

HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL SEARCH

ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL

Houston, Texas

sjs.org

Start Date: July 2024



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission Statement

St. John's is an independent, co-educational day school presenting a 13-year sequence of college preparatory training. A non-profit institution, it was founded in 1946 to provide the community with a school of exacting standards in the development of individual, spiritual, ethical, intellectual, social, and physical growth. While the means to achieve that purpose may change, it remains the basic mission of the School.

The School seeks to develop the whole person in preparation for a lifetime of personal fulfillment and contribution to society. In particular, it is dedicated to the enhancement and the expansion of future leadership for Houston and the country. The School offers talented, motivated, and energetic students a genuine challenge for academic accomplishment and for development of a sense of self-worth and of personal responsibility. The School in turn holds itself responsible for providing that challenge.

At a Glance



Established
1946



Lower School Enrollment
359



Faculty in the Lower School
38



Campus size
42 acres



Students of color
48%



Financial aid awarded
\$4.35M



Faculty with advanced degrees
70%

Total enrollment: 1,423

Class sections per grade in LS: 3 (K),
4 (Classes 1-5)

Total faculty: 195

Faculty of color in the Lower School: 32%

Students receiving aid: 14%

Endowment: \$90.6M

Annual operating budget: \$55.4M

LS Admission Yield: 97% (entry points
in K and 1)

School mascot: The Maverick



Overview

St. John's School (SJS) is an independent, co-educational K-12 day school in Houston, Texas, that provides students with a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum and a wealth of enrichment opportunities carefully designed to prepare students for lives of leadership, service, and personal fulfillment. St. John's graduates are renowned for their academic, athletic, and artistic accomplishments but learn to be most proud of their hard work and acts of kindness.

SJS was founded in 1946 by Alan Lake Chidsey with the mission to create a school of academic excellence, and focused on cultivating leadership skills, teaching moral and spiritual values, and making a high-caliber education available to all, regardless of economic circumstance. Although the School's size has grown, the number of students per classroom remains small, in alignment with the founders' original ideals of an individualized development of the "whole person."

As America's fourth-largest city—and the largest in Texas—Houston is a dynamic and evolving city. Home to nearly seven million residents in the metro area, Houston today is truly a global city, making meaningful contributions in the arts, sciences, and education. The city is the most diverse in the U.S., with residents from a wide range of racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, as well as a substantial and growing international community.

SJS seeks a dynamic, joyful, collaborative, and community-oriented educator to lead, support, and guide its Lower School, home to 359 students in Kindergarten through Class 5, and 38 talented and student-centered faculty members. The robust applicant pool, selective admission process, and 97% admissions yield are a reflection of the tremendous demand for St. John's Lower School. Consistently, families are drawn to SJS for the excellence of its academic program; the School's commitment to nurturing collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity; and the overarching culture of kindness. "The Lower School is a magical place," commented one parent. Another affirmed, "Every child is known and cared for, and kids are allowed to be kids." Students love their teachers, classmates, opportunities to learn in and out of the classroom, and the inclusive and kind community. "Kids come into school skipping," noted one faculty member, and a parent shared her daughter "won't go on holiday if it means she will miss school!" Not surprisingly, the faculty love and are inspired by their engaged, curious, fun, and funny students; they also appreciate their thoughtful and collaborative colleagues and the resources that are available to support their students, ideas, and creativity. This is a compelling opportunity for a skilled and passionate educational leader to build on the division's considerable strengths, serve as a senior leader in one of Texas's most respected independent schools, and help advance SJS's inspiring and aspirational strategic plan, which includes developing a new Lower School campus.



Opportunities and Challenges

The Head of Lower School oversees the day-to-day operations of the division (Kindergarten through Class 5) and is a critical member of the school's leadership team. The Head is supported by an Assistant Head of Lower School and a Lower School Counselor, along with two curriculum coordinators. The person in this position works closely with the Middle School and Upper School division heads, reports to the Associate Head of School, and meets regularly with the Head of School. The next Head of Lower School will have the opportunity to work with a talented and dynamic student body and faculty, supportive and collaborative senior and Lower School administrative teams, and tremendous institutional resources. The priorities, opportunities, and challenges ahead include:

- Nurturing an even deeper sense of community and collaboration within the Lower School faculty;
- Clarifying the Lower School's academic identity, drawing on the considerable skill of the faculty and rich tradition of excellence while seeding opportunities for continued innovation in curriculum, program, and instructional practices;
- Serving as instructional leader of the division, supporting teaching teams and the curriculum coordinators as they further elevate and align the curriculum, with particular attention to the transition between Class 5 (Lower School) and Class 6 (Middle School);
- Collaborating with K-12 colleagues in evolving feedback and evaluation processes to support professional growth;
- Reimagining the system for parent and student feedback, including designing report card indicators and rubrics that are clear, relevant, and specific;
- Serving as Lower School "chief storyteller," communicating the value proposition of Lower School to both internal and external audiences, including prospective parents and employees, faculty, and donors;
- Recruiting, hiring, supporting, and retaining a diverse, talented, and mission-aligned faculty; and
- Partnering with the Head of School as St. John's moves forward in its plans for a new, state-of-the-art Lower School building.



Qualifications and Personal Attributes

Successful candidates for Head of Lower School will possess to varying degrees the following qualities and qualifications:

- Experience teaching and leading in a Lower School, delight in working with a school's youngest learners, and an appreciation for the compelling benefits of a multi-division school;
- The ability to lead, support, and inspire faculty in a highly intellectual and high-achieving community and the emotional intelligence to modulate the pace to support and care for others;
- Expertise and comfort with current best practices in elementary curriculum and instruction and understanding of the developmental and learning needs of children in classes K-5;
- Commitment to listening first and drawing upon existing expertise in the faculty, seeking out opportunities to thoughtfully evolve the school's program;
- Personal and professional commitment to community and inclusion and the requisite skills to support a diverse student body and faculty and to facilitate critical conversations in the design of ever more inclusive Lower School curriculum and programs;
- Demonstrated skill in building and maintaining connections and community between and among colleagues, divisions, parents, and students;
- The ability to prioritize visibility amidst the demands of a busy professional schedule;
- The ability to articulate vision and strategy and the tactical skills necessary to deftly manage the systems and processes necessary to implement strategy;
- The confidence and humility to advocate for new ideas, invite disagreement, and welcome feedback, engaging in challenging conversations with grace;
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate with confidence, inspiration, and clarity across a wide range of audiences;
- A collaborative leadership style built on approachability, responsiveness, and transparency; and
- A dynamic, charismatic, energetic, and joyful spirit.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about St. John's School.

[School Website](#)

[School History](#)

[Lower School Curriculum Guide](#)

[Strategic Plan](#)

[Community and Inclusion](#)

[Virtual Tour](#)

[About Houston, Texas](#)



To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter tailored to express interest in this position
- A current and comprehensive résumé

Selected candidates may also be asked to provide:

- Writing samples specific to this search
- List of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission)

Materials should be sent to:

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