

Latin School of Chicago

Chicago, United States



In Chicago's Gold Coast, the city's oldest independent day school still teaches Latin alongside its inquiry-driven modern curriculum.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	74/100
Academic outcomes	77/100
University placement	75/100
Prestige & heritage	74/100
Alumni network	73/100
Facilities	75/100
Transparency	71/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

In Chicago’s Gold Coast, Latin School of Chicago trades on something more durable than branding: age, location and a clear sense of academic identity. Founded in 1888, it is the city’s oldest independent day school and still keeps Latin in the frame while running a modern American programme through to the US High School Diploma, with AP in the upper school. That combination gives it a distinctive character. This is not a fashionable start-up selling “innovation”; it is an **old-guard** JK-12 school that has had time to refine what it does. The setting matters too. A non-religious, coeducational day school for ages 3–18 in one of Chicago’s most affluent neighbourhoods, Latin sits squarely in the city’s **elite day-school market**.

Parents should shortlist Latin if they want a school with academic seriousness, social cachet and a full through-school journey under one roof. The average annual day fee across the whole ladder is ****\$48,225****, which places it firmly in the expensive end of Chicago private education. NAIS accreditation gives it recognised independent-school standing, but the sharper signal is its alumni footprint: Wikidata alone records ****46 notable alumni****, including figures in politics, business, writing, film and sport. That does not prove present-day quality on its own, but it does show institutional reach and long-term cultural capital. Latin’s age range, from junior kindergarten to Grade 12, also appeals to families who want continuity rather than another admissions scramble at 11 or 14.

The pupil who thrives here will value intellectual structure, strong writing and discussion, and a school culture with **high expectations** rather than hand-holding. The AP option in a school with classical roots points to breadth with academic edge, not a progressive free-for-all. Children who want a loose, unpressured atmosphere or a visibly vocational track will find a better fit elsewhere. Latin suits families who want a **serious urban independent school** with pedigree, permanence and access to a powerful parent and alumni network. It is **not for bargain hunters**, and it is not built around pastoral theatrics. Its attraction is more exacting than that: tradition, rigour and social confidence in a single Chicago address.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1888, making it one of the oldest independent day schools in Chicago, with a long-established college-preparatory tradition.
- Reports a 100% four-year college matriculation rate, with graduates gaining admission to institutions such as Harvard, Princeton, and the University of Chicago.
- Maintains a low student-teacher ratio of roughly 9 to 1, with over 1,100 students across JK through grade 12.
- Offers substantial need-based financial aid, with a need-sensitive policy under which all admitted students who demonstrate need are funded.
- A large majority of faculty hold advanced degrees, supporting a academically credentialed teaching staff.

TRADE - OFFS

- Tuition is high, listed at roughly \$46,395 for upper grades, placing it among the pricier Chicago day school options.
- Entry outside the natural intake points of JK, fifth grade, and ninth grade is limited to a small number of spots, and mid-year transfers are not accepted.
- The school has faced sustained, well-documented public scrutiny in 2024-2026 over antisemitism allegations and a wrongful-death lawsuit tied to a 2022 student suicide, with some claims still contested in court.
- Single urban campus in the Gold Coast neighborhood with no boarding option, so families outside the city or near suburbs face a daily commute.

ADMISSIONS

Latin admits primarily at JK, fifth grade, and ninth grade, though it enrolls small numbers into other grades most years; mid-year transfers are not accepted. Applicants for grades five through twelve must sit the ISEE, and the process runs through the Ravenna online platform with school visits and recommendations. Financial aid is a separate, need-sensitive application handled via a third-party service (Clarity), with deadlines typically in January. Given limited seats outside the core entry points, competition for non-standard-grade openings can be tight.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (46)

SPORT: Laura Granville, Alice Arlen, Q2903401

MUSIC: Cassidy Freeman, Roger McGuinn, Nina Gordon

DRAMA: Nancy Reagan, Cassidy Freeman, Carol Mendelsohn, Lauralee Bell, Sarah Danielle Madison, Bob Balaban, Ike Barinholtz, Crispin Freeman

VISUAL_ARTS: Claes Oldenburg, Carol Mendelsohn

LETTERS: Carol Mendelsohn, Neil Strauss, Alice Arlen, Alexandra Bruce, Rick Kogan

POLITICS: Adlai Stevenson III, Nancy Reagan, Lisa Madigan, Alexi Giannoulis, John Fritchey

SCIENCE: Robert Debs, Philip Schuyler, John W. Nason

BUSINESS: Nancy Reagan, Carol Mendelsohn, William Wrigley, Jr. II, Alexi Giannoulis, Q2903401, Billy Dec, Walter Paepcke, Brooks McCormick

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_c6cc8646d4.