



**St. Stephen's** ✝  
**St. Agnes School**

**LOWER SCHOOL DIRECTOR POSITION  
AND OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

## School Overview

St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School (SSSAS), a college-preparatory, age 3-12th grade Episcopal day school in Alexandria, Virginia, just six miles from Washington, D.C. St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School educates the whole child by tending to the academic, social, physical, and spiritual needs of each of our students. It is a positive and collegial community that combines a strong and engaging academic program with outstanding opportunities in the arts, athletics, and service learning for our students. SSSAS has a deep commitment to creating an inclusive community which values diversity, and we seek candidates who have this same demonstrated commitment. The School adheres deeply to its Mission and truly values "goodness as well as knowledge" as it seeks to develop empathetic students of character who understand the importance of and gain the skills and disposition to thoughtfully and positively engage in the world outside of the walls of the school. By every concrete measure—including record enrollment and record annual giving—the school is in a strong position, yet we are by nature a reflective community, always examining our challenges and successes and striving to do better. Given our Mission and our strong adherence to it, this often means focusing on less tangible aspects of building and maintaining a strong, welcoming, inclusive community.





## The Lower School Community

The Lower School of St. Stephen's and St. Agnes is a positive, vibrant community. It is located on its own 9-acre campus and has 60 faculty members and 440 students age 3 through 5th Grade. There is great support of and energy around many different areas of school life inside and outside of the classroom. The Lower School community is a reflective and innovative one where teachers are encouraged and empowered to try new approaches and techniques.

Recent areas of focus include:

- Weekly Wonderings discussions about identity and belonging, and expanded young boys/girls of color affinity groups
- a new, dynamic numbered day schedule including more world language instruction in the early years
- the introduction of Orton Gillingham
- "Grade Brigade" committee examining report cards, assessments
- "Saints Behavin'" committee looking at Responsive Classroom and social emotional programming
- student-centered campus redesign and renovations



## Position Description

### Lower School Director Position Overview

Reporting directly to the Head of School, the Lower School Director serves on the senior administrative team and shares the responsibility for setting the strategic vision for and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the division. The Lower School Director works in a highly collaborative environment, particularly with the Associate Lower School Director, Lower School Counselor, faculty leaders, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Director of Service Learning and External Engagement, and the Director of Teaching and Learning, to support division-wide work on co-curricular and curricular programming, student wellbeing, faculty and staff hiring, and faculty growth and development. The Lower School Director sets the tone for the division, reflecting high professional and academic standards, integrity, and a commitment to our mission “to pursue goodness as well as knowledge and to honor the unique value of each of our members as a child of God in a caring community.” The successful candidate will be a proven educator and leader who finds joy in working with young children and possesses the vision, creativity, and organizational skills to lead a highly-skilled faculty and staff. The candidate will be a master teacher with excellent written and oral communication skills. He or she will employ best practices and possess excellent administrative experience and professional preparation, including an advanced degree.



## Lower School Director Role

The Lower School Director collaborates with other key administrators to run and manage the Lower School, so many responsibilities are shared. Below are ones that are mainly the purview of the Lower School Director:

- setting the strategic vision of the Lower School in regard to curricular and non-curricular programs
- leading an administrative team that consists of the Director, Associate Director, Lower School Counselor/ Director of Counseling, and Early Years Coordinator
- serving as a member of the Small Advisory Group of key administrators who work closely with the Head of School to help implement the strategic vision of the school
- working with school-wide administrators Director of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Director of Service Learning and External Engagement, Director of Teaching and Learning, Associate Head of School, Director of Lower School Admissions) and faculty leaders (Team Leaders, Director of Mathematics, Literacy Coordinators) to collaborate in effecting curricular and school change
- creating and overseeing the Lower School budget
- managing parent engagement
- working closely with Lower School administrative assistants to support the division's programs, faculty, and families
- playing a leadership role in Campus Master Planning in conjunction with the Chief Operating Officer
- collaborating with Communications Team to promote Lower School highlights on social media



### Important Qualities/Characteristics of Lower School Director Candidates

- joyful
- creative: someone who can think outside of the box and has a “why not?” attitude; growth mindset
- patient, kind, honest, supportive, empathetic
- possesses an understanding of the teacher’s perspective and what it is like to be in a classroom. Also, an understanding of teachers as people and a knowing that their personal lives matter.
- skillful communicator and collaborator, including the ability to directly communicate and provide information (even difficult news) to the entire staff

- a good listener, facilitating opportunities for feedback and hearing and incorporating what is shared
- an anticipator: a leader who is adept at anticipating issues that may arise and addresses them/facilitates creative problem solving
- the ability to support teachers while holding them accountable professionally
- a good sense of humor is key
- a solid understanding of both early childhood and upper elementary education
- love of young children
- the ability to see all community members for who they are and the unique gifts they bring to the lower school



### Important Experience/Expertise of Lower School Director Candidates

- extensive administrative experience (such as serving as a Lower School Director)
- has had different roles within a school community and understands how the connect
- expertise in child development ranging from early childhood to upper elementary
- is well versed in DEIB work/leadership and understands that it is crucial that it transfer to the classroom
- has experience with the academic support of students with a range of learning differences
- has experience mentoring teachers on how to grow as well as navigate tricky situations

## Opportunity Statement

### Lower School Strengths

The Lower School is a vibrant, joyful division. Faculty, staff, students and families find it to be a positive environment where everyone feels welcome. The following strengths are of note:

- **Joyful:** The Lower School campus is a joyful place where children and faculty/staff feel happy and safe, smile and greet one another, and want the best for all the children. It is truly a magical place to work and to learn!
- **Nurtures the Whole Child:** The community embodies our Mission to value “goodness as well as knowledge” while attending to the academic, artistic, athletic, and spiritual needs and gifts of our students.
- **Child-centered:** When decisions are made about daily routines and schedules of students—whether about classroom learning or outdoor playtime—the child is at the center.
- **Inclusive:** The Lower School is committed to creating an environment and curriculum that embraces diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. The work in this area is focused, multi-pronged, and ongoing.
- **Supportive:** Everyone who works at the Lower School campus is genuinely willing to help other community members. People have a strong work-life balance and respect one another.
- **Community-centered:** Our commitment to DEIB work and service, our love for the students and their families, and our dedication to meeting each child where they are and lifting them up helps to create a positive, affirming community.
- **Faculty/Staff:** Our Lower School educators are creative, dedicated, collaborative, flexible, and constantly examining ways to improve their practice. They share their gifts of earnest



- hearts, passions, positive energy, and sense of humor to inspire and nurture their students.
- **Saints Families:** Students and families who are a part of SSSAS are an amazing group, and the Lower School students are genuinely excited to learn and participate in all that SSSAS has to offer. Families believe in and trust the faculty and administration and partner in living the Mission of the school.
- **Culture:** We enjoy longstanding school traditions, yet are open to looking at what we do with fresh eyes and multiple perspectives.
- **Curriculum:** We utilize strong curricula/approaches (Math in Focus, Responsive Classroom, Orton Gillingham, etc.) guided by our learning principles, with each teacher having some measure of autonomy to meet the needs of the particular students in one’s class.
- **Campus:** The campus is spacious and beautiful, with a lot of outdoor space where students can be in nature and play.
- **Resources:** Faculty members have ample resources to equip their classrooms with excellent tools of teaching and learning.

## Lower School Challenges

The Lower School faculty and staff are always reflecting on their practice with an eye towards growth. The following are of note:

- **Academic Consistency and Rigor:** The Lower School is working on consistent academic rigor from grade to grade, and within grade levels themselves. This necessitates a common understanding of curricular standards, ensuring that certain concepts are consistently being taught in each class.
- **Homeroom/Specials Connections:** It is important to systematically examine this relationship in order to foster collaboration and marry the needs and desires of homeroom teachers and specials teachers, not only with curricular opportunities but also with schedules and logistical matters.
- **Managing Growth:** The addition of classes (Age 3, JK, K/1 sections) poses challenges with how to use space creatively to be sure all the students have access to programming and facilities throughout the day (i.e., lunchroom, bathrooms, specials classes). It will also be important to maintain good communication and build bridges to connect teachers and families across the Lower School division.
- **Student Assessment and Support:** We need to continue to develop systems and use tools to consistently assess student skills and understanding across all grade levels. It is important to explore how we are serving the diverse needs of our students and which resources may be necessary to meet these needs.
- **DEIB Work:** The Lower School is on a positive (yet challenging) journey of ensuring this work is implemented community-wide and there is clear messaging about what this looks like to families.





## Lower School Opportunities

As the Lower School faculty and staff reflect upon both strengths and challenges the following as opportunities are of note:

- **Curriculum:** Our curriculum is becoming more diverse and relevant to the world we live in today, and we want to see this work continue to shape and develop our curriculum and flourish at every grade level, in every single classroom. Also, there were seeds of the possibility of interdisciplinary planning time planted in the past, and there is a desire to continue with this work.
- **Technology:** The Lower School has abundant technology resources with many creative applications. There are even more opportunities for greater individualized instruction and practice using technology.

- **Learning Resource:** With the examination that is going on in this area, there is potential for a broader resource program that is able to better support the needs of our students and faculty.
- **Community Building:** There are opportunities to promote interaction between and among students in different grade levels- reading together, playing math games together, sharing projects. Also, we can create a distinct Early Learning Center approach that would connect the early grades in philosophy, curriculum, etc.
- **Innovation:** Given the strength and flexibility of the faculty, there is great potential for creativity, risk-taking, and “outside the box” thinking to take further hold.

**TO APPLY:** Please submit a cover letter and resume to:

John Faubert, [jfaubert@carneysandoe.com](mailto:jfaubert@carneysandoe.com) and

Namita Bhattacharya, [ntb@carneysandoe.com](mailto:ntb@carneysandoe.com)

*Please do not contact the school directly.*

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SSSAS:** Please visit [ssas.org](http://ssas.org)