



HEADMASTER

Start Date: July 2027

Memphis University School

Memphis, Tennessee | musowls.org



**Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES**

MISSION STATEMENT

Memphis University School is a college-preparatory school dedicated to academic excellence, cultivation of service and leadership, and the development of well-rounded young men of strong moral character, consistent with the school's Christian tradition.

At a Glance

 **610**

enrollment

 **30%**

students of color

 **132**

total employees

 **71%**

faculty with
advanced degrees

 **\$21.3M**

annual operating budget

 **~\$60M**

endowment

– campaign commitments will
bring total to over \$100 million

 **31%** students
receiving need-based aid

 **105k**
square-foot

Arts and Sciences Center
will open in Spring 2027



OVERVIEW

Founded in 1893, Memphis University School (MUS) stands as one of the South's most respected independent schools, dedicated to developing well-rounded young men of strong moral character, intellectual curiosity, and service-minded leadership. Rooted in a tradition of truth and honor, MUS serves approximately 610 boys in Grades 6-12 on a 94-acre campus in East Memphis. It is a community defined by integrity, scholarship, and camaraderie – where every boy is known, challenged, and inspired to achieve beyond what he thought possible.

The school's Community Creed and Honor Code form the moral heart of MUS life, guiding students to tell the truth, uphold commitments, and respect one another in a spirit of accountability and humility. These values permeate every aspect of school culture, from rigorous academics and championship athletics to the arts, chapel gatherings, and civic engagement. The Civic Service Organization (CSO), one of the largest student groups on campus, provides students with abundant opportunities to serve others and learn the joy of giving back. Through this distinctive combination of scholarship, leadership, and service, MUS continues to produce graduates who are not only accomplished scholars but also honorable men devoted to the common good.

The faculty is characterized by exceptional experience and loyalty – averaging 24 years of teaching and 14 years at the school – and teachers embody the same devotion they seek to cultivate in their students. Their deep expertise, spirit, and high expectations create an environment where intellectual challenge and personal growth coexist. They encourage students to think deeply, write clearly, and act honorably, whether in the classroom, the rehearsal hall, or on the playing field. A renewed commitment to the arts and thoughtful evolution in curriculum and instruction ensure that the MUS program remains both timeless and forward-looking.



Sixty percent of MUS alumni return to Memphis after college, improving and investing in their hometown, serving as leaders in a wide range of corporate and community organizations, and contributing meaningful economic, intellectual, and philanthropic capital in the city. Memphis University School students benefit from this deep, loyal, and generous alumnus body and from the school's rich partnership with the city of Memphis. Indeed, the school's commitment to the city is significant – from 7,000 student CSO volunteer hours per year, to over 670 seats held by local alumni on nonprofit boards, to shared facilities and philanthropic endeavors – and the MUS headmaster plays a vital role in nurturing the success of both the school and the city.

Today, MUS stands at a moment of extraordinary promise. The Bold Vision, Bright Future campaign, the most ambitious in the school's history, has already raised over \$110 million of its \$200 million goal to fund major campus transformation and endowment growth. \$50 million of that total is committed to the endowment, which will bring the value of the fund to over \$100 million in the coming years. A new 105,000-square-foot Arts and Sciences Center is under construction and will open in spring 2027, to be followed by a Library and Technology Center, a new Lower School facility (for Grades 6-8), and updated athletics facilities. As these projects reshape the physical campus, they also represent a broader opportunity to reaffirm the enduring MUS mission: to form men of character, compassion, and competence who will lead with distinction in Memphis and beyond.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next headmaster will join a mission-driven community with a rich history, a loyal alumni network, and a deep sense of purpose. Working in partnership with a dedicated Board of Trustees, an expert faculty, and an engaged parent community, the headmaster will guide MUS into its next era of excellence. Specific opportunities and challenges include:

- **Completing the Bold Vision Bright Future campaign** by sustaining the momentum of a transformative \$200 million capital and endowment initiative that will expand facilities, strengthen programs, and secure the school's financial future.
- **Leading with clarity and balance through a period of transition and renewal**, ensuring that construction projects and new facilities align with the timeless MUS mission and educational values.
- **Advancing faculty recruitment, retention, and professional growth**, maintaining the school's long-standing academic excellence while cultivating a culture of continuous improvement and professional learning.



architectural rendering of Arts and Sciences Center



- **Sustaining strong enrollment and strategic recruitment**, particularly following the recent addition of the sixth grade, while deepening connections with Memphis-area families and feeder schools.
- **Championing student life, arts, and athletics** – supporting an evolving program and ensuring that competition, creativity, and character development remain mutually reinforcing.
- **Reinforcing the school's position as a pillar of the Memphis community**, strengthening existing community partnerships, establishing new partnerships, and nurturing and leveraging relationships with Memphis-area alumni and other civic leaders.
- **Managing the evolving landscape of independent school athletics and college admissions**, guiding MUS through external shifts while maintaining integrity and perspective.
- **Balancing tradition and innovation**, ensuring that MUS continues to evolve thoughtfully – embracing best practices, evolving pedagogies, collaborations with other schools, and technology – while preserving the school's distinctive spirit and honor-driven culture.
- **Nurturing an inclusive and connected community** that honors the school's Christian foundation while welcoming diverse perspectives and fostering a shared sense of belonging among students, faculty, and families.



“

MUS is a place that demands more than you think you can give. It raises the bar of what you can accomplish.

- MUS student leader

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QUALIFICATIONS & PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

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



Strategic and Mission-Aligned Leader

- A deep understanding of and appreciation for the joys and compelling qualities of a multidivisional school that nurtures the development of young men;
- Personal and professional alignment with the school's mission and a leadership style rooted in commitments to academic excellence, honor and integrity, and service;
- The courage to make challenging choices while upholding the highest standards of integrity and embodying the school's values; and
- A history of thoughtful innovation moderated by a skillful and sensitive approach to change.



Community Leader

- Eagerness to engage actively with employees, students, alumni, and parents, and willingness to prioritize relationships amidst the demands of a busy professional schedule;
- A leadership style that is collaborative whenever possible and decisive when necessary, built on approachability, responsiveness, and transparent communication;
- A commitment to honoring and balancing multiple perspectives in order to maintain an authentic, inclusive community; and
- Enthusiasm to strengthen existing community partnerships, establish new partnerships, and connect meaningfully with the city of Memphis.





Fiscal Steward and Operational Leader

- Classroom teaching experience, the “heart of a teacher,” and deep appreciation for the daily work of faculty;
- Depth of experience in enrollment management, school operations, governance, and strategic planning;
- Strong fundraising capabilities and the ability to serve as an ambassador for Memphis University School in the broader community; and
- Significant experience recruiting, hiring, managing, and developing adults in complex organizations.



LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)
- [School History](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [School Profile](#)
- [About Memphis, Tennessee](#)





TO APPLY



Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible and to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing interest in this position
- A current résumé

As the process moves forward, selected candidates may be asked to submit:

- Writing samples specific to this search
- 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)

Candidates should submit a résumé and cover letter to:

JAMIE ESTES

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