



# WEBB SCHOOL OF KNOXVILLE

Knoxville, Tennessee

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**PRESIDENT**

Start Date: July 2023

[webbschool.org](http://webbschool.org)



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

# Webb School

## OF KNOXVILLE

### MISSION

*The mission of Webb School is to inspire and nurture the full potential of each individual and to prepare our students to serve as leaders of character in tomorrow's world.*

### KEY VALUES

*The mission is supported and achieved by the School's key values:*

- *The pursuit of academic excellence*
- *A strong sense of honor and personal integrity*
- *The development of critical, creative, and socially conscious thinking*
- *A culture of interacting with others in a respectful and productive manner in a vibrant, caring community*

### OVERVIEW

As one of the leading college preparatory institutions in the Southeast, Webb School of Knoxville produces graduates primed for future leadership and success. Through a personalized approach to educating students focused on the whole child, Webb offers a rigorous, student-centered educational experience to a diverse student body of approximately 1,000 students Pre-K-12. The school places emphasis on character and integrity as well as on academic knowledge and skills. Graduates leave Webb intellectually, emotionally, and ethically prepared to thrive in college and beyond with the lifelong purpose of active participation in global citizenship. This was Robert Webb's vision and hope when he founded the school with a handful of students in 1955.

Webb's commitment to excellence is enviable and palpable. An experienced, talented, and dedicated faculty seek to inspire students as they discover their full potential in an environment that celebrates their individual strengths and promotes a community of learners. A strong sense of community, mutual support and respect, and strong bonds characterize this learning community that is moving confidently and energetically toward its next decade of operation.

## AT A GLANCE

**Founded: 1955**

**Total students: 1,075**

**Total faculty: 97**

**Faculty with advanced degrees: 73%**

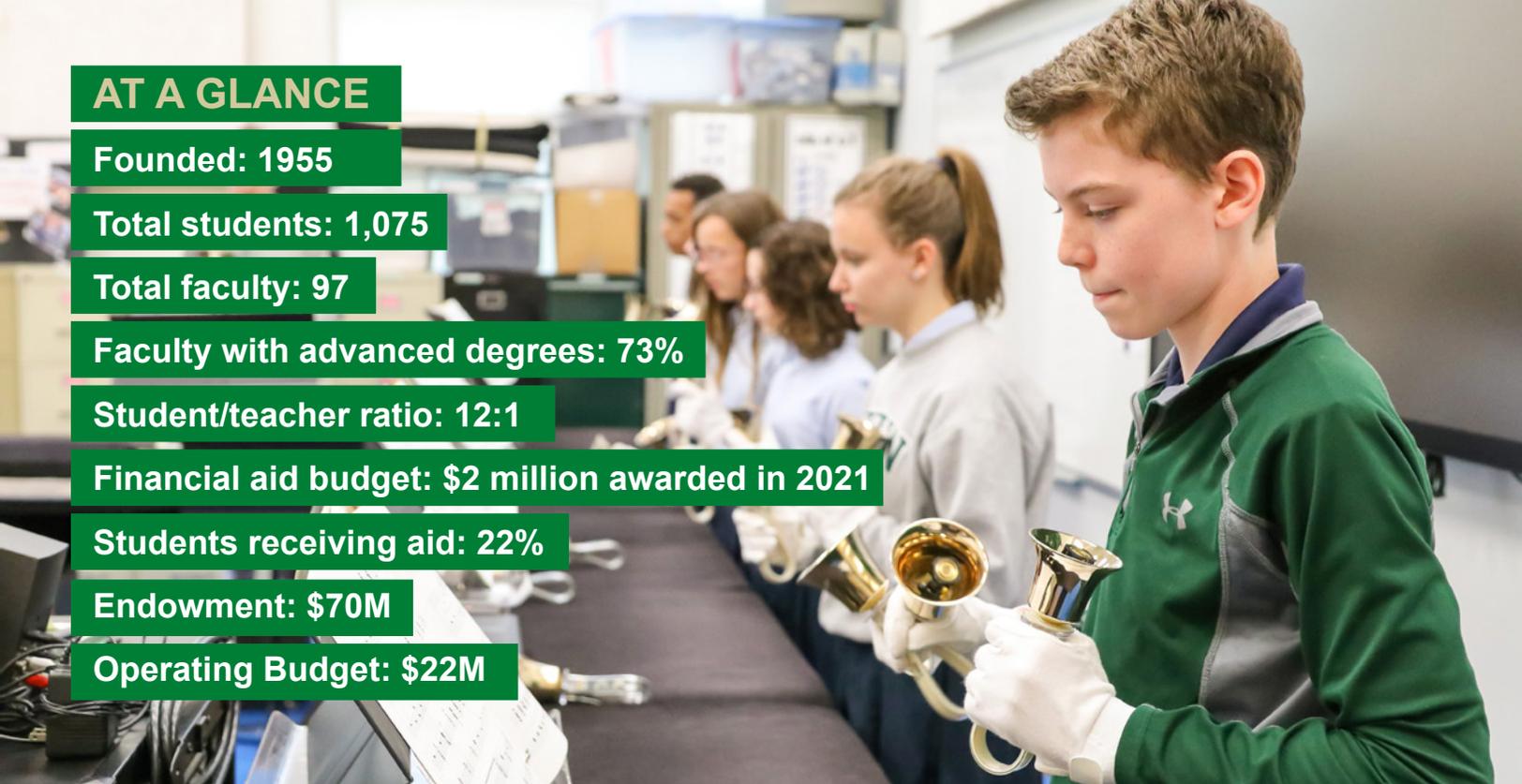
**Student/teacher ratio: 12:1**

**Financial aid budget: \$2 million awarded in 2021**

**Students receiving aid: 22%**

**Endowment: \$70M**

**Operating Budget: \$22M**



Webb is seeking in its next leader an educator who embodies the best aspects of Webb: leadership, vision, tradition, and excellence. The next President, effective July 2023, will be an experienced leader who connects deeply with the school's mission and programs and who can develop and guide the school's next strategic vision, continue to enhance the curriculum and campus, and inspire and support Webb's faculty and students. The school has achieved notable positive momentum as an institution with sound governance, market dominance, and innovative programming that adds richness and depth to its core curriculum. The successful candidate will enjoy playing an integral role in continuing to shape Webb academically, culturally, physically, and financially; the future for the school is indeed bright, and the key building blocks are in place for long-term success.

## SCHOOL HISTORY

Founded by Bob and Julie Webb, Webb School of Knoxville fulfilled Bob's dream of founding a school in his hometown that emphasized honor, academic excellence, a strong foundation in the liberal arts, and the building of character and leadership. Webb School began as a boy's school with four students meeting in a room at Sequoyah Hills Presbyterian Church in Knoxville. After its second year, Webb admitted its first female students and relocated to the old Staub School where the University of Tennessee's aquatic center now stands.

Through succeeding decades, enrollment grew steadily. The school moved to an expansive property west of town where Knoxville continues to grow today. New facilities and fields were continually built and updated, and a lower school opened in 1998, followed by other projects, including the athletic and science centers, an outdoor theater, and an international center. In fall of 2014, Webb dedicated the new Haslam Center, a multipurpose facility with a new Lower School gymnasium as well as studios for dance, broadcasting, robotics, and other activities.



Today, Webb School of Knoxville is one of the leading college preparatory schools in the Southeast, and the only private, independent Pre-K-12th grade school within a 100 mile radius of Knox County. The broad curriculum, along with a wide range of athletic, arts, service learning, clubs, and international study programs, prepares Webb students to enter the nation's finest colleges and universities and to lead honorable and fulfilling lives. *As the only Independent school of its kind in the immediate area, Webb offers a welcoming and supportive atmosphere where students and families from diverse backgrounds and belief systems feel valued.* Graduates have felt well-prepared for higher education, and parents seem unanimous in their appreciation for the attention, support, and engagement their children experienced from faculty along their educational journeys.

## THE SCHOOL

For nearly 70 years, Webb has aspired to prepare students to serve as leaders in a rapidly changing world. To do so, Webb provides a student-centered, well-rounded education that emphasizes rigorous academics and dynamic extracurricular activities, enhanced by global travel opportunities and innovative signature programs. Such opportunities are intended to expose students to a broader frame of reference and different perspectives, empowering them to step outside their comfort zone and discover new talents and passions. In addition to the school's robust program offerings, students receive ample leadership and community engagement opportunities in which they develop critical personal skills that extend beyond textbooks, such as honor, integrity, and compassion.

Webb School's Honor Code, *I will not lie, cheat, or steal — nor tolerate those who do*, is based on the premise that every student has a fundamental right to be trusted and to have his or her word accepted at all times and by all people. In order for each student to have this right, all must accept the covenant not to lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate this behavior in anyone else at the school. The atmosphere of mutual trust between students and faculty at Webb is fundamental to the community and enriches the lives of all who work and study here. It is freeing in many ways and has helped produce a culture of mutual respect, support, warmth, and care one feels on campus. Each division offers age-appropriate activities that allow students to learn about and reflect upon the importance of honorable behavior.



The Honor Code, embraced by students of all ages, is the foundation for a life of honor, integrity, and a strong moral compass.

The Webb School of Knoxville enjoys tremendous support and participation from an active network of over 5,200 alumni, many of whom report that the school positively impacted their lives and the directions they took for their futures. Webb also benefits from a committed volunteer Board of Trustees who serve to preserve the school's mission, act as the financial fiduciary of the school, and hire, support, and evaluate the President. The school is concluding a seven-year strategic plan developed in 2016 that focused on: Delivering tailored solutions (differentiated instruction); developing global perspectives; and driving entrepreneurial methods. This focused strategy has served as the foundation for the subsequent programmatic, facilities, and fundraising priorities of the school, paving the way for the *Reimagining Extraordinary* a capital campaign (2018-2020); the opening of new facilities (2020), including a Middle School Innovation Center, and Upper School Learning Commons, and additional and renovated space in the Central Building; the enhancement of the athletic program, owing to Webb's move to a higher level interscholastic division; and the first endowed faculty chair, the Entrepreneur in Residence (2021). The next President has the opportunity (and expectation) to shepherd Webb's continued enhancement of all facets of school life following the development of the next strategic plan.

The President of the school is the head of school, charged with the responsibility of interpreting and translating the policy guidelines set forth by the Board into operational procedures. Authority is delegated to the President by the Board for the day-to-day operation of the school. Retiring in June of 2023, Michael McBrien will have led Webb as President for eight years. He arrived in Knoxville from the headship at TASIS England. He previously served as Head of School at Baylor School in Chattanooga and Frontier Academy in Greeley, Colorado.

Webb School of Knoxville is accredited by the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) and a proud member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).



## ACADEMICS

Parents, faculty, and alums prize the school's academic excellence first, followed by its strong sense of community, committed teachers and the strong bonds between students and faculty. Webb's developmentally responsive curriculum provides dynamic learning activities that allow students to grow in confidence and excel. Through a balance of content mastery and skill development, students are fully equipped to thrive in their next exciting learning opportunity. Class sizes are intentionally small to foster the close student-teacher relationships that are essential for successful learning. Graduates exit Webb School as critical and creative thinkers adept at navigating complex issues. Indicative of this desire to expand the critical thinking mindset throughout the K-12 experience is the school's entrepreneurship program in the upper grades. Webb is currently the only college preparatory school in the country authorized to use the Harvard Business School Case Study Program.

### **The Lower School (Pre-K – Grade 5)**

The structured, engaging, and nurturing environment in the Lower School provides a safe haven for active learners, teaching them to think critically and to take intellectual risks. Building on the young student's natural curiosity, teachers emphasize the appeal and fun of learning, aiming to provoke wonder and instilling a life-long love for discovery. The curriculum focuses on foundational content and skill development and offers a balance of teacher-led instruction and student-directed investigation allowing children to become responsible, engaged learners.

Lower School students are immersed in hands-on curriculum, project-based learning opportunities where they learn to collaborate and cooperate with one another while they have fun. Teachers focus particular attention on the acquisition of language and problem-solving skills, developed in the context of an interdisciplinary approach, engaging students in literacy, mathematics, and social studies, along with art, music, physical education, science, and Spanish.



The development of critical and creative thinking and the acquisition of reading and numerical skills are complemented by a focus on helping students become caring, good human beings. The Lower School seeks to balance the demands of a competitive college preparatory institution and the basic needs of children in the context of enjoying and celebrating childhood. Recently, Webb added a Lower School Learning Center and a learning specialist to more adequately support the range of learners.

As students in the distinctive and set-apart “Fifth Grade Academy” prepare to transition to the Middle School, they fully embrace ownership of how they learn through the Creative Genius Initiative. This program gives fifth grade students the chance to independently research and showcase a topic of their choosing, empowering them to build confidence, develop critical thinking skills, and pursue interests as they take the lead in their education.

### **The Middle School (Grades 6-8)**

Amazing transformations transpire at Webb Middle School. Students grow into independent learners, responsible citizens, abstract thinkers and problem-solvers, collaborative learning partners, and empathetic leaders through thoughtful programming intentionally designed to meet the needs of growing adolescents.

A strong advisory program at the Middle School level ensures that each student has access to an adult who is attentive to his or her overall development. Faculty members form strong partnerships with parents, providing a cohesive support network that aids students in all aspects of their changing lives.



As they enter the Middle School, students move from a homeroom-based environment to a departmentalized setting and gain new responsibilities and access to different subjects and areas of learning. Middle School students' coursework includes composition, literature, social studies, math, science, and world languages (selecting from French, Spanish, or Latin). Students also pursue study in art, music, study skills, and physical education.

An innovative and talented faculty creates an engaging learning environment that is appropriately challenging. Small class sizes and frequent group work promote collaboration and communication, and a longstanding iPad program supports student learning. Each year, students gain hands-on learning experiences through week-long field trips to camps in North Carolina in sixth and seventh grade to study outdoor education and biology, respectively, and to Washington, D.C. in eighth grade, where American history comes to life. As students engage more deeply in academic initiatives, Webb's values of integrity, character, and honesty continue to be upheld. Teachers seek to help students internalize a sense that it is "always the right time to do the right thing."

### **The Upper School (Grades 9-12)**

Upper School life at Webb is both inspirational and aspirational with innovative, comprehensive programs tailored to match students' individual strengths and interests. Students are motivated to learn, serve, and lead as they seek and embrace challenges.

Students complete coursework in English, math, science, social studies, world languages, world religions, and visual and performing arts. Community service initiatives promote leadership skills, character development, and commitment to civic responsibility. Each year, students are required to complete minimum grade-level service requirements, gaining exposure to a variety of service opportunities throughout their years in the Upper School. Students come to know that the school expects their best, not only in the classroom and on the court, field, or stage, but also in their citizenship, service to their community, and respect for others.



## COLLEGE COUNSELING

Rather than the culmination of our students' journey, Webb's Upper School is a beginning. Students benefit from 25 Advanced Placement Courses and Honors classes as well as a wide array of experiential programs including the Webb MD, Entrepreneurial Methods, Research Fellows, STEAM initiatives, 40-plus fine and performing arts courses, and a global education initiative, all of which lay the groundwork for the next successful business leader, artist, doctor, teacher, or scientist. Serving as an anchor point in the school day, the Chapel program requires each sophomore and senior to deliver a speech to the student body, creating confident and clear communicators. Whatever path they choose, students leave Webb School poised to make their mark on the world.

Webb School's college counseling program is designed to assist each student in meeting his or her developmental needs and in planning and implementing occupational goals beginning with a strengths assessment in eighth grade and progressing through the formal college counseling process which begins junior year.

## THE ARTS

The visual and performing arts program at Webb enhances expression and imagination. Students learn to observe and interpret the world through a unique lens. The dynamic roster of arts opportunities helps set the stage for students to discover and develop their passions and self-confidence. Creativity is unleashed as they produce and perform from a young age.

## COLLEGE MATRICULATION

Students from the classes of 2017-2021 matriculated at the following colleges and universities, among many:

American University  
Baylor University  
Boston College  
Boston University  
Bryn Mawr College  
Clemson University  
Colby College  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Dartmouth College  
DePaul University  
Duke University  
Elon University  
Furman University  
George Washington University  
Georgetown University  
Johns Hopkins University  
Lee University  
Middlebury College  
New York University  
Northeastern University  
Pepperdine University  
Purdue University  
Rhodes College  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Savannah College of Art and Design  
Syracuse University  
United States Military Academy  
University of Alabama  
University of Chicago  
University of Miami  
University of Tennessee  
Villanova University  
Wake Forest University  
Xavier University  
Yale University



Beginning in the Lower School students are introduced to resources, techniques, and basic art elements. Artistic development continues to a greater degree as students get older. Visual and performing arts classes become core courses to allow for more in-depth examination.

An exploratory program in sixth grade exposes students to a broader menu of arts offerings, allowing students to make a more informed decision when the arts elective program is introduced the following year. Elective arts courses, beginning in seventh grade and continuing through eighth grade, include strings, band, chorus, handbells, art, and drama. Students benefit from experienced faculty, many of whom are practicing artists. Musical and theatrical performances and opportunities to enter regional art contests are highlights for many Middle School students.

In the Upper School the art program connects students to historical, diverse cultures, while cultivating courage and creativity. Students learn to stretch and take risks in both personal and collaborative work. Students have opportunities to perform on campus, around Knoxville, and across the country. Participation in competitions and performances on stage at national conferences highlight the individual and collective talents.

Webb's [Artist-In-Residence program](#) introduces students to artists from across the United States and abroad. The four-to-six-week on-campus learning and teaching experience offers young people a glimpse into the real world of art by exposing them to professional artists, their work, and their perspectives. During their tenure, artists lead class projects, critique student work, mount an exhibition, and continue their own studio practice.



Hosted on campus each spring, the ArtXtravaganza art show and sale is an annual celebration of the arts and community. The three-day event boasts over 60 professional artists from around the Southeast and beyond. Proceeds from ArtXtravaganza fund Webb’s Artist-in-Residence program and support the school’s visual and performing arts. ArtXtravaganza also features a student exhibition that allows the local community to experience the work of our budding artists. The Upper School spring theater production is often held that same weekend.

## ATHLETICS

Athletics play an integral role in the Webb experience. They are an extension of the classrooms where dynamic growth transpires; Webb athletics enable students to continue to learn about hard work, perseverance, and dedication toward a goal. Fielding 20 varsity sports and numerous others, Webb School has a proud history of successful teams, and boasts 76 state championships in 14 different sports. Many Spartan graduates have gone on to play at the collegiate level as well as professionally. Over 70 percent of Webb students play on athletic teams – developing strength of body and mind, building their character, and enhancing their athletic skills.

Athletes benefit from state-of-the-art facilities including six playing fields, three gyms, an eight-lane track, an indoor and outdoor tennis complex, and two fitness/weight training rooms and expansive field space. Teams include cross country, field hockey, football, golf, soccer, tennis, volleyball, basketball, bowling, dance, cheerleading, swimming and diving, wrestling, baseball, lacrosse, softball, and track.

Plans are on track to break ground for an Elite Performance Fitness and Training and an Indoor Pitching and Hitting Facility in summer of 2022, a new turf field, and further enhancements to current facilities. Webb competes with a range of public, parochial, and independent schools.



## SCHOOL LIFE

One experiences a powerful sense of community across Webb's campus as students connect, explore, and learn in ways that prepare- them to enter a complex, diverse world. With over 70 clubs and activities across all three divisions, community service and global studies programs, as well as strong parent engagement through events and workshops, students have abundant opportunities to explore their passions, give back to the community, and make friends. Students acknowledge, appreciate, and readily embrace the myriad opportunities the school offers them.

In the Lower School students assemble daily for morning Community Meeting, where they recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the Lower School Creed, and listen to announcements and speakers. The division further emphasizes community and collaboration through its "FAMILIES" program, which combines a faculty member with at least one student from every grade. Lower School FAMILIES meet once a month for a planned activity, fostering connections and friendships that transcend grade levels. In Middle School, an eighth-grade student leads Morning Assembly each day, making announcements, leading recitation of the Middle School Pledge, and concluding with a personally-selected quote of the day.

Clubs play a significant role in the development of Webb students, allowing them to explore their interests outside of academics and gain leadership skills. Lower School programs include chess club, cub scouts, girl scouts, homework helpers, Mandarin Chinese, orchestra, running, tennis, theatre workshop, and ukulele. The Middle and Upper Schools provide a myriad of clubs and activities as leadership opportunities abound including robotics, multicultural student alliance, philanthropic investment group, W.O.W. Network-Sports broadcasting, and youth in government. The evolving House System (begun in 2020) in the Middle and Upper Schools is intended to provide connection, continuity, and collaboration across grades during each student's secondary school experience.



The school is committed to serve its community and develop socially responsible leaders that positively impact the lives of others. Through Lower and Middle Schools, students progressively participate in both service projects and service learning. A sense of civic responsibility grows stronger as students reach the Upper School. Many students dedicate their service efforts to a specific organization or initiative and easily surpass the 15-hour service requirement per grade. Much of the work has a true service-learning focus as students delve deeper into why a situation has transpired and how they can be part of a long-term solution. Community service at Webb propels students to emerge as leaders creating positive change at the local, national, and global level.

Learning is not confined to the campus at Webb. The Global Education Program is a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to understanding international concepts, cultures, and perspectives – fostering global competency and encouraging students to engage and respond empathetically to issues of international significance. Experiences include exchange programs, hosting international students, as well as global travel programs. Past trips have included France, India, Dominican Republic, South Africa, Italy, Iceland, China, Spain, Taiwan, New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom, just to name a few.

## CAMPUS

Webb's expansive 114-acre campus provides leading-edge facilities for the growth of all students. Each division occupies a separate section of the campus, connected by the main quad, clock tower and a central building housing admissions, the cafeteria, and administrative offices including that of the President. The campus also features an impressive science center, the international center, a 550-seat performing arts center, two libraries, three technology labs, three separate visual arts facilities, and dedicated classrooms for strings, instrumental, choral, and general music. Webb's campus also includes three gymnasiums, six athletic fields, two strength training facilities, an outdoor track, outdoor swimming pool, wrestling room, and indoor and outdoor tennis facilities. This Spring Webb dedicated the new 4,500-square-foot Middle School Governor's Center for Innovation offering cutting-edge spaces to guide students through the cycle of innovation from theory to practical application. All the newly built and renovated facilities equip students with leading resources for exploration and engagement.



## KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

Now the third-largest city in Tennessee, Knoxville was settled in 1786 and served as the state's original capital. In 1933, the U.S. Government founded the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to help create jobs, attract manufacturing, and provide electricity for the region, and Knoxville remains home to TVA's headquarters. In 1982, the city hosted the World's Fair and welcomed 11 million visitors. Over the past several decades, the city has focused on developing its economy and reshaping its downtown area. The Women's Basketball Hall of Fame and Knoxville Convention Center opened, and Knoxville has redeveloped Market Square and built a new visitors center and regional history museum while supporting a variety of restaurants and hotels. In 2011, Kiplinger ranked Knoxville at number five in its list of Best Values Cities, specifically highlighting the city's college sports fervor, proximity to the Smoky Mountains, and "entrepreneurial spirit." Beyond the marketing, Knoxville has seen families from all parts of the country move to and settle in the area, known for a modest cost of living, abundant natural beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities, as well as an urban wilderness, a vibrant research university, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and a thriving and growing business community and economy.

One of the largest cities along the Appalachians, Knoxville is a gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the nation's most-visited national park where among many activities one finds camping, fishing, hiking, rock climbing, and whitewater kayaking. Typical Knoxville weather features warm summers and cool winters, and its higher elevations provide relief from some of the hotter temperatures to the south and west of the city. Long a manufacturing center, Knoxville currently focuses on advanced manufacturing marked by significant technological advances and scientific breakthroughs. The city's digital design community is also now well-established.



A rich arts community – particularly a vibrant bluegrass and country music scene – can be found in Knoxville. The Knoxville Symphony Orchestra is the oldest continuing orchestra in the South and performs at the Tennessee Theatre, the Bijou Theatre, and the Civic Auditorium. Knoxville hosts several annual arts festivals, including the 17-day Dogwood Arts Festival each April. Residents cheer on teams from the University of Tennessee, whose flagship campus enhances life in Knoxville. 22 other post-secondary educational institutions also have campuses in the region. The city is also home to the Knoxville Ice Bears hockey team and the Tennessee Smokies Baseball Club, the Chicago Cubs' AA minor league affiliate. The lively culinary scene has been driven in part by its proximity to culinary and hospitality mecca, Blackberry Farm. Many Blackberry alumni/ae have established their own destinations affording an array of restaurants and breweries, many highlighting the unique food and agriculture of Southern Appalachia. Emerging as a cultural hub, Knoxville was named a top 5 Trending U.S. Tourism Destination in 2020.

Aside from its reputation as a great place to raise a family (something widely acknowledged by both natives and newbies), Knoxville is appreciated for its college town spirit, easy commutes, affordable housing, moderate weather, and welcoming populace. The fourth-largest broadcast center in the U.S. (after New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago), the area is also home to Warner Brothers Discovery, Pilot Flying J, HGTV, Regal Cinemas, Bush's Beans, Covenant Health, and Sea Ray and Mastercraft Boats. Knoxville features a historic downtown on the banks of the Tennessee River; as a city it combines both history and resilience together with inspiring urban revitalization and development.



## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

With sound financials, a strong endowment and reserves, full enrollment, an engaged and wise Board, and a campus to envy, Webb is in a great place as a school. The next President will have numerous educational, strategic, cultural, and operational opportunities that include and are not limited to:

- Continue to knit together all elements of the community Pre-K-12;
- Further the campus master plan;
- Develop a new strategic plan with the community;
- Enhance the school's outreach and messaging to Knox and surrounding counties;
- Move the school forward while preserving the values and character of the school;
- Guide the school into post-COVID recovery;
- Balance the perspectives and voices in the community surrounding key current issues and events;
- Continue to focus on faculty professional development and enrichment;
- Further define Webb's identity, capacity, and educational vision.

## DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Webb has enjoyed strong leadership from its President throughout its history with leaders for whom the role was a first – or another – headship. The qualities sought for the next President most often mentioned by the Board and Search Committee include:

- Team builder;
- Strategic thinker;
- Clear and proactive listener and communicator;
- Decisive yet collaborative decision-maker;
- Visible and engaged as a leader;
- Warm, personable and relational style;
- Effective recruiter and mentor;
- Competitive;
- Diplomatic and fair-minded;
- Authentic and effective ambassador for telling the Webb story.



## 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 expressing interest in this particular position;
- A current and comprehensive résumé (no more than 4 pages);
- A statement of leadership practice or other strong, relevant writing sample;
- A 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*) to:

### **Benjamin L. Bolte**

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