Oregon Episcopal School

HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL

Start Date: July 2027

Oregon Episcopal School

Portland, Oregon | oes.edu

Carney Sandoe & ASSOCIATES

carneysandoe.com

MISSION STATEMENT

Oregon Episcopal School educates students to realize their power for good as engaged citizens of the world.

At a Glance

1869
established

881
total enrollment
(Lower School enrollment: **345**)

46%
students of color

40
total faculty in the Lower School

85%
faculty with
advanced degrees

9:1
Lower School
student-faculty ratio

OVERVIEW

Established in 1869, Oregon Episcopal School (OES) has long enjoyed an outstanding reputation as one of the premier schools in the Pacific Northwest. Under the leadership of The Reverend Michael Spencer, OES has launched a bold and comprehensive strategic plan. OES 2030: Leading with Purpose builds on the School's mission and vision with ambitious goals along three pathways: fostering excellence through inquiry, cultivating character through connection, and building community through belonging.

Housed in a state-of-the-art facility that maximizes opportunity for student engagement, community, and collaboration, the Lower School offers an unparalleled and exceptional program. Building on the leadership of its longstanding Head of Lower School and the collective work and dedication of its teachers, student support team, and staff, the new Head of Lower School will guide the divisional team's day-to-day work with its students and their parents/caregivers and partner with other school leaders to advance OES's strategic vision within the Lower School, across its campus, in Portland, and beyond.

The Head of Lower School reports to the Associate Head of School, meets regularly with the Head of School, and is a member of a dynamic, collaborative, and generative senior leadership team. The Head of Lower School leads a lower school faculty and staff of 70 who are consistently described as student-centered, creative, curious, and hard working. The Lower School team shares a commitment to celebrating childhood, fostering the love of learning, and embracing a sense of play.

In its next Head of Lower School, the OES community seeks an individual with a particular passion for the work of growing pre-K through Grade 5 children, guiding and supporting their parents and caregivers, and leading their teachers in ways that honor their autonomy under the banner of a progressive, whole child education grounded in developing the skills of an inquirer. Experience teaching in one or more Early Childhood and Lower School grades will ground the appointee's leadership, allowing them to deeply understand the needs of students, the perspectives of parents, the demands placed on teachers, and the importance of being a visible, engaged, and joyful presence. OES's Lower School is a dynamic and caring community, and its next leader should model and sustain its ethos. Additionally, experience working in multi-divisional schools with facility in partnering with colleagues across divisions and departments will support OES's ongoing work to provide a coherent academic and co-curricular program.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Head of Lower School arrives at a time of compelling opportunity and evolution of the division as well as the entire school. Much of their work will center on the following priorities:

Support the ongoing assessment and strengthening of the Lower School academic program. OES is committed to continuous improvement, and advancing the Lower School's academic program is ongoing work. The Head of Lower School will lead the division's academic team: the Assistant Heads for Grades PreK–1 (Beginning Years- BY) and Grades 2–5 (Intermediate Years – IY), the Literacy Specialist, and the Math Specialist. Together they will assess the curriculum, advance teaching practice, articulate excellence through inquiry, shape a schedule that supports learning, and ensure smooth transitions within the division and into the Middle School.

Maximize the impact of the Student Support Team. In recent years, OES has made a deliberate investment in its Student Support Team. A Pre-K-12 Director of Student Support joined the community three years ago, and, this year, a Lower School Community and Behavioral Support Specialist was added to the Lower School team that already included a full-time Lower School Counselor and Lower School Learning Specialist. The Head of Lower School will partner with this team to enhance existing systems and structures, grow new ones, and strengthen its work with students, faculty, and families.

Actively engage and lead in the Lower School admission and enrollment efforts. In a competitive market, OES stands out for its academic excellence, its celebration and honoring of childhood, its Episcopal identity, and its commitment to a beloved community where "all people are seen, known and affirmed." As a chief storyteller, engager, and relationship builder, the Head of Lower School will show prospective and current families how the division lives out these commitments. With confidence and enthusiasm, the Head of Lower School will work to meet the school's enrollment goals in close collaboration with the admissions team and peer divisional leaders.

Champion the Lower School and lead its contributions to the strategic vision. As the division's voice on the senior leadership team, the Head of Lower School will advocate for the Lower School while working with colleagues to balance Pre-K–12 needs. That balance applies to daily operations and long-term strategy, and to shared resources such as facilities, time, budget, and staff. The new Head also has opportunity to support Lower School teachers in lending their voices and expertise to Pre-K-12 work and conversation. They and members of their team will also be a critical part of advancing aspects of the current strategic plan.

Partner with parents and caregivers. For current parents and caregivers, the decision to join the OES community reflects confidence in the school's professional community of teachers and a desire for partnership as they navigate parenthood. The Head of Lower School has a particular responsibility to guide and support the division's parents and caregivers as they discover the humans and learners their children are and help them adapt their parenting to their children's needs as well as the realities of today's world. Bringing a grounded understanding of parenting and child development, empathy, joy, and a sense of humor to their work with parents will serve the next Head of Lower School well.

$5.2M
financial aid awarded

23%
students receiving aid

$42M
endowment

$11M
operating reserves

$41M
annual operating budget

59 acres
campus size

QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

The most competitive candidates for the Head of Lower School position at OES will offer most or all of the following qualifications and qualities:

- Experience teaching and leading in a Lower School and an appreciation for the challenges and opportunities inherent in a complex, multi-division school;
- Proven ability to inspire, support, and lead faculty in a culture that values both autonomy and collaboration both within a division and across the pre-K-12 context;
- Nuanced understanding of best practices in student-centered pedagogy and curriculum design;
- A track record of inclusive leadership, a strong commitment to equity, and the relational and communication practices that cultivate belonging;
- A community-building leadership style that is collaborative whenever possible and decisive when necessary, demonstrating approachability, trustworthiness, as well as a commitment to honoring multiple perspectives;
- Appreciation for the inclusive, pluralistic Episcopal identity of the school;
- The ability to communicate verbally and in writing with inspiration and clarity across the full range of modes and occasions required of independent school divisional leaders;
- Comfort with and skill for serving as a primary voice and storyteller for the division and school in support of its enrollment goals, including actively partnering with the Admissions Office and its marketing, selections, and yield work;
- A history of thoughtful innovation moderated by a skillful and reflective approach to change;
- The commitment to prioritize visibility and presence amidst the demands of a busy professional schedule; and
- Authenticity, kindness, and humility to accompany a joyful spirit and a warm sense of humor.

LEARN MORE

- School Website
- School History
- Strategic Plan
- Equity & Inclusion
- School Profile
- Working at OES
- About Portland, Oregon

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 their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A statement of leadership philosophy;
- 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:

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The competitive starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors which include years of experience, education background, and expertise.

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