is visible: Advanced Topics courses, college counselling, academic support and enrichment, a DREAM Lab, libraries, a conservatory for music, theatre and visual arts, and membership of the Inter-Academic Athletic League. That is the profile of a school built for girls who want a full independent-school education rather than a narrow exam factory. The average annual day fee across the full age range is **\$45,802**, which places Baldwin in the *expensive*, upper-tier US private day-school bracket. NEASC and NAIS accreditation add credibility, but the stronger signal is longevity plus coherence: Baldwin has had plenty of time to calcify into mannerism, yet the school still reads as a place with active academic and extracurricular ambition.

The right student for Baldwin is a girl who will use the opportunities rather than hide inside them. She does not need to be loud, but she does need appetite: for discussion, for performance, for sport, for leadership, and for the concentrated social dynamics of an all-girls school. Students who thrive in mixed settings, want a more diffuse campus culture, or need a low-pressure environment may find Baldwin *too defined* and *too exacting*. Students who want a serious college-prep school with a strong female peer culture, a *distinctive* setting, and a tradition that still has practical force will find Baldwin easy to place on a shortlist. Its alumni floor is also meaningful: Wikidata records **16** notable alumni, including **4** scientists or scholars and **4** writers or journalists. That is not decoration; it fits the school’s long-established habit of educating girls for public, intellectual and professional life.

STRENGTHS

- The Baldwin School was founded in 1888 by Florence Baldwin as a preparatory school for young women planning to enter nearby Bryn Mawr College, giving it over 130 years of continuous operation as a girls' school.
- The school occupies a former nineteenth-century resort hotel designed by Victorian architect Frank Furness, a landmark of the Philadelphia Main Line, and the building is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.
- Student to teacher ratio stands at 7.0, on an enrollment of 572 (2022-2023), supporting close academic attention within a small day-school community.
- The average GPA is 3.62, the graduation rate is 100%, and average standardized test scores include an SAT score of 1410 and an ACT score of 31, indicating a consistently strong academic cohort.
- The Baldwin School offers 14 interscholastic sports: Basketball, Crew, Cross Country, Dance, Field Hockey, Golf, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Squash, Swimming, Tennis, Track and Field and Volleyball, giving girls broad co-curricular options beyond academics.

TRADE-OFFS

- The school is single-sex by design -- the school's commitment to remaining a single sex institution means it will not suit families seeking a coeducational environment.
- Day tuition runs high for the region, listed at \$48,402 for 2024, plus a non-refundable enrollment deposit and additional fees for extracurriculars and uniforms.
- The last boarders graduated in 1974, so the school offers no residential option, which is a structural limitation for relocating expat families without a local home base.
- Admission is competitive and process-heavy, requiring standardized testing and an interview rather than a straightforward application, which can slow placement for families on tight relocation timelines.

ADMISSIONS

Baldwin admits girls from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 on a rolling basis, though grade-specific deadlines apply for younger entry points. Applicants typically submit transcripts, recommendation letters, and an application essay, with the SSAT or ISEE required or recommended and an interview generally expected. The \$50 application fee is modest relative to the roughly \$46,000-\$48,000 annual day tuition. Financial aid is need-based and considers family income, assets, and lifestyle factors rather than a fixed formula, so early contact with the admissions office is advisable for aid-seeking families.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (16)

SPORT: Ruth Davidon

MUSIC: Helen Thorington

VISUAL_ARTS: Helen Thorington

LETTERS: Kinney Zalesne, Sophia Yilma, Helen Thorington, Barbara Adams Holland

POLITICS: Henrietta H. Fore, Sophia Yilma

SCIENCE: Margaret Robinson, Emily Hartshorne Mudd, Jane Setlow, Marian Holland McAllister

BUSINESS: Jody Gerson, Jane Krumrine

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_84cf3eeb67.