

AT A GLANCE

Founded: 1960

Community:

Coeducational parish Episcopal school for grades Preschool 2's to Grade 8

Campus:

Parish church/school setting

Number of students: 374

Preschool 2's to Grade 4: 259

Middle School (grades 5-8) 115

Number of Faculty: 50

Number with Masters: 22

Tuition:

Preschool 2's to Grade 8

\$8,074—12,662

Accreditation:

Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES)

Memberships:

National Association of

Independent Schools (NAIS)

National Association of Episcopal

Schools (NAES)

Houston Association of

Independent Schools (HAIS)

Texas Association of Nonpublic

Schools (TANS)

Recognition by Texas Education

Agency (TEA)

www.stmes.org

ST. MARK'S



EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Houston, Texas

Professional Opportunity
for

Head of School

Located in the rich business, cultural, and educational city of Houston, Texas, St. Mark's Episcopal School is a preschool (age 2) through grade 8 parish Episcopal school enrolling approximately 375 students. The school was founded in 1960 with a clearly defined mission:

The mission of St. Mark's Episcopal School, an outreach ministry of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, is to provide a learning environment that fosters academic excellence while developing moral and spiritual character.

The school shares the campus of St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Adjacent to the Sanctuary, Chapel and Parish Hall, the separate school facilities include four major buildings which house large, bright classrooms; three computer labs; two libraries; two dedicated science rooms; a gymnasium; multipurpose cafeteria; rooms for art and music; and the school's administrative offices. Courtyards provide safe play spaces for the children. It is a sparkling clean, inviting environment which has benefited from recent facility expansion and excellent maintenance. The school campus is valued at approximately \$12 million.

St. Mark's is located in the West University area of Houston. It is within the 610 Inner Loop in a popular residential area which enjoys close proximity to Houston's extraordinary medical center, downtown businesses, restaurants, museums, performance halls, and sports arenas. The Galleria, a premier shopping mall, is minutes away, and the Texas Gulf Coast is only an hour's drive.

With a population of 2.2 million within its 600 square miles, Houston is a multicultural city with a large and growing international community. The city is home to the third largest concentration of consular offices representing 86 countries. It has received the nickname "Space City" as the home of the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center.





“Church and school are our two governing bodies, and we are fortunate to have a strategic, thinking Board and a terrific new Rector.”

— Faculty Member

Many annual events celebrate the diverse cultures of Houston. The largest and longest running is the annual Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Other city annual events include the Greek Festival, Auto Show, Boat Show, the International Festival, and the Bayou City Art Festival which is considered one of the top five arts festivals in the country. With its parks and green spaces, Houston is a wonderful place to live. It is a mecca for sports enthusiasts, fielding teams for nearly every major professional sport. Houston’s climate makes outdoor activities enjoyable year round. Although it is at times hot and humid, great air conditioning and the Gulf Coast beaches make the summer months easily manageable.

St Mark’s Episcopal School is a member of a diverse group of educational institutions in Houston. There are more than 60 colleges/universities and other degree granting institutions in the city. In addition to the four public universities, there are a number of highly respected private institutions, including Rice University. Seventeen public school districts serve the students of Houston, and the independent school community of which St. Mark’s is a part provides excellent and strongly sought after educational alternatives for the city’s families. St. Mark’s is accredited by the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools and recognized by the Texas Education Agency through this accreditation. The school is also pursuing dual accreditation through the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest.

Families

St. Mark’s Episcopal School evolved in the 60’s from the vision of the Reverend Stanley Hauser and St. Mark’s Church. There was an initiative to create a traditional school for children in which their intellectual, moral, and physical development would be kindled to celebrate their innate gifts from God. Today, that vision is a true reality — St. Mark’s Episcopal School. Although the face of the school has changed over five decades, its core commitments have remained the same.

Entry into St. Mark’s begins with toddler two-year-olds. The preschool and elementary grades enroll 259 students with 115 students enrolled in the Middle School, grades five through eight. Great care is given in admissions to the developmental level of each child, to his/her socialization skills, the family’s willingness to be an active participant in the school community and embrace the school’s Episcopal identity, and the child’s ability to manage academic expectations. St. Mark’s attracts a diverse student body, but it also has a strong family feel with 94 of its families enrolling more than one child at the school.

We love St. Mark’s. The size is great — the families are great — and the faculty is great!

— Parent

Upon completion of their eighth grade year, St. Mark’s students matriculate in schools such as Episcopal High School, Lamar High School IB program, St. Agnes Academy, The Kinkaid School, St. John’s School, Strake Jesuit College Preparatory High School, Bellaire High School IB Program, and the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. Its graduates are highly successful doctors, lawyers, teachers, and business people. Most importantly, each of them has learned the importance of following Christ’s model of making a positive difference in the lives of others and using their God-given talents to the best of their abilities.

In general the students come from professional families with many of their parents associated with the medical center, the oil business, or city law firms. Most families are from a Christian heritage, but there are also Muslim and Jewish students. Within what is a predominantly white community, school families also bring Middle Eastern, Hispanic, Asian, and African American backgrounds. Regardless of religions and ethnicities, families find in St. Mark’s a small, neighborhood school which provides a nurturing, supportive environment and a place that will guide their children in a values-based educational experience. They appreciate St. Mark’s small size which enables their children to participate in school sports and other activities as well as be in a safe school setting. An active Parent Guild which meets each month provides a formal organization for the many volunteer hours provided by moms and dads.



“I love the faculty and its camaraderie. But equally as appreciated is my freedom to make decisions for my classroom. We are valued for how we approach education. We have more autonomy than some other schools with a nice administration that generally supports and backs us up.”

— Faculty Member

Faculty and Administration

St. Mark’s has been blessed with a dedicated and loyal faculty. Of the 50 faculty members, the average tenure is 10-15 years. However, the school is fortunate to have a healthy mix of faculty. There are a number of long-time veterans as well as a group of talented newer teachers; some are from private/independent schools, while some have come from public school teaching. Approximately half of the faculty members have advanced degrees. All are hired for their commitment to bringing to their students a balanced experience of strong academic expectations, spiritual formation, and community-building.

Supporting educational instruction is an administrative staff which includes: Head of School, Middle and Lower School Heads, Director of Admissions, Director of Development, Director of Finance; Director of Extended Programs, Athletic Director, and Facilities Administrator. The administration meets weekly to facilitate communication and smooth day-to-day operation. Additional staff members are the Office Administrator, School Secretary, Bookkeeper, and Student Accounts Manager.

As a part of the school’s leadership transition, an Interim Head of School has been appointed for the 2009-2010 school year.

Governance

The fifteen voting trustees are currently composed of the Rector, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, three members elected by the Parish, three appointed by the Rector, three appointed by the Vestry, and three elected by the school’s Parent Guild. The Head of School is an *ex officio* member. While closely associated with the Parish, the school is a separate 501-C3 organization.

Trustee terms are for three years, with four trustees typically rolling off each February. Eight of the current trustees have children at the school. The work of the Board is facilitated by four standing trustee committees: Executive, Finance, Trustees, and Development. The Board’s current strategic plan was developed for the school during the 2007-2008 school year.

St. Mark’s Parish has a congregation of approximately 300 families. It has itself recently gone through a search for a new leader. The new Rector, Reverend Patrick Miller, has been with St. Mark’s Church for approximately 18 months and has generated through his dynamic leadership lots of positive excitement for both the church and the school.

Programs

While there are some variations in schedules depending on the grade level, in general the class day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m. Middle School classes are 45 minutes each with sports and activities offered after school. Thursday’s schedule includes chapel. Younger children benefit from a self contained classroom. For the school’s families, there are both Before School Care and After School programs.

The school’s traditional curriculum provides instruction in language arts, literature, social studies, math, science, Spanish, religion, music, art, computer, physical education, and health. Used at various levels are Everyday Math, Making Meaning (Reading Program), Words their Way, and Wordly Wise.

Other student opportunities include Honors Art, Student Council, Chapel, the National Junior Honor Society, musicals and student performances, Dance, Yearbook, Geography, the Spelling Bee, Duke TIP program, and the Presidential Fitness program. The Middle School athletic program provides competitive sports in soccer, volleyball, basketball, and track. It is a sports experience where emphasis is on participation rather than winning.

Finances

The school’s operating budget is approximately \$6 million. Tuitions begin at \$8,074 for toddler two-year-olds and is \$12,662 for eighth graders.

A significant part of the school’s current strategic plan addresses the school’s financial planning. In recent months, great attention has been devoted to improved business operations. The school has also been successful in refinancing the debt incurred from recent campus additions and renovations.

Primarily tuition driven, the school adds additional income to the school’s budget through Parent Guild sponsored activities, including an auction which nets about \$100,000 each year and the school’s Annual Giving which at the end of the current year stands at \$150,000.



The Opportunity

In seeking its next school leader, St. Mark's is searching for an experienced school administrator whose career has included work in a similar school. This person should be an inspirational role model who will attract and retain school families and an excellent faculty.

Clearly, the Head of School must fully embrace the school's Episcopal identity and enjoy working with the church's leadership although it is not essential that the person be an Episcopalian. Other areas which will be important include:

- strong academic preparation for the position with an advanced degree
- awareness of best practices and cutting edge educational programs/curriculum
- experience in the classroom at the grade levels served by the school
- strong management, administrative, and communication skills
- the ability to oversee the school's finances and development activities

Application Procedures

Materials required to complete application include a letter of interest, resume, philosophy/personal statement, and a list of 5 references to be sent to:

The Education Group

5952 Royal Lane, Suite 161

Dallas, TX 75230

214-696-3692 • 800-369-9102

FAX 214-369-4979

Email: services@educationgroup.com

Credentials will be evaluated as received with priority given to applications submitted by September 15, 2009. Electronic transmission of materials is preferred.

It is anticipated that an appointment will be announced by early December with position responsibilities beginning July 1, 2010. An attractive salary and benefits package will be offered.

Professional Leadership and Administrative Skills

As expressed by constituencies at the school, the following are additional expectations and areas which will need to be addressed by the new Head of School:

"We need someone who is enthusiastic and positive and will take the time to understand us and help us get where we need to go. Our new strategic plan is one of our roadmaps."
— Board Member

"Communications are pretty good, but we really need someone who listens and communicates regularly. It's terrible when you get blindsided by something which you should have known."
— Faculty Member

"We want someone who has his [or her] feet on the ground. It should be someone who has experience dealing with this age group of students and their parents."
— Faculty member

"Someone who understands and functions with 'healthy boundaries' would be great."
— Faculty Member

"I'd like a fresh look at people's responsibilities — Who does what? Why? We need to clarify and build more efficient systems. Sometimes things seem to get done rather mysteriously, with no rhyme or reason."
— Administrator

"We want someone who will be permanent."
— Student

"We don't want a micromanager. We have good people who do their jobs."
— Faculty Member

"We'd like someone who will get to know us — know our names, be out in the hallways, at lunch, at our activities."
— Student

"It's not good just being an educator, we need someone who knows the financial side of a school and has organization/management skills as well as classroom experience."
— Administrator

"A good decision maker and one who will follow up with the decisions are my wants."
— Faculty Member

"We need a great personality — someone who is outgoing, approachable, friendly, available, lighthearted and positive. The personality sets the stage both in the school and in the community."
— Board Member/Parent

"We've been blessed with a strengthening relationship between the school and church. The new person needs to continue to nourish that relationship and keep us true to our identity as an Episcopal school."
— Board/Vestry Member

St. Mark's Episcopal School does not discriminate in the hiring, admissions, or administration of its programs on the basis of race, gender, sex, or ethnic origin.