

Buckingham Browne & Nichols School

Cambridge, United States



Born of an 1883 merger between two Cambridge institutions, its three campuses sit in the intellectual orbit of Harvard and MIT.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	77/100
Academic outcomes	80/100
University placement	78/100
Prestige & heritage	77/100
Alumni network	76/100
Facilities	76/100
Transparency	75/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Buckingham Browne & Nichols sits in a rare patch of Cambridge where independent schooling intersects with the academic gravity of Harvard and MIT, and that setting matters. This is a non-religious American day school for ages 3 to 18, founded in 1883, with three campuses rather than one self-contained estate. That arrangement gives BB&N a distinctive character: less cloistered prep-school theatre, more city-school movement and intellectual traffic. It also places the school in a bracket where families expect substance, not polish alone. On fees, BB&N is expensive even by US day-school standards: the average annual fee across the full ladder is ****\$69,428****.

What puts it on a serious shortlist is the combination of age, academic culture and social capital. BB&N is accredited by NEASC and NAIS, belongs to the G30 Schools group, and is part of Round Square. Those badges do not make a school good on their own, but they do place it inside an established network of high-performing independents. The stronger point is output and reach. Wikipedia records that its graduates include three of Massachusetts' 27 Presidential Scholars since 1964, and Wikidata catalogues **89 notable alumni**, spanning politics, finance, science, writing and the arts. That is not a decorative alumni list; it points to a school with a *serious* tradition of producing adults who move into public, intellectual and cultural life.

The catch is equally clear. BB&N suits families who want an *urban, high-expectation* education, not a pastoral retreat or a glossy all-rounder with easy charm. The school's appeal rests in ambition, institutional heft and proximity to one of the world's densest academic ecosystems. Students who thrive here will relish pressure, breadth and competition, and will use Cambridge itself as part of their education. Children who need a slower tempo, a more sheltered campus culture or a less *intellectually charged* peer group may find the atmosphere hard-edged. For the right student, though, BB&N offers something *distinctive*: a long-established American independent school with real metropolitan seriousness, strong affiliations, and a proven habit of sending its pupils into consequential fields.

STRENGTHS

- Long-established Cambridge institution formed in 1974 from the merger of the Buckingham School (1889) and Browne & Nichols School (1883), giving it over a century of continuous operating history.
- Very low student-teacher ratio of 6:1 across a PreK-12 enrollment of roughly 1,000-1,040 students, allowing small class sizes throughout.
- Notable alumni include screenwriter and actress Mindy Kaling, and graduates have included three of Massachusetts' 27 Presidential Scholars since that federal program began in 1964.
- School reports average standardized test results well above national norms, with an average SAT of 1373 and average ACT of 30 among recent graduating classes.
- Around a quarter of the student body receives need-based financial aid, and the school states roughly half of enrolled students self-identify as students of color.

TRADE-OFFS

- Day tuition for the upper grades runs in the range of roughly \$60,000-\$67,000 per year depending on the source and year cited, before additional fees for books, activities or international-family administration.
- The school operates across three separate campuses in Cambridge, which families should factor into daily logistics, transport and sibling scheduling.
- As a day school only, it offers no boarding option, which can be a practical constraint for relocating expat families still arranging local housing.
- Admission is selective and requires standardized testing (SSAT or ISEE), transcripts, essays and typically an interview, adding a competitive, paperwork-heavy hurdle for new applicants.

ADMISSIONS

BB&N admits students from PreK (Beginners) through grade 12 across its three Cambridge campuses, with entry points concentrated at the youngest grades, sixth grade and ninth grade. The process requires a school transcript, teacher recommendations, a written application, and for most applicants an admissions test (SSAT or ISEE) plus an interview. Given its enrollment of roughly 1,000 students and reputation among Boston-area independent schools, competition for openings, especially at popular entry points, is significant. Families should contact the admissions office directly for current deadlines and international-applicant requirements.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (89)

SPORT: Jake Rosenzweig, Tessa Haining

MUSIC: Anthony Perkins, Edward Burlingame Hill, Andy Pratt, Anton Kuerti, Rachel Platten, Robert Brink

DRAMA: Anthony Perkins, Ari Graynor, Paul Michael Glaser, Mindy Kaling, Melinda McGraw, Alison Folland, Jonathan Collier, Jere Burns

VISUAL_ARTS: Eliot Noyes, Jonathan Moore, Michael Sloan, John Steffian, Nicole Cherubini

LETTERS: Anthony Perkins, Charles Colson, Q517275, Peter Beinart, Ellen Goodman, Mary Lord, Robert M. O'Neil, Scott Belsky

POLITICS: Robert F. Bradford, Charles Colson, John Moors Cabot, Anton Kuerti, Josh Zakim

SCIENCE: George C. Homans, Svetlana Alpers, Garrett Birkhoff, Deirdre McCloskey, Langdon Warner, Charles Pence Slichter, Alfred V. Kidder, Peter Beinart

BUSINESS: Abigail Johnson, Sherwin Badger, Eleanor Sanger, Reed Hastings, Scott Belsky, Thomas Dudley Cabot, Gregory Blotnick, David Sze

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_9e93b5a9bc.