Position and Candidate Specification

St. John's School

Head of School

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With a mission to provide the Houston community with a school of “exacting standards,” St. John’s School offers talented and motivated students a genuine challenge for academic accomplishment and personal development. While the school may be known for its longstanding tradition of academic achievement, including numerous National Merit Finalists and strong matriculation to selective colleges and universities, the St. John’s experience is focused on the “whole child.” The school combines accomplishments in academics, athletics, and the arts with selfless service to the community in the development of individual, spiritual, ethical, intellectual, social, and physical growth in its students.

Throughout the 13-year educational sequence the school offers, St. John’s students thrive in an environment that combines challenge with support, work with play, and individual success with the common good. St. John’s inculcates intellectual enthusiasm, leadership, and an appreciation of discovery. In its dynamic classrooms, students develop skills to think critically and creatively in an atmosphere that promotes determination and resilience through healthy challenge and loving support. Students are celebrated for using these special years to engage in the possibilities at St. John’s and to give back beyond the campus walls.

The St. John’s motto of “faith and virtue” underpins the student experience and animates the school’s culture. While the school continues to grow in number with over 1,400 gifted students, the community and classroom experience remains small in alignment with St. John’s focus on the personal development of each student. Indeed, care is the school’s cardinal virtue. The St. John’s School community is sustained by caring relationships in which members extend themselves for others, with compassion, courtesy, kindness, and respect.

Because the St. John’s community revels in scholarly, athletic, and artistic adventure, day-to-day life at St. John’s is filled with the joy of learning and doing, both for students and for faculty. St. John’s works tirelessly to ensure that students of all ages and beliefs feel safe to explore the many dimensions of their developing identities, personalities, and interests. The community has embarked on a deliberate path to diversify its student body, faculty, and administration and has launched the school’s first Strategic Plan for Community and Inclusion. St. John’s students benefit from a curriculum and culture that is based on mutual respect for their unique perspectives, whether it is in attending chapel, serving the local community, or experiencing the environment and cultures outside the classroom.

**KEY ST. JOHN’S SCHOOL FACTS**

- 1,432 students; 698 in the upper school, 363 in the middle school, and 371 in the lower school
- 203 faculty members, over half with masters or doctorate degrees
- $51m budget
- $80m endowment; nearly $5m annual fund
- $4m financial aid budget
- 44% students of color
- 44 varsity and JV sports teams, with 83% athletic participation
- 118 clubs and student organizations
- 86% of students are involved in fine arts
- A secular school with a unique student-run Chapel program
The Head of School is appointed by the Board of Trustees and is responsible for all aspects of the school, including the academic program, operations and financial health, and external relations and fundraising. In partnership with the board, the Head is responsible for setting the school’s strategic priorities and achieving the school’s mission.

St John’s next Head of School will inherit a talented and deeply committed faculty, an engaged and well-rounded student body, a supportive and welcoming community, and a dedicated Board of Trustees. As the intellectual, moral, and administrative leader of St. John’s, the next Head will be deeply committed to preserving the school’s values and commitment to “faith and virtue” and will inspire the community to continue to innovate, evolve, and strengthen all aspects of the school and community. With a passion for the education of the whole child, a deep commitment to students and faculty, and a track record of leadership, the next Head of School will inspire St. John’s students to live a life of personal fulfillment and contribution to society. With the soul of an educator, the successful candidate will be a thoughtful, strategic leader who is able to articulate and actualize a compelling educational vision.

The next Head of School will relish the opportunity to be a highly visible member of the community and will engage in the full life of the school. The Head will have the ability to inspire and empower a talented faculty and administrative team, while supporting their on-going professional development. The Head will be inspired and energized by the opportunity to cultivate the development of individual, spiritual, ethical, intellectual, social, and physical growth of the remarkably diverse and talented student body. The Head will support a culture that fosters community and inclusion, cultivates intellectual curiosity, passion, and goodness in our students, and honors the gifted and devoted faculty who dedicate their lives to all aspects of the school experience.

A person with humility, unquestioned integrity and judgment, and a passion for educating talented students, the Head will be energized by the opportunity to lead this institution.
Candidate Profile

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

Academic Leadership
Accomplished and passionate independent school leader with experience motivating and inspiring dedicated faculty and staff.

Student-Centric Leadership
Has engaged effectively with students across the 13-year educational sequence on issues related to their intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
A demonstrated commitment to and experience leading diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives that have influenced organizational culture, practices, and strategies.

Financial and Operational Leadership
An understanding of the financial and operational underpinnings of an independent school and the levers to secure a fiscally sustainable institution, including the capacity to act as St. John’s principal fundraiser.

Partnering with Board of Trustees
An ability to collaborate effectively and transparently with the Board of Trustees.

Academic Credentials
Strong academic credentials: relevant advanced degree required.

CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

Strategic and Academic Leader
With vision and leadership for the future and an enduring appreciation for St. John’s longstanding tradition of excellence in providing a well-rounded education, the next Head of School will:

• Be an innovative, visionary leader committed to educating students in a demanding yet supportive environment.
• Retain, build, and support a world-class faculty.
• Inculcate a culture of intentionality on key areas of focus, including social and emotional learning and community and inclusion.
• Be a voracious learner and the lead advocate in the evolution of the school’s programs. Challenge and guide the community to continuous improvement and academic innovation, including thoughtfully embracing and incorporating technology into the curriculum.
• Ensure that all academic programs are challenging, set high standards, and advance a culture of excellence and accountability.
Inspiring Community Builder

Given the deep commitment to a kind and caring culture and community, the next Head of School will be a gifted community builder with the ability to:

- Be visible and accessible as a genuine presence in the life of the school and students. The Head will find joy in daily conversations with students, faculty, and staff – whether it be in the classroom, at chapel, at lunch, in the theatre, or on the athletic fields.
- Be a caring and values-based educator committed to the individual, spiritual, ethical, intellectual, social, and physical development of each child.
- Continue to advance the school’s commitment to community, equity, and inclusion in its intellectual and community life and across its student, faculty, and staff populations.
- Promote trust and engagement across the school’s broad community and maintain a culture of unity, collaboration, and mutual respect.
- Be an inspiring and transparent leader who will welcome debate, value diverse perspectives, listen, and then make decisions always in the best interest of the students and the school.

Complex Organizational Leadership

In a highly complex school with ambitions for continued growth and evolution, the Head of School will:

- Provide critical leadership to empower and inspire a talented and diverse faculty, staff, and administrative leadership team members who are committed to academic excellence, curricular improvement, professional development and growth, and enhancing the culture of the community.
- Be a strategic, effective steward of the school’s assets with strong business acumen, smart fiscal management strategies, and the ability to manage the improvement and expansion of facilities.
- Develop strong relationships with the school’s Board of Trustees and partner closely with them on major institutional issues.
- Foster a culture of philanthropic support from alumni and parents.

OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- A broadly engaged intellect, a courageous leader with humility, unquestioned integrity, good judgment, and a strong internal compass.
- Warm and engaging; genuinely interested in the lives of students, faculty, and staff members.
- Exceptional verbal and written communication skills – thoughtful, inspiring, and authentic.
- The confidence to listen carefully, make decisions, and to share credit.
- A sense of humor.

Search Process

St. John’s School is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages individuals of all backgrounds and cultures to consider this leadership position. St. John’s commitment to inclusivity encompasses, but is not limited to, diversity in nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and disability. The St. John’s Head of School Search Committee is being assisted by Spencer Stuart in this search process. The committee welcomes comments, questions, nominations, and expressions of interest.

To contact the committee, please send an email with any supporting materials to the confidential email address below: SJSHead@spencerstuart.com.