

# St. JOHN'S

EPISCOPAL SCHOOL



Rancho Santa Margarita, California

Early Childhood through Grade 8

Elementary Division Principal

July 2020

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Grounded in the rich history of diversity and excellence in Episcopal education, St. John's fosters every child's full intellectual, physical, and spiritual development. A nurturing learning environment and programs built on an ideal balance of tradition and innovation encourage our students to pursue lives of service and purpose.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

St. John's Episcopal School, a coeducational Episcopal school for students from early childhood through grade 8, seeks a mission-driven, student-focused, experienced and forward-thinking leader to serve as elementary division principal starting July 2020. The school is organized into three divisions: early childhood, elementary and middle. It is highly regarded in the Southern Orange County area and known for its strong community, a joyful and family feel for the students and faculty and staff who are highly committed to their young students as well as to each other. There is genuine care and warmth on the school campus, which is palpable.

The elementary division principal is responsible for all day-to-day operations of the K-5 division. The next elementary division principal has the opportunity to lead in a dynamic teaching and learning environment where the faculty and administrators are committed to the continuous improvement of the program and curriculum.





## THE SCHOOL

Founded in 1988 by the Reverend Canon Ernest D. Sillers, the school has grown from its initial enrollment of 250 children to 432 today. The seven-acre campus, situated at the base of Saddleback Mountain in Southern Orange County, houses five buildings: a church and enrichment center; a gymnasium that doubles as auditorium and performance space, with a second story suite of administrative offices; an early childhood center for nursery through kindergarten and administrative offices; a classroom building housing grades 1 through 5 on the lower level, and grades 6 through 8 and the middle division administrative office on the second level; and a specialized building, the Johnson STEAM Center, housing a Maker Space, Robotics lab and elementary science classroom. In 2017, the School installed a new turf athletics field and PAR course and in 2018, the Bishop John Harvey Learning Commons was unveiled. In 2019, the School initiated its *Making Space for the Future* to transform the learning environments across campus to create modern, flexible spaces that inspire and engage teachers and students, fostering superior academic and social – emotional outcomes. The campaign's progress will enter the elementary division this spring and summer, with the goal to complete all elementary division classrooms by winter break of 2020. The campus setting is beautiful, clean, safe and well maintained.

The vast majority of students live within 10 miles of the school and most of the parents are professionals, with a significant number working in various technology industries. Although Southern Orange County is not particularly diverse, the school's families represent many religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Including international students, 24% self-report that they are from underrepresented backgrounds.

The School has a close relationship with the Church and is a not-for-profit institution incorporated under the auspices of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. There is a school committee which is responsible for the long-term strategic vision and financial health of the school.

St. John's Episcopal School is accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), and is a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES) and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).







## THE ELEMENTARY DIVISION PROGRAM AND PEOPLE

St. John's was the first school in California to adopt a STEAM approach to teaching and learning. STEAM integrates curricula across subject areas and enables students to collaborate on projects to create solutions to real world problems. For elementary faculty, this means that there is an intentional integration of classes, from core curriculum through enrichment areas and gives them opportunities to collaborate with one another. One example is the planets unit at the second grade, where, in addition to the science of planets, the music specialist will introduce Holst's orchestral work, "The Planets," to them. St. John's aspires to be a school where students' critical thinking abilities and opportunities to see the interplay between previously-siloed disciplines enhances creativity, problem-solving, empathy and lifelong positive outcomes. The faculty's overall approach to teaching and inspiring children is based on the belief that children are at the center of the educational experience and that they learn best through exploration and discovery.



Dedicated and recently-transformed enrichment spaces underscore the essential nature of the arts at St. John's. At the elementary level, music classrooms leverage the Orff Schulwerk method to encourage students to imitate, experiment and play. In visual arts, students learn about organic and geometric shapes, developing creative skills and forming aesthetic judgments. Performing arts is designed to build an appreciation of the arts and includes skills such as memorization, public speaking and collaboration.



With a balanced focus on character and academics, the school has earned a well-deserved reputation for preparing its students for success. In the best tradition of Episcopal education, religion and worship are central to the spiritual and character development. Elementary students have religion class and twice-a week-chapel. Service is a key component of elementary school life and students participate in food distribution from their own "Seeds of Hope" garden as well as restoration and clean-up projects off-campus.

Elementary students have opportunities to grow as student-athletes, as well. The School instituted its "Rising Cardinals" athletics program to support fundamentals and character within competition to



elementary-aged students in grades 2-4. Additionally, the School added a track & field program for its elementary students as an after-school and weekend opportunity to build their skills, as well. Competitive after-school athletics is available to student-athletes in grades 5-8.

Administrators, faculty and staff build deep relationships with students, families, alumni and each other to foster the closeness of the community. Parents feel welcomed on campus, that it is like “getting a big hug.” They appreciate that their children are known and supported and that the students are seen as kind and respectful. The elementary students love their teachers, saying that they are kind and helpful when they “have a hard time.”



## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEXT ELEMENTARY DIVISION PRINCIPAL**

There is a strong sense of community and spirit that makes St. John's a special school. The elementary division principal must ensure that this spirit and identity remain a central part of all that is done. Maintaining the essence of the school while imbuing it with an enhanced sense of purpose to provide for the meaningful implementation of its mission and values in today's world will be a key opportunity for the new leader. The new elementary division principal will be expected to actively connect with students, faculty, staff and families to understand the community and culture and help define the path forward.

Because, as stated in the mission statement, “St. John's fosters every child's full intellectual, physical, and spiritual development,” the importance of ensuring “a balance of tradition and innovation” in all

aspects of the curriculum is essential. Working in collaboration with the faculty and administration, the next elementary division principal will have the opportunity to develop an academic/pedagogical vision that is grounded in the school's mission and values for education, the changing nature of today's students and evolving societal needs. This vision will ensure that the program, systems and structures needed are in place to serve the needs of all students.

The new elementary division principal will promote and enhance an outstanding program through collaboration with the strong, committed faculty. The next principal will encourage and support faculty initiatives as well as look to how best meet the needs of today's students. Specifically, the new leader will continue to work with faculty to ensure they are growing in their understanding of best practices in teaching and learning and to provide the necessary resources to meet the needs of all students with whom they work. Given that St. John's is a multi-divisional institution, there is opportunity for each division to work more effectively together as one school and to take full advantage of various resources available. This includes providing for greater curricular alignment both horizontally and vertically.

## DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Academic leaders at St. John's Episcopal School are expected to build deep relationships with students, families, faculty, staff and alumni to foster a richness of community. St. John's is looking for a team member who will exhibit optimism, solve problems collaboratively, be reflective, create an engaging and inclusive school culture and share in the united pursuit of the school's mission.

The elementary division principal will lead a division of 209 students and 32 faculty, provide educational leadership to his/her division, ensuring excellence in academic and co-curricular programs, curriculum development and supervision in support of the mission of the school. The school desires a student-focused educator with elementary experience and demonstrated leadership in curriculum and program. In addition to being a strategic influencer, consensus-builder and skillful manager, successful candidates will have background and skills that include:

- A passion for and appreciation of elementary education and the willingness to promote a culture of learning and high expectations as well as knowledge, understanding and commitment to the developmental, academic and social-emotional needs of elementary school age children
- The ability to take the initiative to make connections and

- Enrollment for Fall 2019:  
• 432 (including 20 international students)
- Administration: 28
- Teaching faculty:  
• Early Childhood Division: 19  
• Elementary Division: 32  
• Middle Division: 25
- \*Including teaching assistants, ECC & Elementary only; Crossover enrichment teachers in Elementary and Middle Divisions counted twice—once under each division they serve
- Faculty with advanced degrees: 13
- Tuition (2019-20):  
• \$15,100 5-day early childhood  
• \$17,560 grades K-5  
• \$18,350 grades 6-8
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- understand the culture of St. John's
- The desire to work closely and collaboratively with an experienced faculty and staff to support and facilitate their commitment to academic excellence and strong working teams
- A willingness to be visible and connect effectively with faculty and staff members, administration, parents, students and community members
- Having strong emotional intelligence and the ability to navigate complexity and ambiguity; be able to communicate openly, respectfully and constructively with others
- Comfort and confidence in asking questions, seeking support and responding with equanimity to unpredictable day-to-day events while working toward long-term strategic goals
- An approachable and down-to-earth disposition, with a healthy balance of humility and confidence as well as a good sense of humor
- And, as one St. John's third grader noted, "they must be friendly and love being around kids"

## SEARCH PROCESS

St. John's Episcopal School has engaged the national search firm, Educational Directions, to assist with the search. The search committee plans to complete the search in spring 2020.

Candidates should submit all information as soon as possible to:

Risa Oganessoff Heersche     [rheersche@edu-directions.com](mailto:rheersche@edu-directions.com)

Mathew Heersche, Ed.D.     [mheersche@edu-directions.com](mailto:mheersche@edu-directions.com)

Electronic submission of materials is required. **Please send materials in a consolidated pdf format.**

Candidates should submit the following documents.

- Cover letter explaining their interest and qualifications for the elementary division principal position at St. John's Episcopal School
- A current resume
- One-page statement of educational philosophy and practice
- Names, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of five professional references

