

HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

JOHN BAPST MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Bangor, Maine

johnbapst.org

Start Date: July 2026



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission Statement

John Bapst, an independent, college-preparatory school, cultivates academic excellence and personal growth, encourages exploration of opportunities, and fosters connections in an inclusive and global community.

At a Glance



Established
1928



Total enrollment
500



Financial aid awarded
\$708,000



Campus size
7 acres;
10 buildings



Endowment
\$2.75M



Total faculty
42



Faculty with advanced degrees
72%



Student-teacher ratio
approx. 11:1

Students receiving aid: 16%
Annual operating budget: \$9.4M

AP courses: 25
Interscholastic sports teams: 23



Overview

There is a certain energy at John Bapst, that one recognizes quickly, that supports the school's "Make it Happen" attitude. When one-fifth of the student body participates in the concert band and the choir, the College Board awards the school its highest national honor for the AP program (top 7%), and the school wins as many accolades for the teams in robotics, chess, and math as those in ice hockey and girls' basketball, you know you have an engaged, dynamic community making contributions to all areas of school life. The sterling academic reputation of the school is well-deserved, supported by a talented, experienced faculty, and curious, interested students who choose Bapst with intention, anticipating both the challenges and the opportunities.

The school has enjoyed solid, steady leadership over the last four decades and seeks a new Head of School who can marshal the talents and energies of the school community to continue to build on Bapst's almost century of excellence, shaping an exciting next decade. The school is poised for it. The defining characteristic of John Bapst is its extraordinary sense of community, often described as "a feeling in the air, a feeling like love, and it loves you back." Faculty demonstrate genuine collegiality with willingness to listen to and value each other's expertise. The culture empowers people to contribute meaningfully to solutions rather than simply receiving directives from leadership.

Students actively choose to be at John Bapst and fully embrace the opportunities available to them. The environment encourages mutual support where participation doesn't require being the best performer, and students successfully balance academic and co-curricular pursuits. Cross-grade relationships flourish with seniors welcoming younger students, while student agency thrives through opportunities like club creation. The academic program maintains strength through extensive AP offerings (25), diverse coursework, and dedicated faculty support. Students demonstrate exceptional energy, loyalty, and history with the school, creating possibilities that are "limitless if you apply yourself." Graduates regularly attend top-tier institutions.

Faculty value the professional autonomy and trust they receive in their classrooms, with freedom to teach what and how they wish, while maintaining creative opportunities. The school demonstrates commitment to professional development, rigorous academic standards, and to providing opportunities for all students. International students contribute essential diversity that broadens the Maine experience, and graduates achieve notable academic success with alumni "doing remarkable things all over the world." The school serves as the only northern institution offering an orchestra program, part of the notable balance between arts (one-third of students involved in some way) and athletics, with arts education particularly important to international students. The community demonstrates strong support for all persons, creating an inclusive environment.



Unlike typical public-school environments, John Bapst enjoys authentic buy-in across its entire population with curious, interested students who are excited to learn. Students create a consistently supportive atmosphere where the community actively welcomes and integrates newcomers. The school maintains its reputation as the #1 reason families choose it - academic excellence and college preparation uncommon in Maine. Favorable faculty-to-student ratios in smaller classes provide individualized attention, while students can participate in multiple activities regardless of skill level. The broad community draws students from many towns, fostering new friendships in a very accepting environment.

History

Named for a Swiss Jesuit who went on to become the first president of Boston College, John Bapst High School opened its doors in September 1928 originally as a parochial high school for Bangor-area girls and boys. Catholics in the area from the many parishes of Bangor, Brewer, and other area towns now had church-supported high school education available to their children in a state of the art, new building. Until the 1960's, the school was not really coeducational, as girls and boys entered through separate doorways and attended classes separately. The girls were taught by nuns, the boys by brothers (with some lay teachers, of course), and even the start and end times for school were staggered.

John Bapst offered quality general and religious education to Catholics and non-Catholics alike until 1980, when declining enrollment led the Portland diocese to announce its closure. In the spring and summer of 1980, a group of local people, led by four re-founders whose names are recorded on a special plaque that hangs in the first-floor corridor, managed to save the school. A consortium of banks provided a financial safety net, and the State of Maine approved John Bapst as a nonreligious private school, qualified to receive both publicly tuitioned and private-pay students. The school reopened without missing a beat as John Bapst Memorial High School, and this is the school we know today, almost fifty years into its new identity. As John Bapst's enrollment grew throughout the 1980's and 1990's, the school became something of an academic powerhouse. In the 1990's the early years of the statewide Maine Learning Results testing, John Bapst students often led the state. With more than twenty AP courses taught on campus, a faculty of teacher-leaders, 500+ AP exams administered each year, and an impressive college attendance list, John Bapst is a strong academic school and the only New England town academy (see below) without a specific town. John Bapst's students come from approximately 30 Maine communities, some of which have school choice and some of which do not. The school has an extremely generous financial aid program that incentivizes residents of non-choice towns to consider a John Bapst education.



The most recent major step in John Bapst's evolution came in 2011, when the first 35 international students entered as boarding and homestay students. Two years of study, building acquisition and renovation, and program development preceded that step, and the program grew to its present size (just under 15% of total school enrollment by board policy) bringing cultural and racial diversity.

Campus

The school's primary building occupies most of a city block in an historic residential neighborhood on Broadway, a few blocks from downtown Bangor with walkable access to restaurants, cafes, library, grocery, YMCA, banks, post office.

Built almost a century ago, the striking structure of four floors above and two floors below ground houses all the classrooms, library, labs, offices, auditorium, music and art studios. While slightly quirky, and certainly dated in some ways, faculty and students embrace the building's aura of history, the warmth of its abundant wooden floors, and its sheer mass. It's home.

Five nearby homes have been renovated to house international students (from 15 countries) as well as some domestic boarders, and supervising house parents. Another building to the rear is being prepared to become the school's 2000sf tech center. Across the street, the school's gym and fitness center, completed five years ago, provide not only an excellent practice area for several sports and strength and conditioning for all teams but also exercise/fitness pursuits and social activities. Bapst uses field space in area parks as well as those at Husson College which is close by. The head of school's residence on the next block is a five-bedroom period home with ample living and entertaining space.

A Public-Private

Like a handful of schools in mostly Maine, Vermont, and Connecticut, John Bapst's charter defines it as a town academy, an independent school that also serves as a public-school option for designated surrounding towns. Families in Bangor proper pay tuition for their children to attend Bapst for but 30 area "sending" towns, the tuition is paid by the town for those students whose families reside there and who choose John Bapst as their high school. John Bapst does not "cherry pick;" students choosing to enroll at Bapst do so with enthusiasm for the excellent college preparation, the broader range of opportunities, the smaller class size, and because everyone feels the collective pull in the same direction: college. Students describe it as "a special place," and new students are welcomed with enthusiasm.



Location

Bangor, Maine became established in the mid-19th century with the lumber and shipbuilding industries due to the city's location on the Penobscot River, with access to the Atlantic. Founded as Kenduskeag Plantation in 1791, Bangor was incorporated as a town in 1834. The name Bangor is said to have been taken from a Welsh hymn tune and/or from Bangor, Gwynedd, the oldest city in Wales. It's a city where one feels the historic past through the architecture and setting and which over the last two decades has become a vibrant community of 32,000 with privileged access to the exceptional natural beauty and outdoor activities that Maine offers. US News also ranks Maine as the safest state in America.

The city has a dynamic music and event scene. The Bangor Waterfront hosts an outdoor concert series in the Maine Savings Amphitheater featuring big names in today's pop, rock and country - and the Bangor Symphony Youth Orchestra. Nearby the Cross Insurance Arena can host conventions. Downtown, the historic Bangor Opera House hosts the Penobscot Theatre Company. The Zillman Art Museum University of Maine specializes in modern and contemporary art featuring works by David Hockney, Andy Warhol, Edward Hopper, Pablo Picasso, Marsden Hartley and Winslow Homer. Close to downtown, the lush City Forest has 680 acres of wildlife habitat and forest to explore with more than 9 miles of trails for running, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing available year-round. Many residents take advantage of Acadia National Park (1 hr), Swan Lake, Baxter State Park, and the many rivers, lakes, and notable ski areas.

Bangor's vibrant downtown is surrounded by incredible farming communities, so residents have access to some of the best produce and meats the state has to offer. The city is served by Bangor International Airport with non-stop flights to major East Coast cities, and two large hospitals, the Eastern Maine Medical Center and the Catholic-affiliated St. Joseph Hospital. The state's primary campus of the University of Maine sits nearby as do Beal University, Husson University, and Eastern Maine Community College. Celebrities? Paul Bunyan (born there "allegedly") and Stephen King (whose wife, Tabitha King, a professional writer and philanthropist, is also a Bapst alum).

The Position

The Head of School serves as the visionary and operational leader of the school, championing its mission while fostering a culture of academic excellence, inclusivity, and community engagement. This role guides enrollment, advancement, and resource development to ensure sustainable growth, oversees campus operations with optimism and clarity, and inspires students, faculty, and staff to thrive.



The Head of School leads and mentors the administrative team, ensuring alignment with the school's values while advancing strategic goals through collaborative governance and strong partnerships with the board.

As the school's primary ambassador, the Head of School actively engages with local and global communities, maintains regulatory and accreditation standards, and ensures preparedness and clear communication during crises, safeguarding the well-being and future of the school community. This position requires domestic and international travel in support of recruitment and advancement initiatives.

Opportunities and Challenges

The next Head of School will embrace key opportunities including:

- Strengthen community engagement and communication by building on John Bapst's extraordinary sense of belonging and collaborative culture that faculty and families deeply value.
- Advance financial sustainability through enhanced development initiatives, competitive faculty compensation, and strategic growth of the international boarding program.
- Support academic excellence by enhancing curriculum consistency and maintaining the rigorous standards that send Bapst graduates to top-tier institutions.
- Position John Bapst as the premier college-preparatory destination in Maine, celebrating its unique combination of academic rigor, inclusive community, student engagement, and remarkable student outcomes.
- Lead collaborative strategic planning that harnesses the school's strong alumni network and approaches the exciting opportunity of the 100th anniversary milestone.
- Serve as chief storyteller and enthusiastic advocate, sharing the remarkable daily successes happening across this vibrant learning community.
- Build on John Bapst's welcoming culture while enhancing integration between the valued international community and domestic students.



Leadership and Personal Qualities

The Head of School will bring a successful record as an educator and school leader who has previously served in senior administrative roles of considerable responsibility. Competitive candidates will have classroom experience and will be familiar with strategic planning, change management, program development, management of complex processes, and the day-to-day operations of a thriving 9-12 school. The successful candidate will demonstrate proven ability to unite constituents around shared vision, with experience fostering collaborative relationships and inclusive decision-making, plus strong development and financial leadership experience with success in major donor cultivation and sustainable revenue growth.

The most competitive candidates will offer most or all of the following:

- Advanced degree with proven success as Head of School or senior administrator in independent or mission-driven schools.
- Deep commitment to the school's values with ability to inspire community unity around shared vision and propel enrollment, advancement, and resource development.
- Optimistic, resilient, and principled approach with commitment to developing the whole person in students, faculty, and staff.
- Strong interpersonal skills and transparent communication style with ability to engage all stakeholders while making decisive leadership decisions.
- Track record of elevating academics, arts, athletics, AP programs, technology integration, and college placement while enriching co-curricular offerings.
- Experience developing and enhancing programs through faculty collaboration, including curriculum development and professional growth initiatives.
- Experience with budgeting, financial stewardship, facilities projects, accreditation, and daily operations management with solutions-focused approach.
- Collaborative leadership skills in governance, donor engagement, and representing the school locally and globally while maintaining visible, enthusiastic presence at school events and activities.
- Technological fluency, excellence in academic planning, and ability to create inclusive environments where all community members flourish.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about John Bapst.

[School Website](#)



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 opportunity;
- A current and thorough résumé of no more than four pages;
- A statement of leadership practice;
- Finalists will be asked for 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).

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